

Heart Foundation
Walking

Summary Evaluation
December 2016



Summary of Key Achievements for 2016

This report

This summary report provides an overview of the National Heart Foundation Walking (HFW) program achievements for 2016. The report presents results from participant surveys, recruitment campaigns and information from the HFW national database that is gained at registration and via monthly attendance logs.

Key highlights

With the national support from Fitbit and Qantas Assure as well as state support from the QLD Government, 2016 has seen HFW achieve steady growth. We have reached several key milestones, the most significant of these was reaching the 27,000 active program participants milestone.

HFW is operational in all States and Territories and continues to experience exceptional growth, with 27,665 participants and 1,263 walking groups currently active at the end of December 2016.

The current active participants include:

- 25,843 Walkers,
- 1,545 volunteer Walk Organisers,
- 277 Local Coordinators, and
- 234 Host Organisations.

Over **27,665**
active participants
& over **5.4 million**
walks registered!

The retention rate for participants continues to be exceptional, with over 77% still active after 6 months and 78% after 3 years participation as of the 31st December 2016. HFW consistently demonstrates retention rates well above typical community based physical activity programs which have a 6 month retention rate of 50%.

Exceptional attendance rates are attributed to the social aspect of the group, the ownership groups take on so quickly, as well as the resources and support from the HFW. The Walker Recognition Scheme assists in providing motivation and allows walkers to set goals and the quarterly newsletter allows walkers to feel part of a broader community.

Since 1995, the Heart Foundation has engaged over 85,000 Australians in community based walking groups. We have now reached over 27,665 active members. Our team looks forward to growing this number and working with our corporate and community partners in 2017.

Introduction to 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.

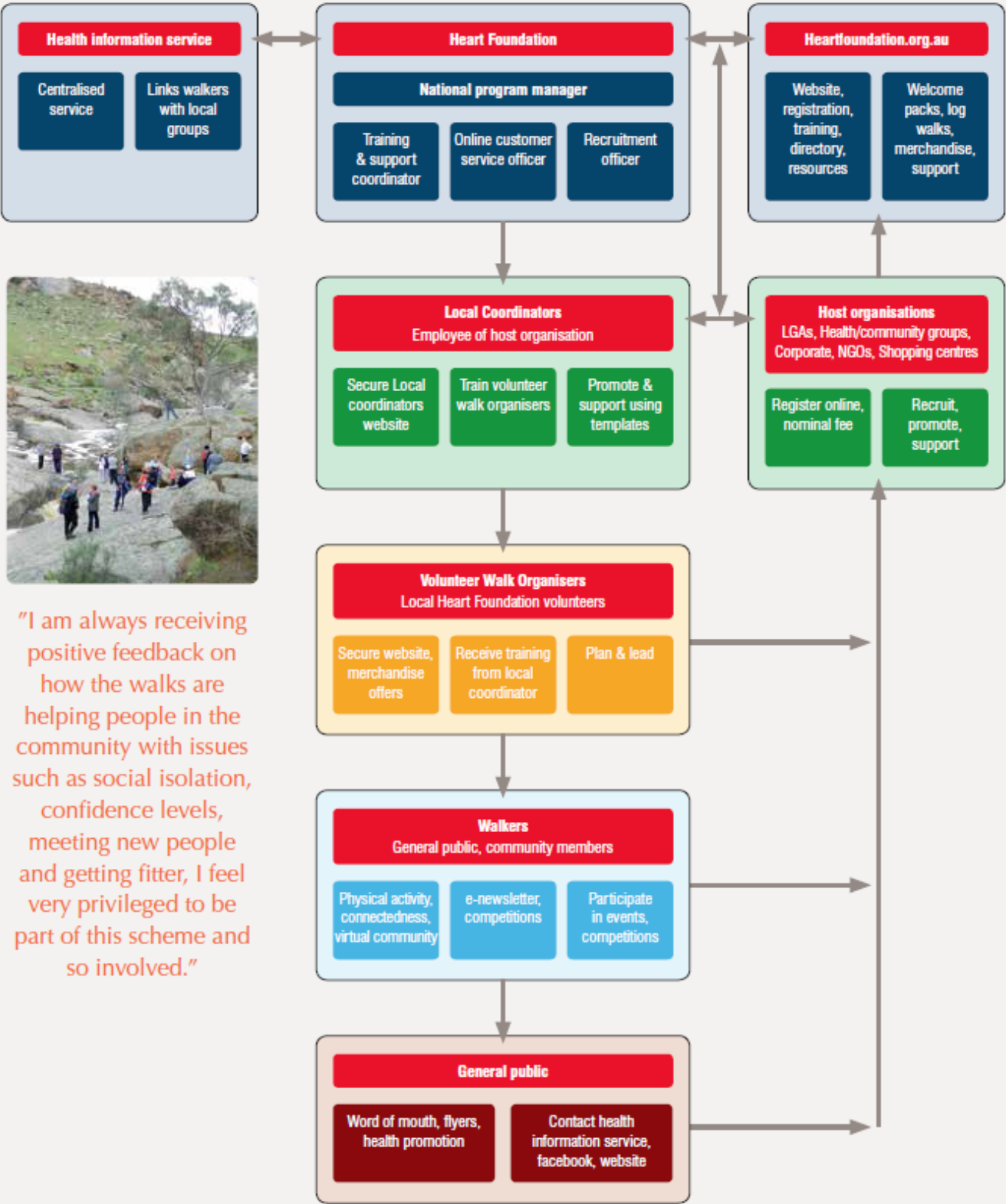
The Heart Foundation works in partnership with Host Organisations and nominated Local Coordinator/s to set up walking groups in their community or workplace. Local Coordinators come from a variety of backgrounds including health and community centres, councils and workplaces and work with the Heart Foundation 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 on page 4).

Community-based volunteer 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. Walkers can join a group and / or be part of a virtual walking community that track their activity online, participate in events and online challenges.



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

Program Participants

The role of Heart Foundation staff (National 3.5 FTE and state/territory 0.8 FTE staff), staff includes:

- Coordinate HFW across the country
- Secure and manage ongoing program funding
- Promote HFW and distribute health information
- Recruit, train & support HFW Local Coordinators
- Help recruit, train & support HFW Walk Organisers
- Provide participants with newsletters, resources, milestones recognition
- Advocate for physical activity and health
- Maintain accurate HFW records

The role of Local Coordinators includes:

- Start/maintain a local support group/network
- Act as a contact point and promote HFW throughout their region
- Recruit HFW participants
- Train volunteer HFW volunteer Walk Organisers
- Support local HFW groups

The role of volunteer Walk Organisers includes:

- Start group - plan the walking route, days and times
- Participate in training session online or with Local Coordinator
- Act as contact point for the group
- Attend walks and welcome new Walkers
- Administration (registration forms/attendance logs)

The role of Walkers includes:

- Find out when and where the group meets
- Complete program registration
- Walk with the group (social support/motivation)
- Receive newsletters and earn incentives
- Join our virtual walking community and track physical activity online including syncing their Fitbit device to assist with goal setting and motivation outside of the group setting.



Profile of HFW groups

Walking Groups:

- The average group walks for 56 minutes.
- The average walking group has been active for 3.4 years, with groups ranging from newly established, to existing for over 22 years.
- The average number of Walk Organisers per group is 1.5, with 372 groups currently having more than one Walk Organiser. Interestingly 4.4% of Walk Organisers (81 in total) have more than one walking group operating.



Walks

- As at the end of 2016, the total number of walks recorded was **5,216,842**.
- However it is likely that this is an under representation as 25% of participants aren't accounted for on attendance logs. This could be because the group does not have up to date data (i.e. have not sent in attendance logs on time), or they have opted not to return attendance logs or be part of the Walker Recognition Scheme.



There are currently 337 active "specialty" walking groups, with:

- 100 parents with prams groups
- 66 health facility groups including cardiac rehabilitation
- 53 workplace groups
- 43 other special interest groups
- 39 shopping centre groups
- 21 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups
- 9 culture specific groups e.g. Muslim women's groups
- 6 retirement living groups



Specialty Walking Groups- GP Setting

Q& A with Dr Karla Raja (Bay Way Walkers - Lake Macquarie NSW)

How did you get involved in HFW?

Our local Primary Health Network in Newcastle included information about HFW in one of their newsletters. My practice contacted the Heart Foundation to find out more and we have since started a walking group called Bay Way Walkers.

How many people are involved in the walking group?

We have one walking group set up. Many of these walkers are my patients but the group is open to the general community as well.

What have you enjoyed the most about being involved with HFW program?

I enjoy supporting people to improve their quality of life. I enjoy the social contact and contribution to my own health and wellbeing that the walking group offers. A highlight has been the participation by 3 members of our group in the 'City to Surf' 14km walk in Sydney.

What barriers have you had to overcome to implement the program?

As our group walks at 6am twice a week, it can be difficult to attract and maintain new walkers, especially during the winter months. As I run a busy practice, initially I organised the walk at a time convenient to me to be able to walk with the group.

What benefits has your organisation / community had from being involved in HFW?

I have seen health improvements in several of my patients who walk regularly with the group. Families thank me - "Dad has never been fitter or happier". One walker said "where would I have been without the walking group".

What strategies have been the most useful for you in recruiting people to join HFW?

During my patient consultations I try and encourage participation in HFW especially where there are (heart disease) risk factors present. Our practice nurse and staff also talk to patients and promote the group. Recruitment of a dedicated Walk Organiser (Ross) who is a walker in the group, has been very beneficial in maintaining the group. Ross suffered a heart attack in the 90's which was a 'wake up call' that promoted him to change his lifestyle. Having the support of a Local Coordinator outside of the organisation works really well.

Would you recommend HFW to other general practices?

Yes most definitely. It is rewarding to see your patient health outcomes such as blood pressure, waist measurement and HDL cholesterol improve over time. Once the group is up and running there is minimal work to be done. I suspect the program would work well in rural and regional areas as well.

HFW Virtual Walking Community

Walkers can track their activity online to:

- Help set goals and track progress either in steps or minutes of physical activity (or both!)
- Provide an opportunity for people to be part of a virtual walking community if there is not a HFW group at a convenient location or time.
- Encourage people to be more active outside of their official walking group time
- Share photos of their walks from their Fitbit profile to social media.
- Since launching the virtual walking community including ability to sync with Fitbit **4,843** walkers (18%) have participated. This figure continues to grow each month.
- Ability to connect their HFW online profile with their Fitbit with other wearable activity trackers will be explored in 2017.

Your Fitbit Data

Today Week Month Year ◀ 08-2016 ▶

Walk Summary for This Month **181,376** steps **113.59** km **43,164** calories

Average Steps Per Day - This Month



Your Walks

Wear your Fitbit with your Walking Group Walks to see detailed information about your walks!

Date	Start	End	Steps	Distance	Calories
2016-08-19	20:48	21:07	1219	-	121
2016-08-18	13:33	13:50	1501	-	108

Heart Foundation Walking
Published by Mash Wilson (71) · April 28 at 10:07am ·

What a great photo from one our Walk Organisers in NSW who is using to track activity!

Why not join us for one our Heart Week events? To find an event near you visit <http://walking.heartfoundation.org.au/events/event/>

4.04 km 5,581 steps 140 bpm

Virtual walker – Craig Riley

When married father-of-two Craig Riley was diagnosed with type-2 diabetes, he decided he needed to make a change.

With Fitbit engaged, music pumping and social media postings, Craig took the first steps towards a healthier lifestyle through walking and watching his diet. After three months walking, Craig had dropped 17kgs and amazingly, no sign of type -2 diabetes.

“It was so exciting to get those blood results, to completely reverse the type-2 diabetes diagnosis and no longer require medication,” Craig said. “It was such a win-win situation, even my doctor couldn’t believe it. I had to be retested just to make sure.”

Living in Seaford, Victoria, Craig has scenic walks and challenging hills nearby to maintain his motivation. Through his Fitbit, Craig has mapped out 4km, 6km and 10km courses depending on how he is feeling.

Craig joined HFW as a ‘Virtual Walker’, with work commitments making consistent appearances with a group difficult. However, Craig has found a social media community that motivates everyone.

“I have found the engagement through social media has opened pathways for chatting and everyone knows reaching your goals isn’t a quick process, but is fun.”

Craig found the engagement and conversations from his posts in many places, including at karate events where he watches his son compete and represent Australia.

“I have people ask me how the walking is going and I must admit, it wasn’t a good feeling being the father of an elite athlete at elite events and not addressing my own health,” Craig said.

“I still hope to lose another 18kgs over the next four to six months.”

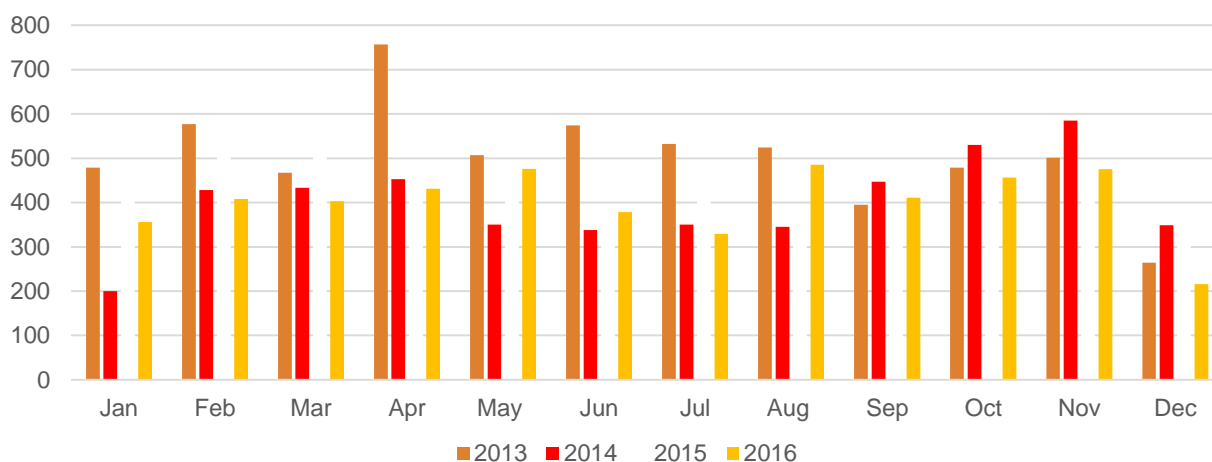
“I started posting every time I was doing a walk on social media and found people commenting publicly and private messaging me. The feedback was really spurring me on and now, I have friends in every state walking each day and challenging each other, holding each other accountable.”



2016 Recruitment Activities

As can be seen in the below graph, recruitment into the HFW program continues to grow despite having a very modest national advertising budget of \$15,000 annually for the past 3 years.

Recruitment (new participants) by month 2013 to 2016



Local Coordinators and Walk Organisers are provided with a range of electronic templates that can be used promote their program at the community level. The below campaigns were supported nationally with media releases, electronic direct marketing and social media.

Campaign Details	Start date	End date	Duration
Dog walking	1 st April	30 th April	30 days
Men's health week	12 th Jun	18 th Jun-18	7 days
Winter recruitment	1 st Jun	31 st Aug	90 days
Spring recruitment	1 st Sept	30 Nov	90 days
Bring a friend	15 th Nov	15 th Dec	30 days

HFW Recruitment Target Regions

With a limited budget for advertising, recruitment activity was targeted based on regions with high physical inactivity rates and/or high prevalence of CVD.

HFW identified 17 priority and 19 secondary regions to target recruitment activities in 2016 and 2017.

HFW in these areas currently represents 36.8% of all participants.

HFW aims to increase participation in the priority regions by 50% by 31 December 2017 months, and by 20% in the regions identified as secondary focus by 31 December 2017 .

Priority Region	State	Secondary Region	State
Illawarra	NSW	Far West and Orana	NSW
Newcastle and Lake Macquarie	NSW	Richmond – Tweed	NSW
Riverina	NSW	New England and North West	NSW
Sydney – South West	NSW	Darling Downs	QLD
Sydney – Inner South West	NSW	Ipswich	QLD
Sydney – Outer West and Blue Mountains	NSW	Cairns	QLD
Sydney – Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury	NSW	Toowoomba	QLD
Logan	QLD	Brisbane – East	QLD
Mackay	QLD	South Australia – South East	SA
Wide Bay	QLD	Adelaide – North	SA
Fitzroy	QLD	South Australia – Outback	SA
Townsville	QLD	Tasmania – South East	TAS
Adelaide – West	SA	Ballarat	VIC
Melbourne – North East	VIC	Shepparton	VIC
Bendigo	VIC	Latrobe – Gippsland	VIC
Melbourne – South East	VIC	Mandurah	WA
Melbourne – Outer East	VIC	Wheat Belt	WA
		Perth – South East	WA
		Darwin	NT

Profile: HFW at Rumbalara

We have joined forces with Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative to set up a Rumbalara HFW group.. Open for all members of the community to join, this walking group aims to engage the largest Indigenous community in regional Victoria to tackle health issues in a social environment.

Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative Chief Executive Officer Kim Sedick says the team is proud to be setting a best practice standard for active workplaces.

"We're committed to allowing our workforce of more than 200 people to take an hour out of their work day to participate in HFW.

"With the Australian Bureau of Statistics data showing that 77% of adults in the Shepparton region are not getting enough physical activity, this partnership is going to be a critical one in encouraging the Shepparton people to move more and sit less."

Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative Healthy Lifestyles Team Leader Hope Briggs says being a part of the walking group helps you stay motivated.

"It's easy to say 'I'll give my walk a miss today', however, knowing there is a group of people waiting for you can provide that extra motivation needed to get out the door."



Chronic Disease Nurse Rebecca Kellehar – "walking the steps together to tackle chronic disease was a step towards strengthening connections, health & wellbeing in the community"



The Heart Foundation is committed to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to reach a truly reconciled Australia, one in which health equality is no longer an issue and where the unacceptable health gap is closed.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are a focus for us due to the disproportionate levels of heart disease they experience.

Participation in Heart Foundation Walking

HFW is operational in all States and Territories and continues to experience exceptional growth, with 27,665 participants and 1,263 walking groups currently active at the end of December 2016. The current active participants include:

- 25,843 Walkers,
- 1,545 volunteer Walk Organisers,
- 277 Local Coordinators, and
- 234 Host Organisations.

Current participation at end of 2016 by State and Status

	National	Break down of participants by state							
		ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA
Walker	25,843	529	6,553	447	6,284	3,262	1,201	4,838	2,379
Walk Organiser	1,545	42	386	9	350	235	76	318	129
Local Coordinator	277	6	74	3	48	26	14	79	27
Total	27,665	577	7,013	459	6,682	3,523	1,291	5,235	2,535

HFW groups are more likely to be in the more disadvantaged areas across Australia:

- One in eight HFW groups located in the most disadvantaged areas.
- Less than one in four (23%) of Walking groups are located in the least disadvantaged areas.

SEIFA Decile	Number of HFW Groups	Percentage (%)
1 (most disadvantaged)	168	13
2	150	12
3	126	10
4	159	12
5	149	12
6	121	10
7	109	9
8	99	8
9	101	8
10 (Least Disadvantaged)	81	7

Program Participants

Retention Rates

A key success of HFW is the consistently high retention rates.

A typical community based physical activity program has a six month retention rate of 50%. HFW demonstrates retention rates well above this – even at the three year mark.

The high attendance rates are attributed to the social aspect of the groups, the ownership groups take on so quickly, and the resources and support provided by the program. The Walker Recognition Scheme assists in providing motivation and allows walkers to set goals and monitor progress.

Why people stay

Most participants identify the health, fun, friendship and social aspects of the program the main reasons for staying with HFW.

Why people are no longer with a group?

Walk Organisers are primarily no longer with the program due to other commitments or no group to join or not enough members. Whilst for walkers, other commitments and health problems / injuries are two main reasons they are no longer walking in a HFW group.

“(a) To accompany my wife who has had open heart surgery. (b) To maintain some fitness and healthy exercise. (c) To maintain contact with some good friends”

“Being part of the group encourages me to stick at it otherwise work and other commitments get in the way and I don’t have the motivation to do it my myself”

“I stay because it is good for my heart, I make new friends and every time I go walking with my group, it makes me feel happy. Thank you”

Retention Rates	Groups	Participants
After 6 months	84%	77%
After 12 months	87%	73%
After 3 years	83%	78%



“Since 1997 I have been committed to walking 3 times a week .. I very rarely miss it. I have made good friends over the years and enjoy the social aspect as well as the exercise”

Walker Profile

Data source:

The 2015 HFW Walker Survey, an online survey that was distributed to a subsample of walkers with 1,602 completing the survey.

Walker Profile:

From the information provided by walkers, we know that:

- Almost 80% are female
- Majority (75%) were aged 60 or over.
- More than one in four (26%) lived alone
- Low income: 33% have an annual household income below \$40k (with 17% having less than \$25k).
- Most are retired (41%), while 25% are employed and 10.3% do home duties
- 2% are from Aboriginal or Torres Straight Islander background
- One in nine have had a heart attack or have heart disease.
- Walking was the most common activity walkers reported undertaking in the previous week.
- Just over 80% of walkers reported that in the last week they participated in 150 minutes or more of moderate to vigorous activity, which is considered 'sufficient' levels of physical activity to obtain health benefits.

"I have made new friends, we socialise outside of walking. My health improved, I can walk safely and always have a laugh, so I feel good when I come home. I tell all my friends and neighbours about the group - the best club I have ever joined and everyone is so friendly."

State	ACT	4%
	NSW	24%
	SA	14%
	VIC	17%
	TAS	5%
	NT	2%
	WA	8%
	QLD	25%
Gender	Male	20%
	Female	80%
Age	25-29	1%
	30-34	1%
	35-39	1%
	40-44	2%
	45-49	3%
	50-54	5%
	55-59	10%
	60-64	18%
	65-69	30%
	Over 70	29%
Household Structure	Person living alone	26%
	Couple only	54%
	Couple living with their child(ren)	11%
	Single person living with their child(ren)	3%
	Adult living at home with parents	1%
	Group household	1%
	Other	3%
Annual Household Income	Below \$25,000	17%
	Between \$25,000 to \$40,000	16%
	Between \$40,001 to \$55,000	9%
	Between \$55,001 to \$70,000	7%
	Between \$70,001 to \$85,000	5%
	Between \$85,001 to \$100,000	4%
	Between \$100,000 to \$120,000	2%
	Over \$120,000	5%
Education Attainment	Year 11 or below	21%
	Year 12	9%
	Vocational qualification	4%
	Other TAFE or technical certificate	14%
	Diploma	13%
	Bachelor Degree (including Honours)	15%
	Post Graduate diploma or degree	14%
	Other	4%

How HFW helped Morgan after his heart attack

Morgan Chetty, NSW

I had a **very severe cardiac arrest** when I was 57 years old. I was given **no chance of survival**. A paramedic told my wife that only prayers could save me. Well there must have been prayers as I am still around to tell the story.

I was in a crucial condition in the ICU for almost 2 weeks. I was transferred to the High Care Ward where a nurse monitored me for 24 hours a day. After another 2 weeks, I slowly regained consciousness and was transferred to the general ward. A defibrillator was inserted in my chest wall. In total, I spent 5 weeks in hospital and left there with a walking stick for support.

After leaving hospital, I was unsure what to do. I felt so weak and tired and had no energy to do the things that I loved. I also felt shaken by the ordeal and depressed.

One day, when I was sitting in the park, I saw a man wearing a red HFW polo shirt and walking with a group. I made some enquiries and joined the group.

On my first day, after about 200 meters, I said to myself "this is not for me!". But by the end of the walk, many of the walkers made me feel so welcome that I had to give it a go. I've been walking with the group ever since!

I now look forward to walking with the group twice a week. The people in our group are just fantastic. I have become physically stronger and thoroughly enjoy the social aspect of walking with the group.

In the years since my heart attack, my wife and I have made 3 overseas trips and we hope to do many more.

Often I reflect on how things may have been different if I wasn't sitting in the park that day and spotted the man in the HFW polo-shirt. I really don't think I could have gotten this far without the support and friendships I've made through my walking group.

After leaving hospital, I was unsure what to do..

...things may have been different if I wasn't sitting in the park that day I spotted the man in the HFW polo-shirt

I really don't think I could have got this far without the support and friendships I've made through my walking group.

Walker Survey - Key Findings

HFW program

- Just over 73% of walkers surveyed are currently walking with a HFW group.
- 8% of walkers surveyed recorded their activity as a virtual walker.
- The social aspect of walking with a group was the main reason participants are still walking with a HFW group.
- 81% of walkers stated the main reason for joining the program was to improve their fitness and/or health.
- When asked what they specifically liked about HFW 59% mentioned the social aspects of belonging to a group.
- Over 57% of walkers rated the Walker Recognition Scheme as important, with 45% rating it as very important.
- The majority of walkers believed HFW was important to their physical, social and/or mental wellbeing.

Website

- 66% of walkers that participated in the survey were aware of the HFW website, with just over a 50% of those aware having actually used the website.
- More than 60% of those walkers who had used the HFW website agreed it was easy to use and was useful to them.

Health and wellbeing

- Just 80% believed their participation in HFW has helped a lot to improve their overall health and/or enabled them to make significant lifestyle changes.
- Close to 40% walkers felt their current general health was better when compared to one year ago.
- More than two in five walkers rated their general health as 'excellent' or 'very good'.
- More than 25% of walkers reported that they have high blood pressure, with one in five also reporting that they have high cholesterol. Overall, one in three do not have any chronic conditions.
- Based on self reported height and weight, 60% were overweight or obese, with women more likely to have a healthy weight (40%) than men (30%). Using WHO weight categories,
 - 2% were Underweight (with a BMI <18.5),
 - 38% were Normal weight (with a BMI 18.5-24.99),
 - 37% were Overweight (with a BMI 25-29.99), and
 - 24% were Obese (with a BMI ≥30)

"The main reasons why I am still walking with Heart Foundation is that I've made friends in the group I walk with. It is a social walk unlike walking with my dog"



Walk Organiser Profile

Walk Organisers are volunteers who manage the walking groups. This involves starting the group, participating in training, acting as a point of contact for the group, attending walks and welcome new Walkers, administration (including - registration forms and attendance logs)

Data source:

The 2015 HFW Walk Organiser Survey, an online survey that was distributed to a subsample of Walk Organisers with 259 completing the survey.

Walk Organiser Profile:

From the information provided by Walk Organisers, we know that:

- Just over 80% are female
- The majority 82% were over 55 years of age
- One in five (25%) lived alone
- Over one in three had an annual income of under \$55,000.
- Walking was the most common activity walkers reported undertaking in the previous week.

Feedback from Walk Organisers

"It was those little incentives that kept me going and aiming for the next goal until I made walking a part of my lifestyle. We've talked about this in our group a number of times and everyone agrees."

"We as a group have BBQs, coffee afternoons and ... plan to have guest walkers but would like new ideas [to better motivate walkers]"

"I am still committed as I want to see the group continue and it is a free avenue for exercise I can refer my patients to"

State	ACT	5%
	NSW	22%
	SA	16%
	VIC	18%
	TAS	5%
	NT	1%
	WA	9%
	QLD	23%
Gender	Male	18%
	Female	82%
Age	25-29	1%
	30-34	1%
	35-39	1%
	40-44	2%
	45-49	2%
	50-54	9%
	55-59	12%
	60-64	17%
	65-69	24%
	Over 70	28%
Household Structure	Person living alone	19%
	Couple only	60%
	Couple living with their child(ren)	13%
	Single person living with their child(ren)	1%
	Adult living at home with parents	0%
	Group household	1%
	Other	2%
Annual Household Income	Below \$25,000	12%
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	Over \$120,000	6%
Educational Attainment	Year 11 or below	22%
	Year 12	10%
	Vocational qualification	5%
	Other TAFE or technical certificate	14%
	Diploma	13%
	Bachelor Degree (including Honours)	13%
	Post Graduate diploma or degree	12%
	Other	3%

How HFW helped Marg with her health problems

Marg from the Ellendale Walkers, Tasmania

A friend's invitation to join a HFW group was an opportunity for Marg, from Ellendale in the Central Tablelands of Tasmania, to turn her life around.

It was time to change. Marg's medical history of high blood pressure, thyroid problems, asthma, depression, a life time battle with her weight and a family history of premature deaths was not a healthy story. But after joining the Ellendale Walkers, her determination, her strong positive attitude and wonderful beaming smile have become bigger than any health crisis.

Though Marg admits she did not think she was going to survive her first walk.

"I was breathless, hurting and wobbling like jelly but I completed the walk and since then I haven't stopped walking - whether at home by myself, with a friend or every Tuesday with the Ellendale Walkers," says Marg. "I no longer need to stop during an hour's walk due to breathlessness and I no longer have really sore feet or knees. I have also joined a program which has me running, skipping and boxing every Friday afternoon."

"It was wonderful for me to see Marg put in such an awesome effort on that first day," says Ellendale Walkers, Walk Organiser, Kim. "And now, Marg is shining! We're very proud of her commitment to change her life" she says

Marg's husband couldn't be more supportive. "Marg lost 12 kilos in 3 months. She had tried to lose weight before but nothing seemed to work. She couldn't keep herself motivated and used to get depressed over her weight but with the encouragement of friends and the walking group she a lot happier. Marg is a different girl."

"I feel fantastic!

I have the motivation to get up and go and am doing things that I could not do before, and it has turned my life around"



Marg (left) and volunteer Walk Organiser Kim

Walk Organiser Survey- Key Findings

HFW program

- Over 90% of Walk Organisers are currently walking with a HFW group.
- The social aspect was the main reason Walk Organisers are still walking with a HFW group.
- Seven in ten Walk Organisers stated the main reason for joining the HFW program was to improve their fitness and/or health.
- Almost half of Walk Organisers enjoy the social aspect of walking with a HFW group.



Walker motivation

- Over 70% of Walk Organisers agreed the Walker Recognition Scheme motivates Walkers.
- Almost two in five Walk Organisers believed there was no need to provide further motivation or support to Walkers.

General Support

- The majority of Walk Organisers were satisfied with the overall support they have received from the Heart Foundation and felt the Heart Foundation either provided all or most of the support they currently needed.

Website

- The majority of Walk Organisers were aware of the HFW website, with over 80% of those having actually used the website.
- Close to 70% of Walk Organisers who had used the HFW website agreed the website was easy to use, with two in three rating the website as useful.

Health, wellbeing and physical activity

- Over 90% of Walk Organisers believed the HFW program was important to the physical, social and/or mental wellbeing to walking participants.
- Just over 40% of Walk Organisers believed their participation in a HFW group has helped improve their overall health and/or enabled them to make significant lifestyle changes.
- Lack of motivation, other commitments and/or safety issues are the main barriers which discourage Walk Organisers from participating in walking groups.

Local Coordinator Profile

The Heart Foundation works in partnership with Local Coordinators to set up groups in their local community. Local Coordinators may come from health or community centres, councils or workplaces. Their role includes starting and maintaining a local support network, promoting HFW throughout their region, recruiting HFW participants, training Walk Organisers, supporting local HFW groups, acting as a contact point for their region.

Data sources:

The 2015 HFW Local Coordinators was distributed to a subsample with 181 Local Coordinators completing an online survey.

Local Coordinator Profile:

- Over 80% are female
- 77% work for local councils or health service/hospital
- Close to 40% indicated that their organisation has been involved with the HFW for 5 or more years.
- The majority of Local Coordinators spend less than ten hours per month supporting their local HFW group(s).
- 70% participate in HFW as it helps build networking in the community.
- Local Coordinators indicated a strong value for the program itself and that HFW is well known and recognised.

State	VIC	29%
	NSW	19%
	WA	17%
	SA	15%
	QLD	12%
	TAS	6%
	NT	2%
Gender	Male	12%
	Female	88%
Currently work in ...	Local Government	52%
	Health Service or Hospital	25%
	Non-Government Community Organisation	12%
	Primary Health Network	4%
	Neighbourhood / Community Centre	2%
	Shopping Centre	4%
	Other	2%
How long organisation has been involved with Heart Foundation Walking Program	Less than a year	8%
	Between 1 to 2 years	14%
	Between 2 to 3 years	10%
	Between 3 to 4 years	12%
	Between 4 to 5 years	20%
	Between 5 to 10 years	33%
	10 or more years	4%

Meet one of our HFW Local Coordinator's

Q & A with Jim Binder (City of Salisbury, SA)

How did you get involved as an Local Coordinator?

Originally I was a Walk Organiser at the Jack Young Centre (JYC). When the Local Coordinator changed jobs, I stepped in and have been here ever since. The JYC provide leisure and lifestyle programs for the over 50s to keep active. However, the JYC Walkers are inclusive of all ages and meet twice weekly. We offer fast and slow walking groups and even have people with mobile walking frames involved.



What have you enjoyed the most about being involved with the program?

The positive behaviours HFW develops as well as feedback from walkers such as "I feel healthier" or "I'm able to walk greater distances without being out of breath". As an Local Coordinator, you do feel you are making a difference and are having a positive influence.

What benefits has your organisation had from being involved in HFW as a Local Coordinator?

We are seen as being active and interested in encouraging people to develop healthy lifestyles. Also the benefits of networking with influential bodies such as the Heart Foundation and Northern Metro Health.

What strategies have been the most useful for you in recruiting new Walk Organisers and walkers?

I have tried many different avenues including:

- presentations at local community groups such as healthy weight groups
- having information about HFW and its benefits everywhere! (e.g. announcements at lunchtime in our dining room, monthly newsletter, flyers on the notice boards)
- special offers or promotions to encourage people to take that first step. (e.g. 'Do XX registered walks and receive a pedometer')
- providing an introductory step for beginners – come and walk 10 minutes and build up until you are able to join the longer walks
- keeping it fun, interesting and social – walk in different locations occasionally, link in with other groups nearby – enthusiastic Walk Organisers are vital
- encouraging people to stay for a 'cuppa' – building that sense of group belonging which creates peer type pressure – "I don't feel like going out this week – but XY and Z will see that I'm not there – and I know I will feel better afterwards ... so I think I'll go".

What is your top tip or best piece of advice for new Local Coordinators?

Early on we created a HFW in the North working group. This is a group of Local Coordinators and stakeholders in the Salisbury and Playford Council areas. We meet bi-monthly to discuss how HFW groups are going, plan events, exchange ideas and discuss issues regarding the program.

Local Coordinator Survey- Key Findings

Reasons for Participating

Local Coordinators consistently state their organisation participates in the HFW Program because it is considered a good, well known program that assists with community networking.

	2010	2011	2012	2015
Builds networking within your community	66%	74%	67%	71%
It's a good program	73%	66%	69%	63%
It's well known and recognised	58%	51%	56%	62%
Addresses the National Health Priorities	32%	72%	65%	58%
It's cost-efficient	56%	54%	56%	56%
It's easy to be a part of	61%	64%	58%	56%
It's sustainable	59%	51%	54%	48%
Contributes to organisational work plans	45%	48%	49%	46%
It's time-efficient	40%	39%	35%	29%
Includes Quality and Risk Management	36%	29%	23%	27%
Offers recognition for you and your organisation from the community	39%	34%	31%	27%
Because the Heart Foundation is a not for profit organisation	21%	20%	18%	23%
Other	-	7%	10%	8%

Walker recruitment

- The use of posters and/or flyers was the most popular form of advertising and recruitment used by Local Coordinators.
- Word of mouth and/or direct contact was viewed by Local Coordinators as the best method for recruiting Walk Organisers and Walkers to the program.

Walker engagement

- Almost 50% of Local Coordinators agreed the Walker Recognition Scheme motivates Walkers.
- Just over one in five Local Coordinators believed the incentives and/or rewards currently provided in the HFW program work well.
- 20% of Local Coordinators believed the Heart Foundation could better motivate Walkers by offering different or more incentives/rewards.

Usefulness of Guides, Materials and Resources and General Support

- The majority of Local Coordinators rated the components of the training, online implementation guide and reporting portal and associated resources as useful.
- Over 70% of Local Coordinators felt the online tools provide by the Heart Foundation were sufficient.

2016 Reflections and Future Recommendations

HFW has had continued success in terms of recruitment, retention and public profile in 2016. The capacity building train-the-trainer model provides a streamlined cost-effective framework for the implementation of community walking programs.

HFW continues to offer a flexible approach in delivery which has led to a variety of successful groups from diverse settings right across the country. There has been continued interest in utilising technology to improve program administration as well as engage more Australians in the program.



Local Coordinators and Walk Organisers are willing and able to utilise HFW templates to attract local media and promote the program locally. Targeted local promotion continues to demonstrate success and will help maintain HFW's presence within communities. To achieve large scale participation there will need to be a significant investment in and focus on marketing and promotion.

With a limited advertising budget in 2017, HFW will focus on three main activities to engage more Australians:

- HFW community ambassador program to recruit volunteers from HFW to advocate for and communicate Heart Foundation messages at the community level.
- Expand the current virtual walker community to enable more wearable devices to be synced with a walker's profile
- Explore opportunities for partnership with relevant corporate and community partners.

The retention strategies (quarterly newsletter and Walker Recognition Scheme) will continue to be refined to ensure effective delivery. The newsletter is a valued feature of the program and is a low cost option for the Heart Foundation to engage with an audience of over 27,000 Australians.

HFW groups take ownership of themselves very quickly and there is little support required of the groups once established. There has been interest and good uptake of online training and support resources, however, areas for improvement have been identified to simplify the process.

The national coordination of HFW continues to be refined and improved but there is opportunity to transition or modify a number of key features of HFW to more online and automated processes to reduce administration costs. This will allow the Heart Foundation to increase the accessibility of free walking programs and engage with more Australians in 2017.

Conclusions

The results from the 2016 evaluation suggest that the HFW program is an appropriate framework to:

- Engage Australians to participate in fun, free, social, physical activity through a community partnership approach
- Encourage community connectedness
- Train, resource and up-skill communities to facilitate local walking programs
- Sustain long term participation in a walking program by encouraging local ownership of the groups
- Reach population groups who are least likely to be physically active, including women, people who live alone, people with low income, older Australians, culturally diverse communities, and people who are overweight or obese
- Deliver a transferable model that can be flexible to the specific needs of local communities and special interest groups
- Encourage and assist Australians to be more physically active and to reach sufficient levels to obtain health benefits

The Heart Foundation looks forward to continued success of the program in 2017 and helping more than 27,000 Australians be active through walking groups nation-wide. This will be achieved by exploring opportunities to expand HFW through the use of activity trackers, mobile apps and online challenges as well as partnerships with corporate and community organisations.

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