



School: Yarra Primary School

Date: 22/02/2010

Purpose: To launch Better Buddies in 2010

Activity: Buddy picnic



He's a tower of strength

BASKETBALLING giant Andrew Gaze was a towering sight at Richmond's Yarra Primary School last week.

The retired champion spent some time getting to know the students and spreading the anti-bullying message for National Buddy Week.

While Gaze admits his two-metre frame has never been a target for bullies, he said the problem was growing worse at Australian

schools.

"We see it in all environments and it's not necessarily isolated to the schoolyard, but nevertheless that's where it all starts and it can cause real problems," he said.

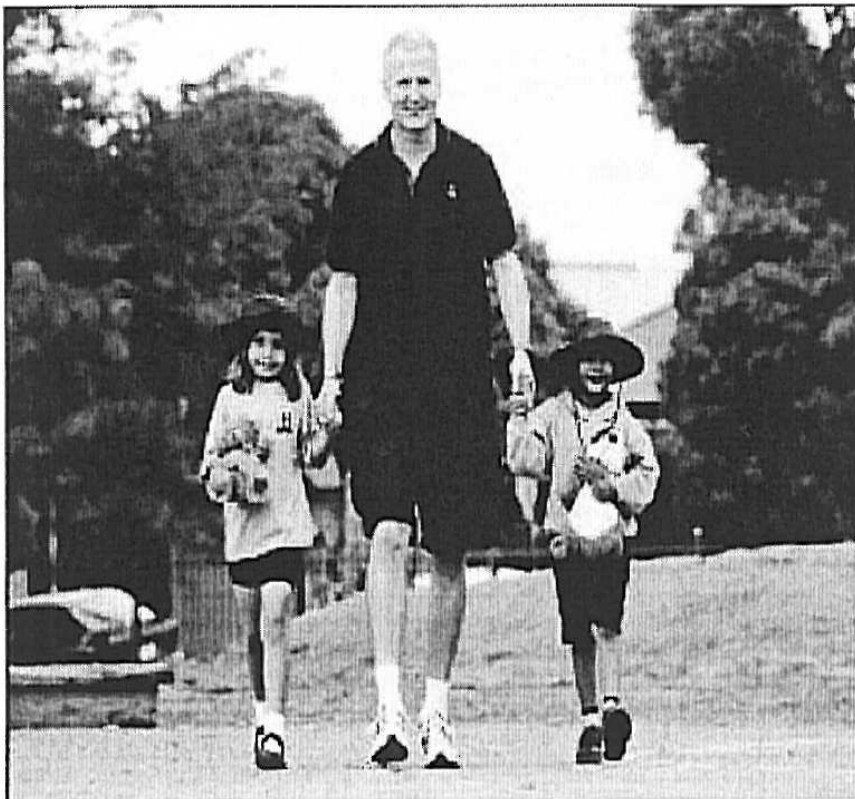
Gaze is one of a number of celebrities who visited schools last week to promote the Alannah and Madeline Foundation's Better Buddies program.

Under the program, prep students

are partnered with a grade 6 student who helps them negotiate the mine-fields of early school life.

'From what I've seen it's great in that the younger student benefits from the assistance and guidance from an experienced student, but it's also great for the buddy because they get a sense of responsibility and care,' he said.

Yarra Primary School principal Tracy Hammill agreed.



Andrew Gaze buddies up with Elly and Rithvik, both 5, at Yarra Primary School. N36ME303