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EARLY HEATWAVE ELEVATES RISK FOR SPORT AND EXERCISE

With the State in the grip of an unprecedented heatwave, sporting groups are being encouraged to implement their heat policies and let participants know about any cancellations as soon as possible.

Minister for Recreation and Sport, Michael Wright, said the forecast of sustained temperatures above 35 degrees this early in the season increases the risk of heat related illness.

“At this time of year, people are not yet acclimatised to the heat. People participating in exercise and physical activity outdoors or indoors without air conditioning may not be able to cope with the heat in the way they expect.”

“There are some measures you can take to reduce the impact of the heat, but most importantly, pay attention to what your body is telling you and stop exercising immediately if you are feeling unwell,” Minister Wright said.

The Office for Recreation and Sport in conjunction with Sports Medicine Australia - SA Branch, has developed Hot Weather Guidelines, and assisted clubs and associations to develop and implement policies to protect their participants over the years”.

Sports Medicine Australia advises participants in sport and physical activity to take common sense precautions to avoid needing to seek medical attention due to heat related illness.

Sporting organisations and people exercising are encouraged to modify their activity schedule. This could be achieved by:

- Diversifying training – train under air conditioning, in a pool, or at the beach.
- Changing the schedule – avoid the heat of the day, swap to early morning or evening.
- Being flexible – reduce game time, introduce breaks or consider postponing, particularly for juniors.

All participants, including coaches, officials, sports trainers, referees and umpires must ensure they are adequately hydrated:

- Drink about two cups of water prior to exercise.
- Continue drinking during activity.
- After exercise, continue to drink to ensure you are rehydrated, but not over hydrated.
- Don't rely on your level of thirst – this is a poor indicator of fluid needs.

For more information:

Sports Medicine Australia SA Branch www.smasa.asn.au

Bureau of Meteorology www.bom.gov.au