



THE HON WARREN SNOWDON MP
Minister for Indigenous Health, Rural and Regional Health
and Regional Services Delivery

MEDIA RELEASE

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SNOWDON SHAVES MO

Australian men are too often reluctant to do the simple things that are necessary to protect themselves from avoidable health problems, the Minister for Indigenous Health, Rural and Regional Health and Regional Services Delivery, Warren Snowdon, said today.

Mr Snowdon was opening the inaugural 'Have a Crack' Day, an event organised by Andrology Australia to focus attention on and raise funds for men's health issues.

The event brought together about 160 individuals from businesses, organisations and the public who had paid or were sponsored to compete in teams of 10 in a modified Super 8s-format cricket carnival held at Trinity Grammar's Sporting Fields in Bulleen, Victoria.

Each team was led by a renowned cricketer or sporting legend who were encouraged to take part by Merv Hughes, Ambassador for Andrology Australia, the organisation established through Australian Government funding in 1999 to better educate the community and health professionals about male reproductive health disorders.

Mr Snowdon said that often Australian men paid too little attention to their own health, neglecting the need for regular checkups.

"However, sport is a great way to get men involved and interested in men's health," he said.

"It is wonderful to see so many Australian sporting legends here today. The involvement of these role models will help the wider community realise how important it is for men to make their health a priority."

Mr Snowdon pointed out that the Australian Government has been very supportive of moves to improve the health and wellbeing of Australian men.

"We made an election commitment to develop Australia's first ever National Men's Health Policy in consultation with the community, state and territory governments and interested groups.

"The policy is intended to take a 'back to basics' approach to improve the health and wellbeing of Australian men, with particular attention paid to men with the poorest health outcomes, especially groups such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders," he said.

In developing the policy so far, the Government has appointed several high profile men's health ambassadors, released a resource kit on men's health issues, held a National Men's Health Roundtable in Canberra and conducted a series of 26 National Men's Health Policy Consultation Forums in both regional and metropolitan areas to help raise awareness about men's health and to receive input to the policy.

Mr Snowdon also took advantage of his attendance at the 'Have a Crack' Day to shave off his treasured moustache which he had been growing for 40 years.

He undertook to remove the mo as part of the Movember campaign, the annual, month-long celebration of the moustache, highlighting men's health issues, specifically prostate cancer and depression. Mr Snowdon raised more than \$8000 for the campaign.

"The Government has a strong interest in the issues highlighted by the Movember campaign," Mr Snowdon said.

"We have improved diagnosis and treatment options for men living with prostate cancer, spending about \$10.9 million in 2009 on 46 prostate cancer research grants through the National Health and Medical Research Council.

"And by the end of 2010 we will have contributed \$66.2 million to beyondblue to help raise community awareness and reduce stigma associated with depression."

EDITORS: PLEASE NOTE – Photographs of Mr Snowdon shaving off his moustache will be available from:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/PhotoGalleryWarrenSnowdon-1>

It is expected these will be online after mid to late afternoon.

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