



The Place To Be

Media release

From the Minister for Sport and Recreation

Thursday, 29 April, 2010

UGLY BEHAVIOUR IN SPORT GIVEN THE BOOT IN NEW CAMPAIGN

A new education campaign targeting bad behaviour and ugly parent syndrome in grassroots sport will be rolled out shortly to Victoria's 16,000 grassroots sporting clubs and associations.

Sports Minister James Merlino and Minister for the Respect Agenda Justin Madden today joined a team of high-profile Ambassadors to launch the latest component of the Brumby Labor Government's *Victorian Code of Conduct for Community Sport*.

"Victorians love their sport and our local sports clubs are the heart and soul of our communities, ensuring families are strong, happy, healthy and active," Mr Merlino said.

"The overwhelming majority of Victorian clubs do the right thing, but this new Code of Conduct reinforces the message to a minority of players, spectators, coaches or club officials that their bad behaviour, abuse and ugly parent syndrome has no place in sport."

Mr Merlino joined ambassadors – Garry Lyon, Lenny Hayes, Sam Mitchell, John Aloisi, Nicole Livingstone, Louise Dobson, Brad Hodge, Bianca Chatfield, Danny Frawley, Andrew Gaze, Tim Watson and Luke Darcy – to launch *Stamp Out Ugly Behaviour or Your Game Is History*.

"Everyone involved in community sport needs to know and understand their rights and responsibilities under the Code," he said.

"As part of the new campaign Victoria's 16,000 clubs will each receive educational kits containing a DVD, posters and other resources."

Mr Madden said the Code of Conduct Ambassadors, appointed as part of the Respect strategy, would be great role models for sporting participants and their families.

"These are people who have excelled in their chosen sport and are leaders on and off the field – we are delighted to have them as our Ambassadors as they naturally engender respect for their achievements and the way they conduct themselves," Mr Madden said.

Code of Conduct Ambassador Garry Lyon said the Code was a great opportunity for sporting clubs to take a stronger stance against poor behaviour at community sport.

"Having been involved in all levels of football from the elite level to local junior competition, I've not only seen the great enjoyment and experiences people get from sport, but also the lasting negative effects that poor behaviour on the sidelines can have on everyone involved, from kids playing on weekends, to adults coaching and on our all important officials," Mr Lyon said.

"It only takes the actions of one person off the field to ruin the experience for everyone else, and in some cases turn them away from sport forever.

"I encourage clubs to get behind the code, help remove the negative elements and help make our kids and community sport the positive and enjoyable experience that it should be."

Under the Code of Conduct, which was developed with Victoria's peak sporting associations, breaches will include:

- Violent, abusive behaviour or vilification of any kind towards another person;
- Discrimination against another person based on their age, gender, sexual orientation, race, culture, religion or any other irrelevant personal characteristic;
- Sexual harassment or intimidation of another person;
- Victimisation of another person for exercising their rights through the Code; and
- A failure to maintain a safe environment.

State Sporting Associations and clubs will now have the responsibility of adhering to and enforcing the Code through sport specific penalties.

Associations and clubs that don't address breaches of the Code will not be eligible for funding from Sport and Recreation Victoria and will run the risk of losing any existing funding.

Over the past decade the Victorian Government has provided more than \$210 million in funding to local clubs. The campaign, which will begin immediately, will also include a television advertisement set to air later in the year.

For more information about the *Victorian Code of Conduct for Community Sport* visit www.sport.vic.gov.au/codeofconduct