

Heart Foundation

# Walking



## An Introduction



## Why walk?

- It's an inexpensive form of physical activity
- It's easy – doesn't require special skills or equipment
- It has psychological and community benefits – improves mental health and social connectedness, especially walking in groups.
- It helps people achieve and maintain a healthy body weight
- Improves bone health and helps to prevent osteoporosis
- Contributes to improved mental health and self esteem
- Helps people feel stronger, more energetic and happier.
- Improves balance, strength and coordination
- Can help diabetics control blood sugar levels (half hour walk after meals)
- 30-60 minutes of walking per day can reduce blood pressure significantly in those with hypertension
- It's as good as vigorous activity in reducing heart disease and heart attack in middle aged women



## Introducing Heart Foundation Walking!

Thanks for considering the Heart Foundation Walking program. Here's an overview of how the program works and fits into Australia's national health priorities, plus the ways it can help you achieve your organisational objectives and save you time and money. We've also set out the program structure and the support you'll receive to establish this great initiative in your organisation or community.

## What is Heart Foundation Walking?

Heart Foundation Walking is Australia's largest free walking network. It is part of the broader Heart Foundation Healthy Hearts agenda to encourage and support walking and physical activity. This includes focussing on advocating for and enhancing supportive environments for active living as well as a marketing and communications component aimed at raising the profile of walking as a fun, free and accessible physical activity option for everyone.

The Heart Foundation works in partnership with Host Organisations and nominated Local Coordinator/s to set up walking groups in their community or workplace. Local Coordinators come from a variety of backgrounds including health and community centres, councils and workplaces and work with the Heart Foundation to recruit and assist volunteer Walk Organisers to establish groups. Local Coordinators can also engage individual Walkers through establishing an online community of virtual Walkers (The structure of Heart Foundation Walking is shown in Figure 1).

Walk Organisers begin and maintain groups in their community with the assistance of their Local Coordinator. They are provided resources, training and support and receive complimentary Heart Foundation merchandise for their role.

Registered Walkers are provided information and newsletters, and may choose to participate in the Walker Recognition Scheme which includes certificates and other incentives when they reach walking milestones (e.g. 25 walks).

The Heart Foundation provides ongoing assistance, support and resources to all Host Organisations, Local Coordinators and Walk Organisers.

## Your role

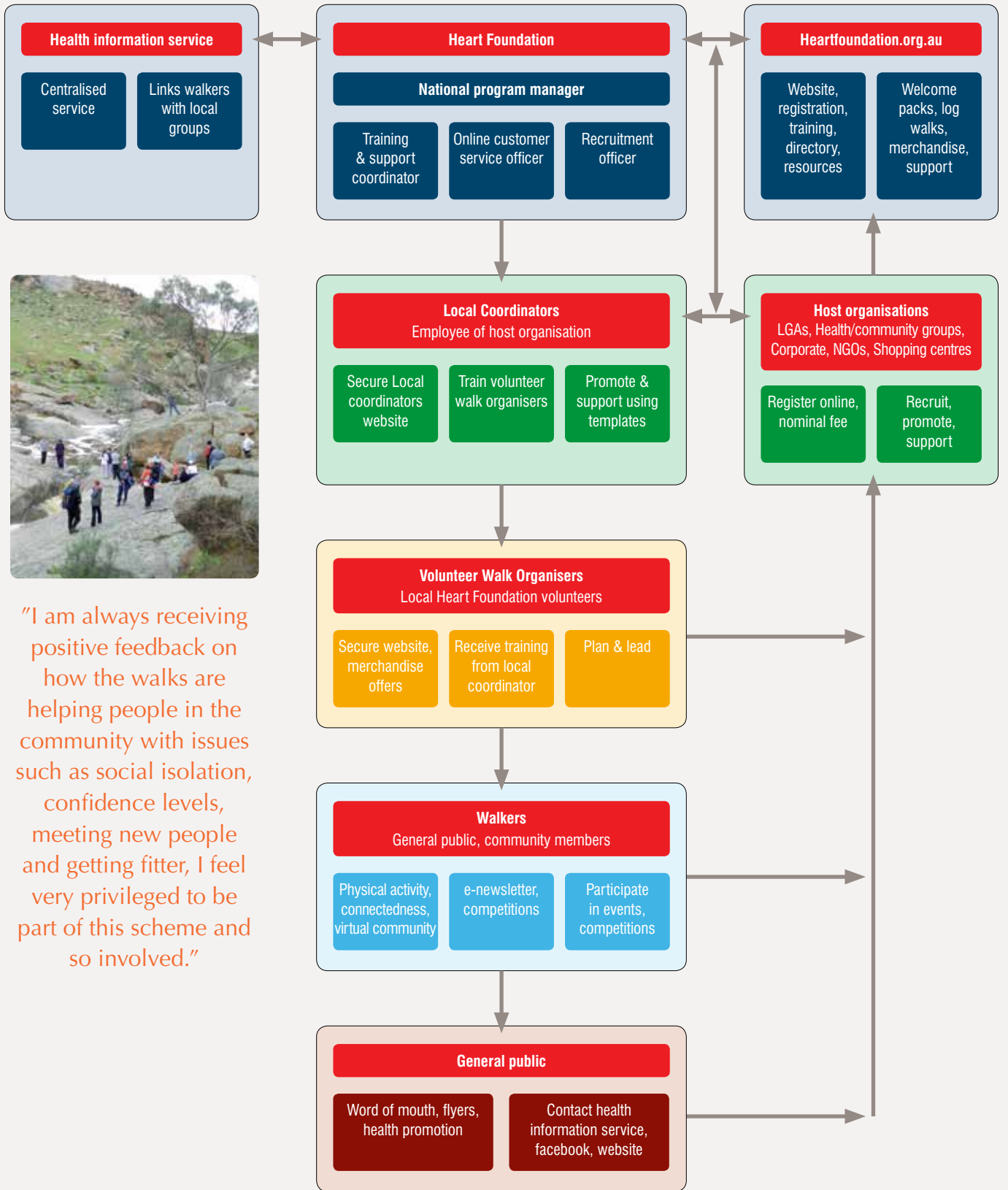
### Host Organisation

- The Host Organisation facilitates the program and nominates a contact person, the Local Coordinator

### What does being a Local Coordinator involve?

- Recruiting Walkers and volunteer Walk Organisers and promoting Heart Foundation Walking
- Facilitating basic training for Walk Organisers without web access
- Being a contact point for Walkers and Walk Organisers in your local area
- Organising a working group to share tasks and maximise publicity
- Keeping Heart Foundation Walking informed of groups' activities and changes
- Supporting existing walking groups

Figure 1: The structure of Heart Foundation Walking



"I am always receiving positive feedback on how the walks are helping people in the community with issues such as social isolation, confidence levels, meeting new people and getting fitter, I feel very privileged to be part of this scheme and so involved."





#### Cardiovascular disease:

- kills one Australian every 12 minutes
- affects one in six Australians or 3.7 million
- prevents 1.4 million people from living a full life because of disability caused by the disease
- affects two out of three families



#### Physical activity FACT:

Being physically inactive can take three to five years off your life.

## What we provide

Heart Foundation Walking is a proven and sustainable framework for starting and operating walking groups in your community

### Resources and tools

- A wide range of regularly updated resources
- A centralised live website
- An option for virtual Walker recruitment
- Individual online profile for Host Organisations and Local Coordinators with access to dashboard reporting on your groups and participants in your area
- Downloadable marketing tools and promotional templates with an option for cobranding
- E-updates with the latest walking, active living and heart health information
- A free t-shirt for Local Coordinators and Walk Organisers

### Training and support

- Interactive training modules for Local Coordinators and Walk Organisers
- Dedicated Heart Foundation Walking staff to provide training and support who are just an email or phone call away
- Public relations and media support
- Monthly educational teleconferences
- Access to the Heart Foundation Walking small grants program
- State and Territory workshops for Local Coordinators and Walk Organisers

### Participant resources and other benefits

- Quarterly newsletters
- Walker Recognition Scheme - Incentives based on walking milestones achieved e.g. 25 walks
- Access to Heart Foundation Walking events
- Downloadable templates for group promotion
- Ability to create personal online profiles, join multiple groups, track walking progress and set personal goals
- Free start up kit, including Heart Foundation merchandise for volunteer Walk Organisers

### Risk management

- Policies and procedures relating to risk management and insurance e.g. incident reporting
- Walk Organisers are registered Heart Foundation volunteers and are provided with insurance coverage under our volunteer Walk Organiser Policy



“From an organisational perspective, there is the opportunity to broaden partnerships for engagement, from community settings such as Neighbourhood Houses, to GP clinics and workplaces.”

## Why get involved with Heart Foundation Walking?

Heart Foundation Walking is a nation-wide program that operates on a tried and tested model that has been operating since 1995. There are many advantages to using the structure and resources of Heart Foundation Walking.

1. National Physical Activity Guidelines	Australia’s National Physical Activity Guidelines recommend that adults accumulate 150 to 300 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week, and Heart Foundation Walking helps communities achieve this. Walking is the number one activity preferred in Australia, however over half of all Australians miss out on the health benefits associated with being regularly physically active.
2. Contributes to organisational work plans	Using an established model and resources, Heart Foundation Walking is an easy and effective way to fulfil goals around community engagement, building inter-sectoral partnerships, delivery of health promotion programs, the provision of physical activity resources to the community or evaluation of health initiatives.
3. It’s sustainable	Heart Foundation Walking demonstrates an impressive retention rate of 93% of groups and 83% of Walkers after six months, few physical activity programs have demonstrated this level of sustainability.
4. It’s time efficient	Heart Foundation Walking comes ‘ready to roll out’ and usually requires about four hours per week during the first six to eight weeks (establishment phase), and one to two hours per week after this (maintenance phase).
5. It’s cost effective	We provide a comprehensive range of resources needed to coordinate Heart Foundation Walking. Host Organisations pay a nominal fee for Local Coordinator training and program resources.
6. Builds networks within your community or organisation	Coordinating Heart Foundation Walking provides an ideal opportunity to work in partnership to achieve improved health and social outcomes. It can help to build and develop links with other service organisations and community members.
7. Includes quality and risk management	Detailed policies and procedures cover all aspects of the program operation.
8. Offers recognition	Heart Foundation Walking will attract media and publicity. It may also result in recognition at a state and /or national level for your organisation, your community or you personally.

### Physical activity FACTS:

- The National Heart Foundation recommends putting together at least 30-60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity (such as brisk walking) most, if not every day of the week.
- Women and older adults are more likely to be sedentary or have low physical activity levels
- Being overweight and/or insufficiently active are key risk factors for heart disease and other chronic conditions
- Most adults spend half their waking hours sitting
- Studies have shown that adults who watch less than two hours of television a day have a lower risk of early death than adults who watch more than this.
- According to a 2010 Victorian Integrated Survey of Travel and Activity (VISTA) study, Melburnians who used public transport spent an average of 41 minutes walking or cycling as part of their travel. Private transport users averaged only eight minutes of walking or cycling.

## What's in it for you?

- Simple, effective, time and cost-efficient way to implement walking groups in your community
- An active role in increasing regular physical activity in Australia to prevent potential health problems
- Be part of a quality, sustainable and proven program
- A simple and effective way to fulfil aspects of organisational work plans and contribute to national accreditation processes (where relevant)
- An opportunity to work collaboratively with the Heart Foundation and other key organisations
- Up-to-date health information through Heart Foundation resources
- Recognition for yourself and your organisation within community
- A Heart Foundation Walking shirt as a thank you gift
- Increased community participation through linking in with a respected and trusted charity
- Ability to track and evaluate physical activity levels of members of your community



Program activity	Heart Foundation Walking
Establish program structure	✓
Develop program name and logo	✓
Design resources	✓
Design and produce merchandise	✓
Establish procedures to enhance sustainability and participant retention	✓
Risk management policies and procedures	✓
Investigate legal and insurance issues	✓
Program support from dedicated staff	✓
Develop a website and a system for data and evaluation	✓
Develop training resources	✓
Provide incentives to program participants	✓
Design promotional materials and media releases	✓
Work in partnership with trusted organisation to maximise program effectiveness	✓

“Having a network of fellow Coordinators across the state is motivating and by far a more preferable option to working in isolation on local initiatives that often exist without peer support.”

## What's Next?

Sign us up! We will be able to answer any questions you may have and when you're ready, get you started.

**For more information or to become a Heart Foundation Walking Host Organisation contact us on 1300 36 27 87 (cost of a local call) or visit [www.heartfoundation.org.au/walking](http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/walking)**

National sponsor

State sponsor