

MEDIA INVITE AND RELEASE: Embargoed 10am Wednesday February 19, 2020



## Launch of National Eating Disorder Recommendations for the Fitness Industry

InsideOut Institute for Eating Disorders and peak industry association Fitness Australia are today (Wednesday February 19, 10am) co-launching new national recommendations for the identification and support of those living with eating disorders in the fitness industry.

*Eating Disorders: Recommendations for the Fitness Industry* has been developed to help fitness businesses and exercise professionals work effectively with people who have an eating disorder, exercise disorder or muscle dysmorphia.

Federal Minister for Sport and Youth The Hon **Richard Colbeck** will speak at the launch, alongside Australian cricketer **Sarah Coyte**, who lived with an eating disorder through her elite sporting career.

### WHO

Federal Minister for Sport and Youth, The Hon Richard Colbeck  
Australian cricketer and eating disorder survivor, Sarah Coyte  
InsideOut Institute Director and Clinical Psychologist, Dr Sarah Maguire  
Fitness Australia Chief Executive Officer, Barrie Elvish

### WHEN

9.45am  
Wednesday 19 February, 2020

### WHERE

Charles Perkins Centre  
Building D17, John Hopkins Drive (off Missenden Road)  
The University of Sydney

### MEDIA RSVPS, ENQUIRIES & PARKING:

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## **Launch of National Eating Disorder Recommendations for the Fitness Industry**

**InsideOut Institute for Eating Disorders and peak industry association Fitness Australia are today (Wednesday February 19, 10am) co-launching new recommendations for the identification and support of those living with eating disorders in the fitness industry in Australia.**

**Eating disorders have low detection and intervention rates. Gyms and fitness clubs are at-risk settings for the presentation of eating and exercise disorders and, as such, present an opportunity to increase identification.**

*Eating Disorders: Recommendations for the Fitness Industry* has been developed to help fitness businesses and exercise professionals work effectively with people who have an eating disorder, exercise disorder or muscle dysmorphia.

The recommendations have been written and reviewed by a team of experienced mental health, medical and fitness professionals, as well as researchers and policy experts.

“Gyms and fitness facilities are one of the most important commercial settings for the identification of eating disorders and early intervention,” says Dr Sarah Maguire, Director of InsideOut Institute. InsideOut is a collaboration between University of Sydney’s Charles Perkins Centre and Sydney Local Health District.

“Eating disorders frequently present within the fitness industry. They have a high prevalence among sports people, have high mortality rates, and can pose a significant issue for professionals who are not necessarily trained in the management of this illness group,” says Dr Maguire.

“Fitness professionals do not receive routine training in mental health first aid and need to be equipped with the skills to address these high prevalence disorders in their work settings.”

“People working in the fitness industry are really on the frontline when it comes to eating disorders. We are hopeful this set of recommendations can promote the early identification of eating disorders, and the sensitive and appropriate handling of people who present with symptoms.”

“We commend Fitness Australia for working with us to develop and implement these guidelines and for addressing this important health concern within their environment.”

Fitness Australia CEO Barrie Elvish says personal trainers, fitness instructors and fitness businesses managers have an important role to play when it comes to eating and exercise disorders.

“We want our Registered exercise professionals to have access to the best available training, including training on how to be part of the solution for people with eating disorders.”

“We always want them to be working within their scope of practice including knowing when and where to refer a client for medical review. Exercise professionals can also play a vital role in recovery, by working collaboratively with a treatment team.”

“Exercise professionals and fitness businesses can help reduce risk by having a positive approach to promoting physical activity and health - instead of one that focuses on guilt and shame around weight and shape.”

“We’d love to see these practical recommendations used in all fitness settings across Australia as an industry standard.”

Australian cricketer Sarah Coyte is a personal trainer with a lived experience of an eating disorder. Coyte has played in three Ashes series and four World Cups, and ranks among the best female bowlers in the world.

“I have struggled with an eating disorder since I was a teenager. It has stolen years of my life even when I was competing on the world stage.”

The eating disorder continued to worsen until Coyte had to step away from cricket for a season. Coyte has now returned to Domestic cricket and works as a fitness trainer at a Sydney gym.

“I still struggle with the eating disorder, but this year is the best year of cricket. I’m happier in everything I do. I’m eating pretty well and consistently, and my training has been good.”

“I know first-hand how hard it can be navigating the pressures of elite sport and the harm that an eating disorder can do. I over-trained and did not eat enough – I thought that’s what I had to do to perform at my best.”

She says that her lived experience of having an eating disorder informs the way she works.

“I check in with people who I think might be at risk, because I know that the earlier these things are picked up, the greater the chance of recovery.”

“These recommendations are an important guide for people working in fitness. They can help us to identify when there is a problem and know how and when to step in, what to do, and who to refer the client to.”

## **CONTACT**

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*The InsideOut Institute – a collaboration between Sydney Local Health District and the University of Sydney’s Charles Perkins Centre – aims to ensure every Australian living with an eating disorder has access to the best possible care by rethinking eating disorders from the ‘inside out’. Visit [insideoutinstitute.org.au](http://insideoutinstitute.org.au)*

*Fitness Australia is the national peak industry association here to get more Australians more active more often, through a professional workforce and high-quality services. We’re made up of almost 20,000 Registered Exercise Professionals, 3,500 fitness business members, 5,000 fitness student members, 200 CEC providers, 31 newly Quality Accredited businesses who are leading the way and an industry with almost 4 million active consumers. Visit [fitness.org.au](http://fitness.org.au)*