



Healthy ways to raise funds

By **Meg Sobey**

GONE are the days of students bringing home boxes of Cadbury Favourites to sell to family, friends and neighbours.

School fund-raisers have become healthier, with pupils collecting money ahead of sports activities or tree-planting days, instead of the traditional chocolate and lolly drives.

Earlier this year, students at Essendon Keilor College sought sponsorship before taking part in a Golden Circle school fun run.

The college's physical education co-ordinator, Julie Pilioglou, said the money collected had been used to buy televisions and cameras.

"It's an opportunity to raise some funds, which we put back into the school. It's also a way to get the students out into the community and let the community know what is happening in the school."

Ms Pilioglou said the school

preferred encouraging the students to get fit rather than eat junk food.

"Sure, everyone loves chocolate, but we are trying to get a message across that students need to be healthy.

"Students need to be physically fit and they can do it while having fun and doing something good for the school."

The Australian Medical Association's Victorian president, Doug Travis, said confectionery should not be a part of a child's education. "It is important for schools to get their nutritional environment right. Nearly a quarter of Australian children are still overweight. Our goal must be to reduce the levels of overweight and obesity among Australian children."

A State Education Department spokeswoman said it advised schools to consider healthy fund-raising activities.

Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals president

Brian Burgess said not selling lollies and chocolate made it more difficult for schools to raise funds for extra supplies, special programs and excursions.

"It does restrict the fund-raising somewhat, but it has to be balanced against healthy choices for kids."

Bernadette Hetherington, of healthy lifestyle advocacy group Parents Jury, said there were alternatives.

"It can be extremely difficult for parents to say no when there is a chocolate box with their name on.

"You often end up buying them yourself and having them in the lunch boxes, which is not healthy.

"There are 101 ways schools can be more creative with their fund-raising."

Another option was to request parents to pay a donation directly to the school instead of doing fund-raising, she said.