



**The Hon Kate Ellis MP
Minister for Sport**



MEDIA RELEASE

22 September 2008

New safety guidelines for children and young people in sport

The Australian Government has moved to make sport safer for young Australians with the launch today by the Federal Minister for Sport, Kate Ellis, of new national guidelines to promote safety in sport and a national sport injury prevention program.

Ms Ellis said *The Safety Guidelines for Children and Young People in Sport and Recreation* and the *National Smartplay* program would help schools, teachers, coaches, parents and administrators to support safer sporting practices and reduce injury risks.

Australian studies have estimated that around one million Australians injure themselves while playing sport each year and that children aged 5-14 years have the highest rate of injuries requiring treatment and affecting performance or participation in activity.

“While the vast majority of injuries from sport are not severe, parental concerns about these injuries are a known barrier to wider participation in sport so I commend these Guidelines that will promote safe, positive sporting experiences that we know play such a key role in the health and well-being of young people,” Ms Ellis said.

“These Guidelines and the *Smartplay* program provide clear and practical advice to people involved in sport to introduce uniform safety practices based on good preparation, correct techniques, appropriate equipment, safe sporting areas, protective equipment and modifying rules for children within community sport.

“Many people in our community play a wonderful role in managing and organising junior sport and recreation. The new safety guidelines for children will empower all people associated with sport with the latest best-practice information to create a safe and enjoyable environment for young Australians participating in sport.”

The Australian Government has provided more than \$300,000 to Sports Medicine Australia to develop and implement *Smartplay* as a national program and to update the safety guidelines for children in sport. Over one million brochures and information sheets have been produced and will be sent to physical education teachers in every school in Australia, as well as sporting organisations, sports stores, pharmacies and health professionals. 40,000 copies of the Guidelines will be distributed to schools and sporting organisations.

Sports Medicine Australia’s President, Mr Michael Kenihan says the guidelines and National Smartplay program will also aid sports participants to correctly prepare their bodies to help achieve positive sporting results.

“Sport should be safe and enjoyable. It will never be risk free, but good planning and sport safety management can help prevent injuries,” said Mr Kenihan.

“These initiatives provide sports participants with handy injury prevention reference tools which are easily accessible and best of all, free of charge.

“With up to 50 per cent of all sporting injuries able to be prevented, educating participants and stakeholders on the sports safety practices that should be undertaken before, during and after sport will hopefully mean less injuries, safer environments, increased participation and greater sporting performance,” said Mr Kenihan.

The Smartplay program was initially developed in South Australia and Victoria. The Victorian Smartplay program is funded by the Department of Planning and Community Development (Sport and Recreation Victoria) and VicHealth.

To access the *Safety Guidelines for Children and Young People in Sport and Recreation* and Smartplay visit www.smartplay.com.au

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