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## VICHEALTH'S \$700K FUNDING FOR LOCAL SPORTS CLUBS NOW OPEN

In a bid to get more people active, the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) has launched its **2010/2011 Active Club Grants** funding round, which assists with the purchase of essential sporting equipment, injury prevention equipment, portable shade and volunteer training.

A total of \$700,000 in grants of up to \$2,500 each are available via VicHealth to local sporting clubs, regional sporting leagues and associations and local active recreation clubs across Victoria.

The grants were announced today by former VicHealth board member and the new Minister for Sport and Recreation, the Hon. Hugh Delahunty.

"The grants aim to make it easier for clubs to fund items or activities that help them to improve safety and to reach out to new participants," Mr Delahunty said.

Mr Delahunty said physical inactivity is responsible for over 13,000 deaths per year in Australia and costs the health system \$400 million in direct health care costs.

"It is important to encourage the involvement of people who are currently inactive, or who face barriers to taking part in sport," Mr Delahunty said.

"This may include Indigenous communities, people from culturally diverse communities, people with disabilities and those who live in rural or low socio-economic communities. Regular physical activity not only protects against many illnesses, it also makes us mentally healthy, alert and resilient against the stresses of modern life."

Mr Delahunty said more than 8,400 sporting codes and clubs across Victoria have received Active Club Grants over the 21 years VicHealth has provided this support. Over this period, more than 1 million club members have been able to access safer and better equipped clubs with more trained volunteers.

VicHealth CEO Mr Todd Harper said this year's grants would focus on people aged over 60, who traditionally had low rates of sports participation and young people aged five to 17-years-old.

Evidence suggests that habits are established early in life, and physically active children are more likely to mature into physically active adults.

In Victoria, only 64 per cent of adult men and 61 per cent of adult women get the recommended amount of exercise.

Research also shows that sport builds community pride and loyalty. Sport and shared recreation activities offer people the chance to get involved, providing them with a positive sense of self-worth.

There are also economic benefits of having a physically active community. A 2009 VicHealth-funded study undertaken by Deakin University revealed that increasing physical activity in the community by 10 per cent would save 2,000 preventable deaths every year.

Eligible sport and recreation organisations are invited to apply for this grant online at [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/activeclub](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/activeclub) or to post completed applications to VicHealth, 15-31 Pelham Street, Carlton, VIC 3053. **The funding round closes 4pm Wednesday 9 February 2011.**