



**THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP**  
**Minister for Health and Ageing**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

15 May 2009

**Health and Safety First Priority As Children Walk To School**

Today is Walk Safely to School Day – a national event to encourage primary school children to enjoy physical activity by walking to school.

The Rudd Government supports this important health and safety initiative and encourages children to enjoy, safely, the benefits of walking to school on a regular basis.

Worryingly, around a quarter of young Australians aged between seven and 15 are considered overweight or obese. The major contributing factors to this are physical inactivity and poor diet.

The positive news is that regular physical activity, like walking to and from school, can help maintain good health and prevent overweight and obesity as well as reducing the risks of other lifestyle-related problems later in life.

This event is part of a continuing series of initiatives introduced by the Rudd Government with the aim of improving childhood health. Others include:

The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Project which is teaching children about the benefits of growing your own food and healthy eating.

The Healthy Kids Check, which provides a health check for all four-year-olds, helping to ensure they are fit and ready to learn when they start school.

The Get Set 4 Life – Habits for Healthy Kids Guide for parents, providing information about healthy living habits for young children.

The National Healthy School Canteens Project to assist school canteens to provide healthy food choices and to promote healthy eating.

\$325.5 million provided as part of the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health to increase physical activity and improve nutrition in children zero to 16 years of age through child care centres, pre-schools, schools and families.

Walk Safely to School Day has been established by the Pedestrian Council of Australia with funding from the Rudd Government. Information on how to take part in Walk Safely to School Day can be found on the website [www.walk.com.au](http://www.walk.com.au)

**For all media inquiries, please contact the Minister's Office on 02 6277 7220**