

C4 Promoting walking

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Purpose

This module provides advice on a range of promotional campaigns and materials for encouraging people to walk.

Introduction

The primary requirements for effectively promoting any behaviour, including walking, relate to how a program is planned, delivered and evaluated. A program to promote walking and achieve sustainable change in behaviour should be well planned and the scope thoroughly defined to determine what the objectives of the program should be.

The implementation strategies should encompass a balance of interventions aimed at individuals and at the target population as a whole (see Figure C4-1). Evaluation of both the implementation process and program outcomes should be undertaken in such a way as to identify who among the target population have been reached and how, and what changes came about as a result of the program.

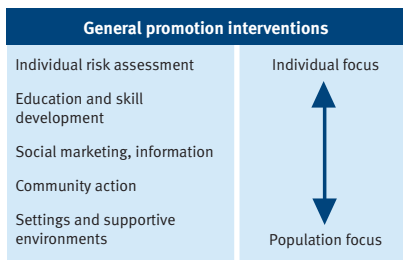


Figure C4-1
Individual and community-wide promotion strategies

This module highlights key considerations for developing, implementing and evaluating walking programs. It draws on the successes of existing walking programs to provide advice on developing promotional campaigns and materials for promoting walking:

- ▶ in urban areas
- ▶ in rural and regional areas
- ▶ for health
- ▶ as a form of transport.

C4.1 Program development

Improving walking facilities and prioritising walking in transport policy can encourage walking (this would come under 'Population focus' in Figure C4-1). Walking can also be promoted through measures aimed at influencing the attitudes and perceptions of local community members.

Scoping a program

Scoping identifies key issues of concern at an early stage of program planning. Consider the following factors when scoping a walking promotion program:

- ▶ existing pedestrian infrastructure
- ▶ area demographics
- ▶ pedestrian-automobile collision statistics
- ▶ information from and/or use of travel surveys and pedestrian questionnaires
- ▶ information about and from stakeholders (e.g. pedestrian groups)
- ▶ existing safety education and enforcement programs
- ▶ known or proposed road, site, park or trail projects affecting walking (Litman et al. 2002).

Information on area demographics derived from pedestrian questionnaires is especially important, as it allows a local community to be segmented into pedestrian groups whose members share similar characteristics. This segmentation allows walking promotion activities to be tailored to meet the needs and aspirations of the appropriate market segments.



Case study: Walking for Pleasure

Being an 89-year-old doesn't stop one Brisbane senior participating in a walking program. Age is irrelevant: just ask the *Walking for Pleasure* group, a self-funded seniors-focused walking group that operates in the suburbs of Brisbane (see Figure C4-2). With initial funding from the Brisbane City Council and the Queensland Council for Ageing, this active group meets every Saturday morning to walk. The route is decided by consensus and is often impromptu.

The small membership fee covers members' walks and insurance. A regular newsletter and promotion of the regular walking program are in the events section of the Brisbane City Council website. The group is also linked with the larger *Gonewalking* program operated by council (see http://www.gonewalking.com.au).

Other promotional elements include a contact telephone number and a program booklet. Regular activities and get-togethers also include breakfasts, sausage sizzles, camps, bus trips and extended trips.



Figure C4-2
A *Walking for Pleasure* group

Developing a program

The development of a successful walking promotion program can be broken into six stages (see Table C4-1).

Some broad market segments include:

- ▶ seniors (see the case study '*Walking for Pleasure*')
- ▶ children who are driven to school
- ▶ commuters who are driven to work or university
- ▶ retired people
- ▶ families
- ▶ people with mobility impairments

- ▶ members of particular ethnic communities
- ▶ Indigenous Australians
- ▶ shoppers
- ▶ dog owners
- ▶ stay-at-home parents with young children
- ▶ people wanting to change their travel behaviour
- ▶ economically disadvantaged people
- ▶ people with low levels of fitness.

The Institute of Highways and Transportation (2000) suggests that the key elements of a program aimed at promoting walking are:

- ▶ **Positive messages:** Depending on the target group, the benefits of walking that could be promoted include:
 - walking is a free and environmentally sound form of transport
 - walking is a good form of relaxation
 - walking promotes physical health and fitness
 - walking provides opportunities to meet people or spend time with people
 - walking provides opportunities to see interesting things in the neighbourhood.

Messages should be simple and easy for the target population to understand. They need to be realistic, and preferably fun. Messages should not overcomplicate walking by providing too much road safety information.

- ▶ **Incentives:** Possible incentives include:
 - individual health checks
 - devices that enable people to monitor their own health
 - gifts (such as T-shirts, shopping vouchers or certificates) and coffee or tea stops.
- ▶ **Overcoming perceived barriers:** Perceived barriers and ways to overcome them include:
 - barriers related to the physical environment: improve pedestrian facilities
 - perceptions that walking takes too long: provide information about pedestrian routes, making community members aware of the most direct routes to their destination (see module D4 *Signage and provision of information*)
 - concerns about personal safety: develop schemes that encourage people to walk together.

(See Module C1 *Planning to walk* for more information on identifying barriers.)

Table C4-1

Process for developing a walking promotion program

Six stages of development

Step 1: Be clear about what you are doing

Develop a clear rationale for the program and define program aims as well as some realistic, specific and measurable objectives.

Step 2: Identify your audience

This involves defining market segments. Some of the characteristics that may be used to define market segments include age, sex, occupation, access to a vehicle, physical fitness, home location and activity location. Market segments may also be characterised in terms of the type of walking that may be increased as a result of the program. (See module C1 *Planning to walk*, and A1.1 *Who walks and why* for information on some categories of walking and the reasons people walk.)

Step 3: Decide on priorities and refine objectives

Priorities should be determined according to the importance of encouraging walking amongst a particular market segment for a particular activity, and according to the ease of achieving this.

Step 4: Research values, perceptions and expectations

This research should be undertaken for each market segment and aimed at identifying barriers to walking, the advantages of other transport modes, and what is valued in a transport option. (See C1.1 *Factors influencing walking* for a discussion on common barriers to walking.) This process will provide clues on how best to reach each particular market segment.

Step 5: Develop a strategy for each market segment

Even within each market segment, people may vary in terms of readiness to change, and this should also be taken into account (see C5.1 *Behaviour change theory*). Tables C4-2 and C4-3 list some potential strategies.

Step 6: Monitor for effectiveness

See C4.3 *Program monitoring and evaluation*.

Source: Information adapted from Institute of Highways and Transportation 2000

Table C4-2

Delivering messages that promote walking

Media format	Purpose	Advantages and disadvantages
New technology	Primarily employed to promote the use of public transport, electronic real-time information and trip planners can provide static and dynamic transport information and raise awareness. Interactive CD-ROMs or websites can be used to promote various messages and convey information.	Use of these media would depend on the target audience. Some new technology may not be appropriate to reach people who are not computer literate, or people in rural areas, who may have slow access to the Internet, or no access. The website and its address would need to be promoted through the use of print or other media.
Print media	Leaflets, posters, maps, press advertisements, newsletters, resource packs and fact sheets can all be produced for relatively low cost. See Figure C4-3 for examples of neighbourhood maps that promote walking.	To be relevant and useful, print items should be targeted at the right audiences. They can be used to promote a website which includes more information.
Television, cinema and radio	Television, cinema and radio can be used for advertising.	This can be an effective way of reaching a mass audience. Visual advertising can be costly to produce, and placement of all forms can be costly.
Ambient media	Examples are outdoor advertising (billboards), coffee cup advertising, taxi signage, helicopter banners, and advertising on supermarket shopping trolleys.	Ambient media is a term for a diverse range of out-of-home media. It can be innovative and capture attention in different ways from regular advertising, and is good for a youth market. Choice of relevant placement is essential.
Forums to promote community action	A dialogue can be established with the local community through forums and interactive workshops.	See Module B4 <i>Community engagement</i> .

Source: Adapted from Transport Studies Group, University of Westminster (1998)





Source: Brisbane City Council

Figure C4-3
Pocket neighbourhood maps promote walking, cycling and public transport in Brisbane communities

C4.2 Program implementation

This section provides advice on various options for staging the implementation of a program to promote walking, and suggests some potential partner organisations to involve in the promotion. Decisions about which means of promotion, or combination of means, are most suitable should be based on the needs and preferences of the market segment being targeted, the possibilities and restrictions related to the season of the year, and budgeting considerations.

Delivery mechanisms

A range of methods can be used to deliver messages promoting walking. Some of these are presented in Table C4-2.

It is important to consider all forms of message delivery to obtain the right mix of promotional methods for the target audience, as different people choose to ignore or receive different messages. Since people are bombarded with information every day, the right mix can help to cut through the 'clutter' of information and reach more people in your target market.

As well as providing information and promotional messages, walking promotion programs can include more participatory activities. Some suggestions for promoting walking among school children, walking for shopping, walking to work or during the course of work, and walking for pleasure are provided in Table C4-3.

It is important to remember that market segments, such as students, shoppers and workers, are not all the same, and that market segmentation within each category is important for a program to be most effective.

Various 'walk to school' programs are used across Australia, including the *Walk to School* program in Queensland (developed by the Queensland University of Technology) and the *Walking School Bus* used in other states such as Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania.

See the case study 'The *Walking School Bus* in Western Australia'. A case study for the Queensland-based *Walk to School* program is included in Module B4 *Community engagement*.

Potential partners

Implementing programs aimed at promoting walking in a community can be helped by involving partners, such as:

- ▶ access and disability groups
- ▶ education authorities
- ▶ employers
- ▶ environment groups
- ▶ health service providers and advisory organisations
- ▶ leisure facility operators
- ▶ pedestrian groups
- ▶ police
- ▶ retailers and supermarkets
- ▶ volunteer groups
- ▶ bushwalking groups
- ▶ community organisations (e.g. police and community youth clubs (PCYCs) or Scouts).

See the case study '*10,000 Steps Rockhampton*' for an example of an effective partnership.

C4.3 Program monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation procedures should be integrated into a walking promotion program.

Wherever possible, monitoring and evaluation should be closely linked to strategic goals with measurable target indicators. These provide evidence to assess the efficacy, cost-effectiveness and feasibility of the adopted strategies and actions.

Monitoring indicators need to be incorporated into existing information-gathering systems. The ultimate objective of initiatives to promote walking is an increase in the level of walking. In many cases, however, statistically valid estimates of the change in walking will be difficult to obtain, and attribution of measured changes to a particular initiative will be problematic.

Table C4-3

Activities for promoting walking

Activities for promoting walking

Walking in schools

- ▶ have walk-to-school weeks or days
- ▶ develop school travel plans and 'walking school buses' (see the case study 'The *Walking School Bus*')
- ▶ prepare walking diaries for young children to complete with their parents on the way to school
- ▶ develop displays that monitor a school's progress in promoting walking
- ▶ promote/develop classroom activities on transport issues and pedestrian safety training, including 'stranger danger'
- ▶ encourage parents and children to suggest ways to improve walking routes
- ▶ encourage schools to have a 'clearing time', allowing children to leave the school on foot (or bicycle) before cars are allowed to enter

Shopping

- ▶ get the support of shopkeepers for walking and encourage them to keep pavements free of clutter
- ▶ provide information about facilities for shopping storage and home delivery, and work to implement new services
- ▶ initiate group health walks that terminate in town centres

Walking and work

- ▶ encourage and support local businesses to adopt an access plan (for benefits and suggestions, see the Queensland TravelSmart website at <http://www.transport.qld.gov.au/qt/pubtrans.nsf/index/TravelSmartWorkplace>)
- ▶ provide lockers and showers
- ▶ promote car-free days

Walking for fun

- ▶ distribute maps of local pathways and list available amenities
- ▶ support or initiate organised walking groups

Source: Adapted from Institute of Highways and Transportation 2000

These difficulties reflect the extent to which walking is an integral part of daily activity and the many other factors that can influence how much individuals walk, and when and where they walk.

Measures of pedestrian usage of facilities or places, while relatively easy to obtain by direct counts, should be used with caution. These measures present only a partial picture and may include people changing where they walk, rather than walking more, for example, in response to selective improvements in walking facilities.

Whether or not reliable estimates of the change in overall levels of walking activity can be obtained, it is important to qualitatively assess other relevant factors, such as:

- ▶ levels of awareness of the promotion program
- ▶ how the program was received by participants and other stakeholders and their views on the outcomes.

The *10,000 Steps Rockhampton* project established both quantitative and qualitative evaluation measures of:

- ▶ the effectiveness of the overall program, using valid and reliable outcome measures of physical activity and its major determinants
- ▶ the success of each of the intervention strategies in terms of engaging community partners, developing supportive policies and environments, and developing initiatives suggested by community members.



Case study: 10,000 Steps Rockhampton

The 10,000 Steps Rockhampton project, funded by Queensland Health, is an innovative community-based walking program aimed at promoting walking. The branding of this multi-strategy health promotion program includes a colour theme and logo (see Figure C4-4), and an interactive website, to enhance public recognition. The motto is 'Every Step Counts!'

The program model aims to increase participation by people who do not exercise regularly, and who are from socially and economically disadvantaged groups in the Rockhampton and Mackay communities.

Participants are encouraged to take up the challenge to walk about 10,000 steps per day, and to count their steps using pedometers. Important messages include:

- ▶ 30 minutes of activity per day is beneficial to health, whether it is walking the dog, walking to work or getting off public transport a stop earlier
- ▶ the program provides an interactive way for people to be motivated to complete daily physical activity and keep in contact with the SOS service (see below).

Innovative tactics to involve people, businesses and communities in the program and to keep them motivated include:

- ▶ an interactive website — contains registration, testimonials and personal stories of motivation
- ▶ media profiling — using high-profile athletes for program launches and for corporate launches
- ▶ fact sheets
- ▶ merchandise available for sale
- ▶ health tips and tricks for motivation
- ▶ incentive packages to encourage corporate take-up as registered providers of the program
- ▶ incentive packages for 10,000 Steps signage for community take-up as registered providers of the program
- ▶ information on where to buy a pedometer
- ▶ an SOS Service that people can contact when they are worried about motivation, and they will be called back within 48 hours.

Partnerships with local health providers using the Active Practice protocol already successfully trialled in NSW and Victoria, along with allied health care providers, are used to make referrals to physical activity resources, disseminate current activity guidelines, and advocate behaviour change.

The project was founded by experienced and knowledgeable researchers in the area of physical activity from Central Queensland University, University of Queensland and Queensland University of Technology in collaboration with members of the Rockhampton community.

Community partners include the National Heart Foundation, Rockhampton City Council, Capricornia Division of General Practice, local health services and the Central Public Health Unit, Sports Medicine Australia, Central Region Sport and Recreation, and local media services.

For more information, see <<http://www.10000steps.org.au>>.



Source: 10,000 Steps Project

Figure C4-4

The 10,000 Steps logo and theme colours

Case study: The Walking School Bus in Western Australia

The Walking School Bus is a supervised walking group of primary school students, escorted by parent volunteers (see Figure C4-5). Students are 'picked up' along a set route in the morning and returned in the afternoon.

The Walking School Bus is designed for children who live within 1 kilometre of their school or who can be taken to a Walking School Bus route terminus point. The Department of Planning and Infrastructure helps schools identify suitable Walking School Bus routes and provides training for parent volunteers.

The 'bus' usually operates on only a limited number of days each week. Parents are not asked to commit themselves to more than 2 days per week. Nominating 1 day per week as 'WSB Day' is a good start for the escort group. This can then be increased at a later date.

The benefits of a 'walking school bus' include:

- ▶ reduction in traffic congestion around schools and provision of a safe environment
- ▶ regular exercise for participants, important in reducing obesity and lack of fitness, which are emerging health risks for Australians of all ages
- ▶ increased street security: the more pedestrians there are on our streets, the safer it becomes to walk
- ▶ reduction in short car trips, which contribute significantly to poor air quality and undesirable increases in ill-health/respiratory conditions.

For more information, see <<http://www.dpi.wa.gov.au/travelsmart/schools.html>>.



Source: Western Australian Department for Planning and Infrastructure

Figure C4-5

A Walking School Bus in Western Australia

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