



PRESS RELEASE

3 April 2007 (For Immediate Release)

Landmine Action Week

Theme: **"Playing Fields Not Minefields"**
Where: Martin Place, Sydney
When: 7.00am-9.00am Wednesday April 4th 2007
Aim: **Alert the public** on the dangers for people in landmine affected zones
Raise funds to clear an area of land the size of Martin Place of mines
Celebrate Australia's global contribution to mine action

Olympians Race to Clear Martin Place of 'Landmines'

Michael Milton AM (Australia's fastest skier) will challenge the **Hon Greg Hunt**, (the Australian Government's Special Representative on Mine Action), **Shaun Boyle** (Australia's fastest Skeleton Racer), school groups and corporate teams to experience a mock landmine zone and compete in a perilous obstacle race to launch Landmine Action Week. The Federal Government will make a major announcement at 8:30 am.

Martin Place will be marked with **red balloons** and **Danger! Mines!** signs. "De-miners" will demonstrate their work in flack jackets with land mine detectors. School children will sidestep **mock mines**, use skipping ropes, hoops, and negotiate a "jungle track" and logs to get to the finish line safely. **Loud explosions** echoing through Martin Place will mean someone has been unlucky enough to step on a mine. Every year, landmines cause an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 preventable casualties.

Young Cambodian dancers from the Khemara Antkor Dance group, Afro Peruvian dancers Brisas Del Peru and Colombian band, The Oscar Jimenez Quartet, will entertain the public.

"Playing Fields Not Minefields" is an Austcare campaign involving the Australian community in activities to support our global work in mine action. It connects with Australians' love of sport and freedom. It inspires people to give generously to people in countries like Cambodia who cannot enjoy the simple pleasures of playing safely.

Easter is the perfect time to engage and alert the public to the perils of living in landmine affected areas. Thousands of Easter eggs are supplied by Darrell Lea for participants. Hot cross buns from Tip Top and coffee from Café Express are on sale with all proceeds going to Austcare's Mine Action program.

ANZ branches around the country will take donations for the campaign throughout April, or call 1300 66 66 72, or visit www.austcare.org.au

ENDS – See below for quotes.

Media please note: For further information, visuals, or interviews please contact:
Nadine Torney
M: 0423 653 613; T: (02) 9565 9153
ntorney@austcare.org.au
www.austcare.org.au

QUOTES

The Hon Greg Hunt MP (Australian Government Special Representative on Mine Action & Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs)

"Landmines are a scourge on many of the poorest and most vulnerable people in our world, people who were victims of war and are now victims of a war that never ends until the landmines are cleared."

Michael Milton AM

"There are around half a million people around the world who have survived a landmine accident – and most of them live in poorer countries," says Michael Milton, Austcare Ambassador for People with Disabilities.

"We need to ensure survivors not lucky enough to be in a country like Australia, receive the support they need to live in dignity and enjoy their basic rights."

Shaun Boyle

Olympic Skeleton racer Shaun Boyle says "As a kid I remember how important playing was to me. I wanted to be an Olympian from a young age. Without playing fields or parks to play in as a child I would not have had the opportunity to develop as an athlete."

"The Olympic movement is based around equal opportunity and fair play," says Shaun. "I am proud to be able to do my part to help give children the opportunity I had as a kid - to just play."