



Archived at the Flinders Academic Commons:
<http://hdl.handle.net/2328/27231>

This is a scan of a document number DUN/Speeches/2058
in the Dunstan Collection, Special Collections, Flinders University Library.
<http://www.flinders.edu.au/library/info/collections/special/dunstan/>

Title:
Speech opening 'Fitness Australia' week

Please acknowledge the source as:
Dunstan Collection, Flinders University Library.
Identifier: DUN/Speeches/2058

© Copyright Estate Donald Allan Dunstan

ADELAIDE. 14.3.74

Dr McKay, Mr Simpson, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you very much for inviting me here today.

Perhaps it's because more of us live in or near big cities than any other country and never walk when we can drive or be driven that explains our appalling general standard of physical fitness. We like to think of ourselves as sunbronzed athletes beaming healthily against a back drop of international sporting trophies: in fact as a nation we tend to be pale, flabby and out of breath. We don't even know properly how unfit we are. National Fitness officials know we lag - or sag - behind comparable North American or Scandinavian countries. But lacking proper statistics it's a matter of conjecture just how bad we are.

This Institute is working to remedy that situation - a task that is necessary and valuable.

The Institute will take a leading part in the "Fitness Australia" campaign.

People will be asked to come forward to be weighed and to perform a simple step test which lasts only a couple of minutes. After this their pulses will be taken and a fitness rating assessed. If below standard, they will be advised to go to the National Fitness Council of South Australia for help with a controlled series of exercises and dietary advice to correct their conditions. I want to stress the need for attention to diet in improving health and fitness.

It is obviously little good taking up walking, jogging or swimming if you're going to eat too much or eat the wrong things. Drinking too much is worse still and smoking as well is just daft. It's important to get moving, to walk that little extra or climb that extra stair, to get the cardio-vascular system into gear. But it's equally important for people to understand basic nutrition and to realise what an excess of carbohydrates and cigarette tars can lead to. That knowledge and the uncovering of the physically unfit from the 1,000 or so people who are expected to pass through the test centre will be the focal points of this campaign.

After being tested, the unfit ones will at least have a chance to do something about the state of their physical health before it is too late.

It's a sensible, practical program that could very easily result in hundreds of South Australians feeling much better, enjoying life more and enjoying it for longer.

It's well organised; it deserves to succeed. I hope it does.