



**18 August 2009**

## **New parenting program to help reduce childhood obesity**

Minister for Health, John Della Bosca, today announced the first phase of a new trial designed to reduce childhood obesity.

Mr Della Bosca said the \$1.1 million NSW Parenting Program will encourage children and parents to work together to change unhealthy lifestyle habits.

“Reducing childhood obesity is a key priority for the NSW Government, with almost 25 percent of the State’s children overweight or obese,” the Minister said.

“The free program will be trialled in Dubbo, Queanbeyan and Broken Hill and will aim to deliver sustained improvements in the diets, fitness levels and overall health of families.

“This practical and fun program inspires children aged between seven and 13 and their parents, or carers, to adopt a healthier lifestyle, to improve children’s fitness, nutrition and self esteem.

“Not only will families improve their overall health, but the program will also see children develop their personal skills, through communication and teamwork.

“The program involves children and their parents, or carers, taking part in a two-hour session twice a week for ten weeks over the school term.

“A comprehensive independent evaluation of the program will be undertaken, including the program’s impact and outcomes. These results will inform future rollout of the program across the State,” Mr Della Bosca said.

The program uses practical and interactive learning to teach children and parents weight management skills, including:

- Preparation and enjoyment of nutritious foods;
- Healthy shopping on a budget; and
- Making exercise fun, particularly for children who don’t enjoy school sports.

“Preventative programs are crucial in avoiding chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease and they help people enjoy a better quality of life,” the Minister said.

“In the longer term they also help take the pressure off our hard-working doctors and nurses because making healthy lifestyle choices will prevent hospitalisation.

“This trial complements a number of existing NSW Government obesity programs for younger people including *Munch and Move* which encourage healthy eating and increased physical activity among preschool-aged children,” Mr Della Bosca added.