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MEDIA RELEASE

Keep sport safe and clean this summer, government agencies warn

As parents enrol their children in local teams and the ranks of community sports clubs again swell with adults registering to play their favourite summer sport, government sporting and anti-discrimination agencies around Australia are calling on parents, coaches and administrators at the club level to remember the basic rules of fairplay and support so that community sporting experiences can be enjoyable, safe and free of bad behaviour.

The 19 agencies, who have formed an unprecedented collaboration in matters to do with child protection, anti-harrasment and anti-discrimination in sport under the banner of *Play By The Rules* (www.playbytherules.net.au), reinforce that bad behaviour is not an option for community or junior sport, and should be rapidly dealt with by clubs.

The Executive Director of Sport and Recreation in the Northern Territory and co-chair of *Play by the Rules*, Steve Rossingh, said that recent brawls on the sidelines of some junior sport matches show that a culture of aggression and bad behaviour by spectators – including parents – is not being dealt with early and promptly by clubs, and that they have a legal responsibility to do so.

“It’s the responsibility of clubs everywhere to create safe, welcoming and inclusive environments for their players. That includes ensuring that coaches know they need to be respectful of their teams, that players support each other and that parents are educated about what is appropriate behaviour on the sporting field when they’re watching their kids”, Rossingh said.

“Clubs need to take their responsibilities in this regard very seriously and accept the information and support that’s offered to them by initiatives such as *Play by the Rules*. Sport is a fantastic, joyful and important part of life, but it really is just a game. Sometimes people forget that, and the game of sport can turn ugly. That kind of culture needs to be stamped out before it begins”.

Play By The Rules (www.playbytherules.net.au) offers online training, information and resources for clubs and sporting organisations to ensure everyone involved in sport can do so in enjoyable, safe environments, free from discrimination or harassment.

Play by the Rules is a unique partnership between the Australian Sports Commission, Australian Human Rights Commission, all state and territory sport and recreation and anti-discrimination agencies and the Queensland Commission for Children, Young People and Child Guardian.

- Ends -

For more information contact Barbara Walsh on 0409 985 600

.../2 *Top Tips for Keeping Sport Safe* following

Top tips to make your child's sport safe, fair and fun
From playbytherules.net.au

- Always support your child, no matter how well they do. Yelling and using bad language is just not on.
- Let the coach do the coaching. If you disagree, have a quiet talk with him or her away from the kids.
- Respect officials' decisions. Many of them are learning and need some support
- Check out your club, and make sure they've got policies about no bullying, anti-discrimination and child protection. Every club should have these.
- Offer to help, if you can. Your child will love you being involved.
- Thank coaches and officials after the game. Most of them are volunteers and appreciate their efforts being recognised.
- Remember, relax - it's just a game. It's supposed to be fun – for everyone.