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**Minister for Health and Ageing**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**TREAD THE PATH TO A HEALTHIER LIFE**

Australians are being encouraged to set aside some time to go for a walk and to continue to be active as part of Walk to Work Day today.

Most of us lead busy working and home lives, and fitting in time for physical activity is sometimes difficult to do. We can all incorporate more activity into our day by walking to work, getting off public transport a few stops earlier, or going for a walk during your lunch break.

Around half of Australian adults are not active enough, while 25 per cent of adults are obese and another 37 per cent are overweight.

This has major implications for our health as being physically inactive and having an unhealthy diet are major risk factors for a number of chronic diseases including diabetes, heart disease, cardiovascular disease and some cancers. Chronic diseases are estimated to be responsible for nearly 80 per cent of the total burden of disease and injury in Australia, and more than two-thirds of all health spending.

By being active at a moderate level for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week – such as taking a brisk walk to work – we can reduce our risk of chronic disease.

It is important that Australians are supported to lead healthy and active lives.

That's why the Rudd Government has provided a landmark \$872.1 million in funding for the new National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health, agreed to by the Council of Australian Governments last year.

This is the biggest investment in health promotion that an Australian Government has ever made and includes funding for healthy lifestyle programs in workplaces, communities and childhood settings.

Part of this work includes the *Measure Up* campaign which helps people to identify if they have an increased risk of chronic disease due to the size of their waist.

The campaign informs men and women that they have an increased risk of chronic disease if their waist measurement is more than 94 cm for men and more than 80 cm for women. Men are at a *greatly* increased risk of chronic disease if their waistline is more than 102 cm, while for women a waistline of more than 88 cm greatly increases their risk. More information about the Measure Up campaign is available at [www.measureup.gov.au](http://www.measureup.gov.au).

*Walk to Work Day was established by the Pedestrian Council of Australia and is funded by the Australian Government. For more information, please see <http://www.walk.com.au/wtw/>*

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