

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

DATE: MONDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2009

ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Michelle O'Byrne launches Launceston's roller derby

Tasmanian Minister for Sport and Recreation, Michelle O'Byrne, will officially launch first Tasmania's roller derby league **tomorrow** (February 23) - then don some skates and try out the sport for herself.

Flat track roller derby is an all-female roller skating contact sport, revived and modernised in the US in 2001. A group of passionate Tasmanian women recently established this State's first roller derby league, the Van Diemen Rollers.

The sport's success and popularity has meant leagues can now be found across the UK, Europe and mainland Australia.

Ms O'Byrne said it was good to see Active Launceston supporting this new community sport initiative.

"This is a great way to ensure we have sustainable physical activity opportunities for our community members in the future," she said.

The co-founders of the Van Diemen Rollers, Angela Offord and Phoebe Nimanis said current members do not participate in other forms of recreation but many have a past association with roller skating.

"While flat track roller derby has a strong focus on athleticism, it also creates an opportunity for self expression. Women can dress up and adopt a new name and alias," Phoebe said.

Phoebe's alias is Vala Volt and Angela's is Land Cruiser.

Special guest Betty Bamalam, founder and coach for the Victorian Roller Derby League will attend tomorrow's launch, and lead a two day training event at the Mowbray Indoor Sport 'n' Skate rink, to be held on February 24th & 25th between 10.30am and 3.30pm.

Members of the public are invited to attend; entry to roller skate with the Van Diemen Rollers is \$7.

The League will also host an information evening and demonstration on Friday 27th February at Mowbray Indoor Sport 'n' Skate from 5pm onwards. Members of the public are invited to find out more about this new sport in Launceston. For more information on this session please contact *Land Cruiser* on 0409 319 405 or 6391 9277.

The Van Diemen Rollers is endorsed by *Active Launceston*, a community project which aims to improve health and wellbeing of the people of Launceston through increased participation in physical activity.

The project is lead by the University of Tasmania with support from the Launceston City Council, the Education Department, The Examiner newspaper and the Trim and Fitness International Sports for All Association.

**For more information contact: Angela Offord, ph. 391 9277 or
Lucy Marshall, Active Launceston**

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