



Walking through the years

Celebrating the 20th anniversary
of Heart Foundation Walking



National sponsor

State sponsor



History of Heart Foundation Walking

Heart Foundation Walking (HFW) is Australia's largest free walking network consisting of walking groups led by volunteer Walk Organisers and a virtual community of Walkers who track their activity online. HFW is based on the successful 'Just Walk It' program that was developed by the Heart Foundation in 1994 in Queensland. The first walking groups hit the pavement in 1995 – some of these groups are still walking today, 20 years later!

Based on its success the program was replicated in:

- New South Wales in 1999
- the Northern Territory in 2001
- South Australia in 2004
- the Australian Capital Territory and Western Australia in 2006.

'Just Walk It' was consolidated as HFW and began in 2007 as a national program to demonstrate the efficiency, sustainability and cost effectiveness of delivering a nationally coordinated model. In 2008 the first walking groups started in Victoria and Tasmania, at which point HFW was active in every state and territory. Over the past 20 years, more than 75,000 Australians have participated in the Heart Foundation's walking groups, recording over 4 million walks!

Longest standing group in each state and territory

State	Group	Date started
QLD	Burleigh Heads Sunday Group	12 January 1995
NSW	Engadine Neighbourhood Group	11 November 1996
NT	Mitchell Centre Walking Group	10 February 2004
SA	Happy Wanderers Renmark	20 October 2004
ACT	Groovy Grannies	6 February 2006
WA	South Beach Friday Striders	12 July 2006
VIC	Koo Wee Rup Walk n Talk	13 June 2008
TAS	Launceston Wednesday Walkers	27 August 2008

Key milestones

1995 – The first 'Just Walk It' groups started pounding the pavement in QLD

1999 – 'Just Walk It' program started in NSW

2001 – 'Just Walk It' program started in NT

2004 – First walking groups started in SA

2006 – First walking groups hit the footpaths in ACT and WA

2007 – 'Just Walk It' transitioned to the national model of HFW as we know it today

2007 – Inception of HFW – Park Walks program

Sustainability

HFW consistently demonstrates retention rates well above the average of typical community based physical activity programs.

December 2014 retention rates	Groups (%)	Participants (%)
After 3 months	99	93
After 6 months	99	90
After 12 months	90	86
After 2 years	80	64
After 3 years	81	62

Sponsors throughout the years

HFW would not be possible without the support of a number of state and federal partners.

Current sponsors:

- Medibank Community Fund (national sponsor)
- ACT Government through ACT Health (state and territory sponsor)

Past sponsors:

- Queensland Government
- Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing
- Alzheimer's Australia.

Groups that have achieved the most walks

State	Group	Date started	Number of walks
QLD	Brookside Walking Group	23 January 2002	213,486
NSW	Lismore Lung Support	21 May 2008	22,782
SA	Colonnades Walkers	4 October 2007	19,459
NT	Casuarina Walk Group	13 August 2004	10,691
WA	Bassendean Walkers	20 August 2010	9,780
VIC	Keilor Walkers	18 November 2009	7,832
TAS	Geeveston Gaitors	17 March 2009	5,952
ACT	Groovy Grannies	3 February 2006	3,323

Individuals who have achieved the most walks

State	Name	Group	Number of walks
QLD	Helen Martin	Inala Forest Lake	4,052
NSW	Anonymous	Lismore Lung Support	2,883
SA	Dean and Judith Rowe	Let's Go Walking	2,510
WA	Bob Porter	Oval Walkers	1,249
VIC	Wayne and Cathy Bedson	Warrandyte Wanderers	821
ACT	Ann Foldi	Goodwin Walkers	616
NT	Judy Miller	Casuarina Walk Group	600
TAS	Laura Ferris	Giant Steps	591

"The camaraderie is absolutely tops; we have had three social functions for our members – walking has filled a void in my life." Walker

"As a widow living alone, the morning walk and chat uplifts me." Walker

2008 – Victoria and Tasmania joined the walking revolution as the first walking groups began in these states

2012 – The Active Body Active Brain pilot program was run nationally with Alzheimer's Australia and the ACH Group

2013 – Heart Foundation Walkers reached their three millionth walk, totaling the distance of 16 return journeys to the moon!

2014 – Inaugural Annual Golden Shoe Awards acknowledged HFW participants who go above and beyond their role to make walking a great experience for others

2015 – Launch of HFW's new online portal which includes a component for virtual Walkers to track their activity

Join us

HFW aims to support Australians to lead active, healthy lives by encouraging them to join or start walking groups which are fun and a great way to meet new people.

Walking for at least 30 minutes a day provides a range of heart health benefits including maintaining a healthy weight, increased fitness and strength, improved self-esteem and mental health.

Members receive some great benefits including special offers, regular newsletters, incentives and prizes to help keep Walkers motivated.

"I have made new friends and we socialise outside of walking, my health has improved, I can walk safely and always have a laugh. I tell all my friends and neighbours it is the best club I have ever joined and everyone is so friendly."

Walker

"Walking is really something special. Sometimes you meet other people who are walking around and you start talking – it's great."

Walker with dementia



To join or start a walking group visit
walking.heartfoundation.org.au or call our
Health Information Service on 1300 36 27 87.

National sponsor

State sponsor

