



MEDIA RELEASE

26th November, 2008

Victorian schools fight for physical education and school sport - Two day Conference tackles childhood obesity and a place for PE and sport in the curriculum

As the Nation tackles the issue of childhood obesity, Victorian schools continue to fight for a place for physical education and sport in curriculum. Issues such as these will be a focus of a **two day conference** being conducted by ACHPER.

The conference is the largest of its kind in Australia. The program features more than 200 speakers on health, physical education and school sport and will be attended by more than 1,100 teachers.

Representatives of the Victorian Branch of ACHPER, the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, say the issue of just having **time** in the curriculum for PE and sport continues to surface, year after year. For example, with the recent move by the Federal government to support the development of a National Curriculum for schools, there has been no mention of time for, or inclusion of, PE and sport. At a time when many schools are still failing to meet compulsory time requirements for physical education and school sport in Victoria, this is giving the wrong message about the lack of importance of physical activity for our children.

(Note: Victorian government policy requires students in government schools to participate in a minimum of 180 minutes per week of physical education and sport for Grades 3 to 6. However a survey undertaken by ACHPER in 2007 indicated that few of the schools surveyed met that requirement).

Dr Jeff Walkley, President, ACHPER Victorian believes physical education and sport helps young people develop the skills and knowledge to lead a healthy lifestyle.

“Whilst schools alone cannot solve the problem of childhood obesity, children spend a significant amount of their lives at school, and therefore it is a wasted opportunity if physical activity is not promoted and provided during the school day”

Research presented by Dr Walkley at the Australian Health & Medical Research Conference in Brisbane late last week revealed that only two of 173 overweight and obese adolescents met the national physical activity guidelines. In commenting on this finding, Dr Walkley said:

“It’s clear that physical activity is a missing ingredient in the lives of adolescents who are overweight and obese. For the sake of these young people, we have to do all we can to encourage regular involvement in healthy physical activity. Clearly, schools provide one of the best ways we can achieve this by providing regularly PE and sport.”

The Minister for Education, Hon Bronwyn Pike MP has recently accepted 11 recommendations from an internal review of the structure of school sport in Victoria. A special forum for leading teachers and key sporting personnel from many of Victoria’s major sporting associations will be conducted at the conference to present these recommendations and to discuss the implications. Dr Jeff Walkley says the action from this review will impact on the future of all Victorian school children including government and non-government schools.

The School Sport forum, to be conducted as part of the 2008 ACHPER Health and Physical Education Conference will be held at:

MONASH UNIVERSITY, WELLINGTON ROAD, CLAYTON

Monash University Club (refer to map),

Thursday 27th November, 2008

10.45 am – 11.45am

For further information and interview contact:

Dr Jeff Walkley, President, ACHPER Victorian Branch 0407 345 525;

Dr. Paul Callery, Senior Lecturer in Exercise Science, Australian Catholic University and ACHPER member 0419309698;

**Mary Wilson, Executive Director, ACHPER 98516966 (w)
0419 391972**