



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

19 March 2000

Senior Citizens Week 2000

## WHY SPORT KEEPS YOU YOUNG

For Senior Citizens Week this year, Sports Medicine Australia (SMA) has just one message - staying fit as you get older not only is great fun, it keeps you healthy.

Dr Shane Conway, National President of SMA said the health benefits of active ageing were indisputable.

“Exercise can’t turn back the clock, but it can certainly slow down the ageing process and help prevent disease,” said Dr Conway.

**“However, recent research by SMA members for the NSW Health Department shows that up to 60% aged over 55 are not sufficiently physically active to receive health benefits\*.**

“Regular exercise can reduce the rate at which your heart capacity declines, reduce your risk of coronary heart disease, improve your breathing, maintain or increase your muscle mass and strength, slow osteoporosis and maintain your flexibility.”

“People who exercise regularly are less likely to develop heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and some cancers, as well as reduced risk of developing osteoporosis and osteoarthritis.

“There is no supplement or drug that you can buy that can provide the same benefits.”

However, Dr Conway warned that a sensible approach to beginning and continuing exercise for the mature aged participants was essential to prevent injury.

“Men over 40 and women over 50 should obtain advice from a doctor before starting any vigorous activity for example jogging, vigorous dancing, tennis or cycling,” said Dr Conway.

“Pre-conditioning exercises for those who haven’t been active for some time, as well as proper stretching and warm-up exercises are a must for preventing injury. As we age, we need longer and more gradual stretching, warming up and cooling down exercises.”

SMA has a range of free information for individuals and sporting clubs about Active Ageing which can be obtained by phoning SMA on (02) 6251 6944.

Further information or to arrange interview:

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media release

\*NSW Health Department, Expert Working Group, 1999