

Tuesday 27 September 2011

## Working Mums Urged To Increase Activity

Working mums and older Australians are strongly urged to get walking this October as part of the Walktober National Challenge.

Physical Activity Australia Chief Executive Officer, Fiona K Bailey said, “recently released ABS data *Physical Activity in Australia: A snapshot 2007-08* shows that people who had children aged 0-17 years were less likely to meet the physical activity guidelines than those who did not have children (28% and 33% respectively) due to their family commitments.

“Women were less likely than men to have achieved the World Health Organisation guidelines of 30 minutes per day of moderate exercise on most days of the week. Women and in particular working mums often put themselves last on the list when it comes to taking care of their health,” Ms Bailey said.

“Around three-quarters of people aged 75 years and over also did not meet these guidelines.

Being physically inactive can lead to overweight and obesity, which can increase the risk of developing a number chronic health conditions

Walktober is Australia’s walking month. Physical Activity Australia’s Walktober Challenge is a terrific incentive to get people walking either as recreation or as a form of transport. This year we’re aiming to clock up enough kilometers to have walked around the world – 40, 075 kms.

We are encouraging workplaces to establish friendly rivalry between teams to see how many kilometers can be walked as a company, the number of kilometers will then be converted into kilojoules equivalent to working off slices of chocolate cake, number of light globes saved in terms of carbon emissions and number of laps around the MCG.

Ms Bailey said: “We are especially grateful to Telstra for supporting the launch of 2011 Walktober and for encouraging strong employee participation in events such as Walktober.

“This is the second year running that Telstra will be participating in the Walktober Challenge. Last year, Telstra was recognised as the organisation with the most walks nationally.”

Telstra’s Group Manager Health and Wellbeing Karen Oldaker said: “Walktober provides an opportunity for our people to focus on their physical and mental health as part of our health promotion programs. We want our people to feel confident that they are working for an organisation that values its people and their wellbeing.

“Last year we had 148 participants, logged 4,049 15 minute walks, stepped out a total of 6,074 kilometres (12,268 laps of the MCG), and burnt over 1 million kilojoules (700 slices of chocolate mud cake),” Ms Oldaker said.

Walking is one of the easiest, enjoyable and least expensive forms of activity.

Physical Activity Australia is dedicated to advocacy, to supporting people to be more active and to representing and registering exercise professionals. Established in 1982 and with nearly 30 years experience, we are Australia’s leading organisation working towards changes and improvements in physical activity environments. We aim for all Australians, young and old, to be active every day.

**For more information on the Walktober challenge visit [www.walktoberchallenge.com.au](http://www.walktoberchallenge.com.au)**

**For more information: Lyn Curtis 0411 019 924 or Penny Smits 0478 029 929**

### **Case Study:**

#### **Karen Oldaker – Group Manager Health and Wellbeing, Telstra**

Karen Oldaker balances her busy corporate career with her role as mother to nine-year-old Angus and six-year-old Wil.

The working mum lives in Ballarat and feels fortunate that her job allows her to work nearby from one of Telstra’s remote offices.

“I am lucky I am able to walk to and from work and where we live is close to playgrounds and parks, which is also great for the kids.”

Karen travels to Melbourne twice a week for work and makes sure she walks to and from the train station when she is in a city.

Her family also takes regular camping holidays, where they enjoy bushwalking and other fun outdoor recreational activities.

Telstra has a Health and Wellbeing program, which focuses on mental and cardiovascular health.

Physical activity is known to boost mental and heart health, so staying active is something the corporation strongly promotes among its staff.

Karen says the team building element of Walktober makes it an attractive activity for Telstra employees.

“The friendly competitiveness of the Walktober Challenge is a great extra boost that can be all that’s needed to get staff members up from their desk at lunchtime and out walking.”