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LDC affiliation with Smart Connection Company

LDC is pleased to announce its affiliation with the Smart Connection Company commencing with our partnership on the development of the Mornington Peninsula Shire's *Sporting Access for Everyone (SAFE) All Access Participation Strategy*.

The Company specialises in providing consultancy advice and training support in the areas of leisure planning, facility management, contract management, leisure facility service planning and performance review, and wellbeing.

The affiliation between LDC and Smart Connection Company enables us to combine our respective expertise in social planning and sport and recreation to work in partnership on health and wellbeing planning using a holistic approach.

Leisure has over the past few years expanded to include many aspects of people's lifestyle. Active (although not necessarily competitive) leisure activities have significantly increased. At the same



Royal Domain Centre
Level 11, 380 St Kilda Road, VIC, 3004

T: 03 9941 3160, F: 03 9941 3163
www.smartconnection.com.au

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time, there has been a move away from many of the more traditional competitive and spectator sports and this active leisure is often occurring in an unstructured and non-organised manner.

The implications of these trends need to be considered as they have significant links to the demand and use of formal leisure facilities and program delivery. The links between passive recreation and health suggests that considerable benefit (both social and economic - through health care savings) could accrue from investing in the promotion of participation in physical activity. Benefits of participation can be categorised into:

- 'Physiological', and
- 'Psychological'.

The **physiological** (or physical) benefits of regular walking and regular aerobic exercise for example are well documented. While many of these benefits of exercise may not be attributed to all leisure behaviour, many people purposely exercise during their leisure time, and physical activity is required of many unstructured recreational activities which are undertaken for purposes other than physical fitness. That is, exercise can be classed as both:

- Deliberate: referring to an activity undertaken for the purpose of exercise, e.g. sporting activities, cycling, going for a walk, or
- Incidental: referring to exercise that occurs while doing something else, e.g. walking or cycling to

work, gardening, walking to the shops, or physical activity during social activities.

While these physiological benefits accrue mostly to individuals, society can also benefit from individuals who are healthier mentally and physically with open space design and infrastructure either positively or negatively enhancing opportunity.

The Department of Human Services (1999) State Physical Activity Survey indicated that 53% of Victorians are not active enough to provide a benefit to their health. The survey went on to state that physical activity plays a significant role in disease prevention, particularly relating to high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and some forms of cancer. Physical activity ranks second after tobacco control in importance as a disease prevention strategy. Hence, increases in community levels of physical activity are likely to have a major impact on the health care system with the associated social and cost benefits.

The **psychological** benefits that are known or thought to be attributed to leisure activity have also been well researched. The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association conducted a study into the benefits of leisure, culture and open space provision to personal, social, economic and environmental well-being in 1997 and identified the following potential benefits of leisure, culture and open space provision:

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- Contributes to mental health
- Builds self esteem and positive self image
- Enhances life satisfaction levels
- Enhances perceived quality of life
- Builds pride in a community
- Assists people in understanding their neighbours, their history and their environment
- Teaches motor and social skills, creativity and intellectual capacity
- Reduces self-destructive behaviours and negative social activity
- Builds families and communities
- Stimulates participation in community life
- Builds strong self-sufficient communities
- Produces leaders
- Reduces isolation, loneliness and alienation

While there is less scientific evidence about these psychological benefits than for physiological factors, there is considerable belief not only that these benefits exist but that they are quite pervasive and help promote and maintain characteristics that considerably enhance an individual's ability to function in and contribute to society at large.

Furthermore, evidence appears to be mounting which indicates that systems of social support and companionship contribute to longer and higher quality of life. Certainly many of these systems are dependent on the availability of facilities for recreational opportunities.

The Mornington Peninsula Shire's Sporting Access for Everyone (SAFE) All Access Participation Strategy

The Mornington Peninsula Shire's *Sporting Access for Everyone (SAFE) All Access Participation Strategy* project will review and assess the current levels of service provision, identify constraints, unmet needs and future opportunities for action for people who experience some cultural, physical or other barrier to sport and recreation participation. In addition, recommendations for key areas of action will be provided to guide Council's involvement in providing appropriate participation opportunities for residents, workers and visitors to the Shire from the nominated population groups of:

- People with physical and intellectual disabilities
- Older adults
- People from indigenous backgrounds
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Special target groups (eg. obesity and type 2 diabetes), and
- Non-traditional participants in physical activity

If you would like to find out more about the *SAFE Strategy* please contact:

Liz Dimitriadis
E: liz@ldc.net.au

Melissa Rathje
E: melissar@smartconnection.com.au

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SERMRC Southern Region CALD Disability Plan

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics:

- 5.6% of Victorians with a disability were born overseas
- 1.9% of Victorians with a disability who were born overseas have a severe or profound disability (ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2003)

However it should be noted that estimates of the number of people with a disability from CALD backgrounds are calculated using mainly Country of Birth (rather than both Country of Birth and Language Other than English) and therefore it can be assumed that the true CALD population with a disability in Victoria is probably larger than the estimate provided (Department of Human Services Disability Services Division 2004).

Disability Services data on people with a disability from CALD who access disability supports is collected through the DHS Quarterly Data Collection (QDC) process. Data collected under the QDC reflects 'Country of birth,' 'Main languages spoken at home', and 'Need for interpreter services'. The general figures according to QDC for 2004-05 are that:

- Clients from CALD backgrounds that accessed disability supports in 2004-05 across Victoria totaled approximately 4,415 or 8% of the total number of 62,216 people with a disability using disability support services. This estimate includes people who speak a language other than English (LOTE) and/or were born overseas.

The development of the Southern region CALD Disability Plan commenced in July 2005 and is due to be completed in December 2005. A discussion paper is currently being distributed to disability support providers in the Southern Metropolitan Region summarising the key findings of research

and outcomes of workshops. *Good practices* have also been identified and include:

- Including quality improvement initiatives relating to services for CALD clients in organisational strategic work plans and reviews
- Establishing processes for identifying the benefits to clients resulting from changes in service delivery to better meet their specific needs
- Planning and researching how to meet individuals cultural and linguistic needs including CALD community profiles
- Creating programs specifically for groups of clients from the same CALD background
- Creating opportunities for people to connect with an celebrate their cultural heritage
- Employing bilingual workers and working with interpreters
- Ensuring staff capabilities through staff training and development
- Developing policies including communication procedures and client involvement in decision-making processes

The final workshop to develop the SMR CALD Disability Plan is on **Thursday 17 November** and research.

If you would like to find out more about the project please contact Liz Dimitriadis from LDC, or Jacob Lee, Aged & Disability Manager of the SERMRC, *Tel: 9706 8933, Fax: 9706 8830, Website: www.sermrc.org.au*

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