

MEDIA ADVICE

For immediate release

Page 1 of 2



**Australasian
Masters Games**

Adelaide 5-14 October 2007

First Indigenous Netball Team Joins Australasian Masters Games

In an effort to promote physical activity and social inclusion, members of the Indigenous community from around South Australia will come together to participate in the Australasian Masters Games in Adelaide, 5-14 October.

Members of *The Boomerangs* Netball Team will be travelling from as far away as Ceduna to take part in the Games this October.

The team will be the first ever South Australian Aboriginal Women's Netball team to enter the event.

Organised by the Muna Paiendi Primary Health Care Service in Elizabeth, the team has been brought together to assist inactive community members to become more physically active by addressing the barriers to participation.

"This team is made up of players from all over the state including Ceduna, Port Augusta, Murray Bridge and metropolitan Adelaide. Aboriginal communities have heard of our initiative and are supporting us all the way" says team organiser, Deb Walker, from the Muna Paiendi Primary Health Care Service.

The team will be registered in the over 35's category, to be played at Adelaide's ETSA Park.

The Australasian Masters Games, Australia's largest multisport festival, provides the opportunity for participation and competition for people over the age of 30, regardless of their background or ability. The event will bring together over 10,000 participants from around Australia and overseas to take part in 54 different sports. While the competition is important, one of the key attractions is the social interaction and spirit of camaraderie experienced by participants.

"The Games is a chance to improve each team member's physical activity, social inclusion, self confidence and self esteem through participation" says Ms Walker.

"It is important that we provide our people with awareness that physical activity is a necessary and enjoyable means of social engagement. Our hope is that this may lead to living a healthier lifestyle which will address several of the major health issues in our community such as cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes and smoking.

Ms Walker says they plan to provide team members with the opportunity to continue their involvement by taking part in future Masters events.

“It’s also about giving members a chance to participate in other facets of netball by providing opportunities for them by undertake training courses to be coaches, umpires and sport trainers.

“We have been able to liaise with Aboriginal and mainstream services to support us with some sponsorship dollars.

Ms Walker hopes that the team will act as role models, not only for the younger generation, but also the elder community members. “We want to send a positive message, ‘Hey Nukken, you can still do it! Just keep on moving it!’”

“Through the team’s participation we hope to be able to take back this concept to our local Community in the form of Capacity Building. This way we can showcase Aboriginal people in pro-active roles, leading by example to instil pride and respect at a local level.

“For us as strong Aboriginal women it’s about remembering and honouring our past Netballers that have come before us and following their example by carrying on their legacy to the present generation. The Teams name “Boomerangs” is a tribute to the first Aboriginal women’s Netball team formed back in the 1970’s.

“But most importantly, this is about Reconciliation” says Ms Walker.

“Reconciliation is about working towards finding ways to better address the disadvantages experienced by Aboriginal people in health, employment, education as well as their general opportunities” added Ms Walker.

Registrations for the Australasian Masters Games close Friday 3 August.

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