



# Media Release

From Victorian Canine Association Inc  
trading as DOGS Victoria

January 2008

## People, Pets and Health

Following up on the recent *Pets, People and Planning Symposium* at Deakin University, DOGS Victoria President Doug Ford explained, "These eminent health experts have announced what we've always known: People with dogs are physically, emotionally and mentally healthier than those without."

Mr Ford specifically referred to several presentations of interest to DOGS Victoria members, and Victorian dog owners in general:

Dr Jo Salmon of Deakin University's School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences looked specifically at young children and families in this study. As childhood obesity increases and their physical activity decreases, this is a very important finding.

Her study showed that children who owned a dog spent more time in what she calls "moderate- to vigorous-intensity" physical activity. The results were particularly true for young girls (study included ages 5-6 and 10-12 year-olds) and their mothers were more physically active as well.

"Many of our members have young children," Mr Ford said, "Not only is this a great way for them to get exercise, but to spend supervised time with the family pet, which is important for the development of a positive relationship between dog and child."

Dr Lisa wood of The University of Western Australia's School of Population Health indicated that dog walking increased people's social interaction with the community, including other people with dogs as well as those without.

"Lack of community interaction can lead to poor social support, loneliness and isolation." Mr Ford said, "Simply walking your dog around the neighbourhood can help enhance the mental and emotional health of the whole community."

Haley Cutt, also from The University of Western Australia's School of Population Health, presented another study on dogs and physical health. These findings showed that dog owners walked more per week than non-owners. However, Ms Cutt's study also showed that 60% of dog owners report they don't walk with their dog.

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**A DOGS Victoria representative can be made available for interviews on a variety of topics including training tips, choosing the right dog, and general dog information.**



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“Considering all the benefits of a simple walk for you, your dog and your family,” Mr Ford said to DOGS Victoria members, “I would like to remind everyone with a dog to walk regularly in their local park. And don’t forget you can use the dog-friendly facilities in KCC Park, Skye, including on-leash walking space, off-leash play areas and a lake for doggy swimming.”

This park is open to any members of DOGS Victoria or the Companion Dog Club.

Visit [www.dogsvictoria.com.au](http://www.dogsvictoria.com.au) for more information on the different levels of memberships offered as well as a detailed map of the KCC Park facilities.

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