

## Surfing Champion takes part in AIS preventative health program

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VNR AVAILABLE

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Australian surfer Sally Fitzgibbons is one of many athletes who has gained access to a range of AIS expertise as part of a new preventative health program. Fitzgibbons has undergone a series of tests in Canberra designed to ensure she is at peak health ahead of upcoming Olympic qualifying events over the next few months and leading in to Tokyo.

The current World Number Two is taking part in the Australian Institute of Sport **Athlete Availability Program (AAP)**, which aims to improve the health, training availability and performance outcomes of Australian athletes via a proactive, preventative healthcare model across the high performance system.

"I really prioritised coming here (to the AIS) even with my busy schedule," Fitzgibbons said. "We live the most time in our thoughts and our body and as athletes we are just scratching the surface on knowing how to better ourselves and become the best athlete we can strive for."

"Even if it was just one day (I had off), this is where I'd want to spend it."

Fitzgibbons was joined at the AIS by members of Diving Australia's National Squad to undergo a variety of tests with the results used to identify any areas of health requiring attention, preventing them from potentially become a more serious issue down the track.

As part of the program, athletes undergo comprehensive testing for everything from movement patterns and medical, physiological, physiotherapy and psychological screenings. The AAP has so far seen athletes from Triathlon, Surfing, Diving and Rowing take part in testing with the AIS, which in turn provides critical information back to National Sporting Organisations to be able to put prevention systems in place.

AAP Program Manager Dr Mick Drew said the initiative is about understanding that health is one of the key determinants of performance.

"Through this program we are chiefly aiming to help performance," Dr Drew said. "We understand that health is crucial to performance, because the simple fact is if you're not on the park, in the pool or at the start line it's very hard to win."

"Basically the amount of training that an athlete can do uninterrupted by injury or illness really correlates highly with their success rates."

"The outcome of the program is to ensure that athletes are as healthy as possible so they can train and compete at their peak when it matters,"

Diving Australia were returning to the AIS for the second time after visiting back in September last year when the program was still in its early stages.

AAP is an initiative of the AIS Applied Technology and Innovation team.

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**VNR Shotlist**

**0:03 – 2:48** – Interview - Sally Fitzgibbons, Australian Surfer.

**2:48 – 5:41** - Interview - Dr Michael Drew, Manager AIS Athlete Availability Program.

**5:41 – 9:31** - Sensory Organisation Test (SOT) at University of Canberra under supervision of Prof. Gordon Waddington (UC AIS Professor of Sports Medicine). The SOT test is also known as a balance test.

**9:31 – 10:35** – Eye Tracking Test. Sally wears virtual reality goggles to track eye movement.

**10:39 – 11:41** – General location overlay. Sally and Dr Mick Drew walking into the AIS High Performance Centre and Sally leaving University of Canberra.

