

Physical Activity Project

Background

The Town of Kwinana is located approximately 40km south of Perth and has a population of approximately 22,000. To increase the physical activity levels of the community, the Town of Kwinana employed a Physical Activity Officer who was responsible for implementing the Town of Kwinana's Physical Activity Plan. This included projects established by the Physical Activity Committee, through extensive community consultation.

Project Objectives

- Increase the number of people in Kwinana walking regularly.
- Increase awareness and knowledge of physical activity opportunities among residents in the Town of Kwinana.
- Develop and maintain sustainable partnerships to gain support for physical activity promotion, opportunities and strategies.
- Create and maintain a supportive physical, social and economic environment for physical activity.

Project Strategies

- Establish local walking groups.
- Identify, train and provide ongoing support to community volunteers as walk group leaders.
- Develop a pedometer loan system through the Kwinana Recquatic Centre and the Town of Kwinana Library.
- Develop and offer walking and/or pedometer challenges.
- Investigate the development of walk trails in the local area.
- Distribute Town of Kwinana walking maps.
- Develop and install 'point of decision' signage.
- Increase community awareness of the opportunities for physical activity within the Town of Kwinana.
- Use media to promote physical activity opportunities.
- Use the 'Healthy Lifestyles' community caravan to promote physical activity at town events.
- Develop a Town of Kwinana workplace physical activity strategy.
- Collaborate with the Kwinana Recquatic Centre to provide physical activity programs that are low cost, subsidised and targeted at specific populations.

Project Results

Through collaboration, leadership and coordination and a wide range of project strategies and activities, the Town of Kwinana Physical Activity Project has achieved some important results.



Information and resources

- 200 local walking maps have been reprinted and redistributed.
- The Town of Kwinana 'Healthy Lifestyles' community caravan has been used at 11 different events promoting physical activity and health.
- Signage (10 mobile A-frames) to promote 'walking' and 'parking further from the car' have been placed at local doctors surgeries and shopping complexes.
- 3 'Kwinana Walkers' newsletters have been developed and distributed to 120 people directly and to the community through Community Health and the Kwinana Recquatic Centre.
- A pedometer loan system has been established through the Kwinana Recquatic Centre and the Town of Kwinana Library with 82 pedometers loaned to date.
- A path reporting system has been established with the Town of Kwinana Engineering Department. Reporting forms are available for the community at the Town of Kwinana Administration Centre.
- 29 paid/unpaid articles have been published in local media.



Physical activity events, programs and activities

- 3 walk leaders have been recruited and trained, with 2 currently leading a walking group.
- 5 walking groups have been established involving 120 people. 108 walks have been undertaken since the start of the project.
- A Workplace Pedometer Challenge was held involving 60 people.
- New Kwinana Recquatic Centre programs have been developed including: 'Revitalise Gym' and 'Revitalise Aqua', 2 low cost group fitness programs aimed at sedentary people; 'Live Longer Live Stronger', a seniors program in collaboration with the Council of the Ageing; and 'Proteen' a physical activity program aimed at teens in collaboration with the Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR).
- 200 eligible people have purchased a discount membership to the Kwinana Recquatic Centre (eligible persons include walking group members and 'at risk' individuals identified through health checks at numerous events).
- All Town of Kwinana employees have free access to use the Kwinana Recquatic Centre facilities.



Leadership and coordination

- A multi-sectoral team involving recreation, environmental health, planning and community development staff has been established to keep physical activity on the agenda and sustain the identified physical activity strategies.
- \$240,000 has been made available to upgrade 9 local parks to increase opportunities for physical activity.
- The Council has provided \$10,000 to fund the YMCA Youth Physical Activity Project.
- The Council has allocated funds to employ a staff member to focus on physical activity and to link with park developments.
- A funding application has been submitted to the DSR Trails Grant program to develop a Trails Master Plan.



Where To From Here?

- The Town of Kwinana and the South Metropolitan Health Unit have provided funding to employ a Health Promotion Officer from 2005 to 2006.
- Trails development will occur if the funding application is successful.
- Several walking groups will remain running with minimal support from the council.
- The Kwinana Recquatic Centre and the Town of Kwinana Library will maintain the pedometer loan scheme.
- The path reporting system will be maintained by the Town of Kwinana.
- Park development policy changes will ensure future parks support physical activity.
- Funding will continue to be allocated by council to upgrade facilities, such as parks to encourage physical activity.
- Information shelters promoting physical activity in the area will be installed in two local parks in Spring 2005.
- The Town of Kwinana Workplace Physical Activity Strategy will be further developed by the Wellness Team.



Lessons Learned

- Recruiting walking group leaders and sustaining commitment is challenging as people are not willing to commit for various reasons.
- Making the walk leader role less formal and letting natural leaders run the group was more successful.
- Informal walking groups were formed through people meeting at walking and physical activity events. These groups walk more often and have better retention rates than larger, organised groups.

Total Project Costs: \$31,529.90 (including \$15,000 Local Activity Grants)
Project Date: August 2004 – May 2005
Contact: Town of Kwinana Ph: 9439 0200

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