



## Media Release

### **FREE WEBSITE CUTS TONNES FROM AUSTRALIAN WAISTLINES**

Sydney, Australia, July 27, 2006 – A free Australian website is helping people who want to lose weight and be more healthy. Mikibo, which launched last December, has thousands of members in 37 countries across 6 continents, and its members are seeing results. Since launch Mikibo's Australian members have lost more than 5 tonnes of body weight.

Mikibo's key features are food and exercise diaries, exercise plans and support groups. By tracking their eating and exercise habits, members are able to see what they are doing right and where they could improve. Mikibo founder Dr Toby Heap says that Mikibo is an educational experience for its members. "By keeping a food diary members quickly learn which foods are causing problems, and which foods are not. Most people get a shock when they record their food intake for the first time" says Heap.

The World Health Organisation has stated that obesity has reached epidemic proportions globally. There are more than a billion overweight people in the world and at least 300 million are obese.<sup>1</sup>

In Australia, over 60% of the adult (over 25 years) population are overweight and 1 in every 5 (21%) Australians over the age of 25 are obese. This means there are now more than 2 million obese Australians, which is twice the rate seen in 1980. The average woman weighs nearly 5kg (4.8kg) more than her counterpart in 1980.<sup>2</sup>

Being overweight increases the likelihood of death and illness from conditions such as: type two diabetes, sleep apnoea, osteoarthritis, psychological problems and reproductive problems.<sup>3</sup>

While genetic and environmental factors play a role, the main cause of obesity is an imbalance between energy intake (food and drink) and energy expenditure (exercise and metabolism). This energy imbalance is caused by an increased consumption of more energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods and reduced physical activity.<sup>4</sup> Australians consume a lot of high-energy foods that are low in nutritional value such as soft drinks. In fact for the last 13 years Coca-Cola has been the top selling grocery food brand in Australia.<sup>5</sup>

The shift towards less physically demanding work, increased use of cars and public transport and more passive leisure activities means that average energy requirements are falling. If our energy requirements are lower this means that we have to increase the

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization, [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

<sup>2</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, [www.aihm.gov.au](http://www.aihm.gov.au)

<sup>3</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, [www.aihm.gov.au](http://www.aihm.gov.au)

<sup>4</sup> World Health Organization, [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

<sup>5</sup> AC Nielsen, [www.acnielsen.com.au](http://www.acnielsen.com.au)



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proportion of fresh fruit and vegetables in our diet if we want to continue getting the same level of micronutrients (vitamins and minerals). Mikibo helps members to see if they are getting the recommended intake of micronutrients, such as calcium and iron, and warns members if they are having too much saturated fat or if their diet is high in cholesterol or sodium.

Mikibo was started by Dr Toby Heap who has a PhD in exercise physiology from the University of Sydney. As an athlete who was keeping food and exercise diaries he saw an opportunity to use technology to assist people to improve their health and fitness. "Keeping a food diary is a very repetitive process that involves a lot of adding up daily totals. It struck me that this was a perfect application for the Internet" says Heap.

Mikibo aims to empower members to lead more healthy lives. "We are providing our members with the tools and information they need so that they can improve their health and fitness through a sensible approach to nutrition and exercise" says Heap.

Unlike other weight loss and fitness services Mikibo is free to join. To become a member of Mikibo people can visit [www.mikibo.com](http://www.mikibo.com).

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## **Mikibo Pty Ltd**

Founded in 2005 and headquartered in Sydney, Australia, Mikibo Pty Ltd (ABN 41 116 196 000) operates the health and fitness web site [www.mikibo.com](http://www.mikibo.com).

Mikibo is a new and exciting online health and fitness concept. The scientifically developed site offers members a range of tools to assist with building fitness, losing weight or simply making more educated food choices. Mikibo has a food database with over 20,000 foods that is growing daily.

Members of Mikibo are able to record every detail of their diets and exercise training. Mikibo has training programs and groups tailored to specific goals, such as weight loss and running, where members can discuss their experiences, ask each other questions and ask questions of Mikibo's experts.

More information about Mikibo is available at [www.mikibo.com/press](http://www.mikibo.com/press) or email [press@mikibo.com](mailto:press@mikibo.com) to arrange an interview.