



John Della Bosca MLC
Minister for Health
Minister for the Central Coast
Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

*****EMBARGOED until 6am Sunday 22 February 2009*****

New healthy weight coaching service

NSW Minister for Health, John Della Bosca, today launched the *NSW Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service*, a new tool to help tackle the rising numbers of overweight and obese people in NSW.

The \$3 million dollar program is a free telephone and web based service which is the first of its kind in Australia.

“This new concept shows NSW leading the way in the fight against obesity, which now affects more than 1.6 million adults across the State,” Mr Della Bosca said.

“The telephone line and internet service provides callers with simple information and ongoing support to help them lose weight by adopting healthy eating habits and exercising regularly.

“People who register with the telephone service will be given up to 10 individually tailored sessions over six months – aimed at changing their day to day habits.”

The *NSW Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service* will be staffed by health coaches who are qualified as dietitians, exercise physiologists, psychologists and nurses and will go live tomorrow (Monday, 23rd February).

The development of the Service is based on the highly successful Quitline model for smokers, which has helped thousands of people quit the habit and start leading healthier lives.

“This is the first service of its kind in the country and the Rees Government has committed \$3 million to fund the telephone and internet service until the end of 2010.

“It’s important we try different ways of reducing the obesity epidemic, and we’re confident this helpline will give people the knowledge and confidence to reach their healthy weight.”

A personal qualified health coach will support service users to develop health goals, create an action plan, maintain motivation, identify problem areas and create solutions for successful lifestyle change.

“People can also receive emails and other reminders, and a website will also be available to help people navigate the journey to getting healthier.

“We are all aware of the alarming figures regarding obesity and chronic disease in NSW,” Mr Della Bosca said.

“In NSW, 34 per cent of the adult population are overweight. Beyond the obvious health problems linked to obesity, including heart disease and Type 2 diabetes, there is a massive financial burden on our hospitals - estimated at \$19 million in 2008¹.

“So for those members of the community who need some information, advice, or support, I challenge them to take the first step. Pick up the phone tomorrow and begin the Get Healthy journey to become more healthy and active.”

The Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service will operate during extended hours between Monday and Friday, 8am until 8pm.

People can access Get Healthy by calling **1300 806 258** – a number which can be called from any NSW fixed landline for the cost of a local call –or by visiting www.gethealthynsw.com.au from **Monday 23rd February**.

¹ Access Economics