

The following article was printed in the Diamond Valley Leader (page 14) August 23, 2006

Walk, and talk, for health

I was honoured to carry the Queen's Baton relay through Hurstbridge in the lead up to the Melbourne Commonwealth Games. This was particularly pleasing as I was a community representative chosen through the local committee. As well as having a long history of professional and volunteer involvement in sport (with a passion for women's sport) and education I was nominated by one of my daughters as a healthy role model for older women. Not that I see myself as an older woman! As I tell my four children and husband, I feel and act like I am still 21!

However, the hair is now turning white, the wrinkles are getting deeper and the body is starting to get a few odd aches at times. Mind you I play basketball twice a week and participate in body balance, pump and fitball classes at the Diamond Greek gym, all activities I positively enjoy. A mixture of an active lifestyle, organised sporting activities and fitness classes keeps me fit and healthy.

However, most of us need to include more regular exercise into our daily lives by changing how we live from day to day, so that we incorporate more physical activity into our routines. Walk or bicycle rather than use the car, get off the train/bus a stop earlier and walk, do your own garden and cleaning rather than pay someone else, grow your own fruit and vegetables and get triple benefits of good food, exercise and save money, keep a few chooks and likewise get triple benefits, walk the dog every day and so on. One of my best tips to save water and exercise is to keep a plastic bucket in the kitchen sink to collect all kitchen water and when nearly full carry outside (resistance training) and water the garden.

Explore your local area and you will be surprised what hidden jewels you may find when you start walking further into your suburb or rural area. I don't have to go too far as I have such a jewel across the road in a nature reserve, where I head every afternoon with my two Labradors and neighbours/anyone else who is visiting. Walking and talking is a great way to socialise and exercise. So look up your street directory and head off for an excursion into the scenic wilds of your neighbourhood and you too may be surprised at what you discover around the corner, a few blocks away or even 30 minutes away! Enjoy.

Janice Crosswhite, President of the Australian Womensport and Recreation Association and a member of the Sport and Recreation Advisory Committee for Nillumbik Shire Council.