



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BACK TO SCHOOL – BACK TO SPORT

As school children and teenagers around Australia prepare to begin the new school year, Sports Medicine Australia (SMA) has called on State and Federal Governments to ensure that each school in Australia has an extensive and safe sports program.

SMA President, Dr Shane Conway said, “In the last few decades we have seen a decline in the amount of physical activity undertaken by schoolchildren and teenagers. Cars, elevators, computers and television have made us all become less physically active.”

“Playing sport is vital for our children’s health and social development. Getting into the habit of participating regularly and safely in physical activity sets young people up for a longer and healthier life.

“Lifelong physical activity can help prevent heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and some cancers, as well as reducing the risk of developing osteoporosis and osteoarthritis.

At the *World Summit on Physical Education* in Berlin last year, evidence was presented for the benefits of physical education and its important role in developing healthy, active children. Research was also presented which showed that, in addition to the undisputed health gains, physical education and sport enhances self esteem and reduces tendency to risk behaviors, reduces negative attitudes to school and dropout; enhances academic performance, and offers focus and commitment.

“SMA believes that physical education should never be an ‘add on’ to education, but a crucial and central part of our children and young adults everyday schooling.

“We can sow the seeds of a healthier and happier Australia now by making a big effort through the education system to get kids enthusiastic about sport and by teaching them how to play safely,” said Dr Conway.

For further information or to arrange interview: Jane O’Dwyer 0419 93 7336

SMA is Australia’s peak advisory body on all medical and health issues for active people.

SMA members are the ‘*team behind the teams*’.

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