



MEDIA RELEASE

Record Number Of Schools Put Their Best Foot Forward

22/11/17

Over 2000 students from 15 local Primary schools took part in Vic Health's Walk to School month during October this year. Together students completed a grand total of 27,230 trips to and from school throughout the month. This is the highest participation rate for the Mildura region to date.

A highlight of this year's initiative was the launch of the Drop and Stride zones at Mildura South Primary School. Drop and Stride zones are designated areas a short walk from the school grounds which are safe spaces for parents to drop off or pick up their children. The children then walk, ride or scoot the short distance to or from school with their friends. They are the fourth school in the Mildura region to adopt the program to help children get the daily physical activity they need along with other benefits such as reducing traffic congestion, parking difficulties and the associated safety risks during peak drop off and pick up times at schools.

"By participating in initiatives like Walk to School we are encouraging students to develop healthy habits early in life which can shape children's ability to be independently active. By moving more and sitting less we can all contribute to improving our physical and mental health and wellbeing as individuals, and deliver a range of other benefits for the wider community" said Principal Debbie Chandler of Mildura South Primary School.

Healthy Together Mildura will again be inviting a further 2 local Primary schools to adopt a Drop and Stride program in 2018. "We look forward to encouraging more students to embrace active travel and to continue the healthy habits learnt during this year's initiative to set them up for a lifetime of good health. Only one in five children aged 5-17 gets the recommended amount of physical activity every day so it's important we work together as a community to try and turn those statistics around," said Rachael Longeri, Health Promotion Officer from Healthy Together Mildura.

In addition to the Drop and Stride programs, the remainder of the funding from VicHealth for this year's Walk to School month will be shared between the top 3 schools with the highest percentage of the student population that participated in the initiative, to go toward holding a Bike Education program delivered in their school by Wild Side Outdoors. Every other school will receive a classroom set of gift vouchers to Inflatable World as a participation incentive. The winning schools will be announced via the Healthy Together Mildura Facebook page on November 24^h.

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