



Park and Walk

Background

Northam is an established regional centre located 96 kilometres from Perth in the Wheatbelt Region. The town services the Central Agricultural District and is the focal point for important rail and road links. The Town and Shires of Northam have a combined population of 10,300. The recent completion of the Northam Bypass road has resulted in decreased through traffic in Northam and has enabled the redevelopment of the main street to be more pedestrian friendly.

Project Objectives

- To encourage more people to walk between destinations along the main street when they shop, rather than driving from one to another.

Project Strategies

- Produce signage to encourage people to 'park and walk'.
- Produce brochures to promote the concept that highlight the 'X number of steps to...'
- Develop an education program using local media including newspapers, radio and the Town of Northam's website and newsletter.
- Launch the signage and brochures when completed, at an event with key players.



Project Results

- Twelve signs were installed.
- 2,000 brochures were distributed through shops and other outlets.
- The public awareness campaign included a radio interview and four articles in the local newspaper.
- A launch was held with the Town of Northam's major business owners and customers.
- An increase in the number of people walking from major car parks into the central business district.
- Favourable feedback has been received from shop owners who have requested more brochures to distribute at their counters.

Where to from here?

- Historic Walk brochures, which are under development, will be linked to the project.
- A series of sculptures will be installed in the main street in February 2006.
- Northam Recreation Centre's Walk Northam project and exercise trails will link to the Park and Walk promotion.
- The Town of Northam will continue to maintain signage and print additional brochures for inclusion in Welcome packs for new residents and community members.



Lessons learned

- Changes in staff caused delays and a loss of momentum in completing the project.
- Considerable planning, design and liaison between agencies and stakeholders is required to ensure signage and materials meet the needs of the local community.
- Additional money would have enabled additional programs such as radio advertising and competitions to be organised, to further increase awareness of the Park and Walk message.



Total project cost:	\$10,000 (including \$5,000 Local Activity Grant)
Project Date:	November 2003 – November 2004
Contact:	Town of Northam. Phone: 9622 6100

These projects have been supported by Physical Activity Taskforce Local Activity Grants through Lotterywest and the Western Australian Local Government Association. Information on Local Activity Grants and case studies can be found online at www.beactive.wa.gov.au



Walk Northam

Background

Following the success of the Park and Walk project, the Town of Northam recognised that a more comprehensive project was required to build on the increased awareness of walking. The second project built on the theme and design of the first and aimed to raise awareness of physical activity and increase participation.

Project Objectives

- Increase participation in physical activity especially walking and cycling.
- Increase awareness of physical activity and the positive effects of exercise.

Project Strategies

- Promote walkability and cycleability of the Town of Northam through paid print and radio, Council newsletters and the website.
- Develop a Walk Northam logo to complement existing street signage.
- Conduct three, 10-week Healthy Lifestyle programs with local health professionals.
- Develop physical activity packs including pedometers and physical activity information, for loan from the Recreation Centre.
- Identify and mark with signage three walking and two cycling routes.
- Develop and distribute a Town of Northam walking and cycling map.
- Train walk leaders and develop walking groups.
- Conduct the Town of Northam Walkathon and training program and other events in Walk There Today Week and Physical Activity Awareness Day.

Project Results

Marketing & Media

- A radio campaign resulted in 500 occasions of coverage and advertising to promote the Walk Northam program and physical activity.
- Regular press advertising and articles in the Advocate, York Community Matters and articles in the West Australian newspaper.
- 2,000 flyers were sent to all local schools.
- 3,000 flyers were distributed through a letterbox drop by Australia Post.
- Emails sent through partner distribution lists including the Act, Belong Commit campaign.
- Development of Walk Northam logos for trail signage and the Healthy Lifestyle program.
- School competitions including colouring and naming of the logo signet (Avon Eddie).
- Promotional T-shirts, beanies and hats for walking events and groups.



Education and skill development

- 100 participants enrolled in the 4 x 7 week Healthy Lifestyle programs.
- Four walk leader courses conducted with 12 walk leaders trained.
- Three walking groups were started and continue to meet regularly.
- Pedometers and information kits were distributed and used by all Healthy Lifestyle program participants.



Improved environments for walking

- 20 Walk Northam signs with logos were produced and erected.
- Three recreational walk trails were identified within the Town of Northam boundaries.
- Walk maps were designed and 2,000 distributed.
- The River Walk Trail in Bernard Park was sealed.
- There was increased usage of identified walk trails, especially the River Walk.

Events

- Over 40 people participated in the 2005 Walk There Today Walk Week event.
- Over 200 people attended the Community Walkathon around the bridges in June 2006.
- Several new recreational programs were developed and promoted including Floorball, Dodgeball, Corporate Challenge and After School programs, resulting in many new participants in recreation programs.
- Continual increase in participation rates in the Town of Northam's recreation programs over the last 12 months.



Where to from here?

- Lighting upgrades for the River Walk Trail are planned for the end of 2006.
- The Recreation Centre will continue to support walking groups.
- New programs will be implemented to suit the recreational needs of all sectors of the community.

Lessons learned

- It is important to follow up with participants, especially those involved in the Healthy Lifestyle program. Follow up sessions, three weeks after the completion of the lifestyle program, have commenced. These have been well received and attended.
- Marketing through a letterbox drop was more effective than radio and press advertising. It is also far more cost effective.
- There was a far greater drop off rate in participants in the 5.00pm Healthy Lifestyle program group (compared to 9.00am) due to work commitments etc., making a 7 week program difficult. Running lifestyle sessions, as independent sessions at night will be trialled, to enable participants to only attend sessions of particular interest.
- The intercept survey and responses from participants in the Walkathon showed the community wants these types of programs and does see them as valuable.
- Attempts will be made to link the walking groups with other parts of the program to better promote these walking groups.

Total project cost:	\$52,400 (including \$19,360 Local Activity Grant)
Project Date:	April 2005 to June 2006
Contact:	Town of Northam Recreation Centre Phone: 9622 5153