

18/03/2019



To: Ms Leanne Linard MP
Chair Education, Employment and Small Business Committee
Parliament House, George Street, Brisbane QLD 4000
EESBC@parliament.qld.gov.au

From: Professor Corneel Vandelanotte, CQUniversity
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Dear Ms Linard and Committee members,

10,000 Steps Submission to Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill 2019

On behalf of *10,000 Steps* physical activity program (hosted by the Central Queensland University and funded through Queensland Health since 2001) I would like to express my support for the establishment of an independent statutory body for health promotion, and use this opportunity to make a submission to the Education, Employment and Small Business Committee (EESBC) regarding the *Health and Wellbeing Queensland (HWQ) Bill 2019*.

We encourage bipartisan support for more activity and funding for preventative health in Queensland and urge all Members of Parliament to support the Bill to establish HWQ.

Given the very high prevalence of health risk factors (e.g., physical inactivity) obesity, chronic disease, preventable burden and health care costs the establishment of a new health promotion commission that is underpinned by a whole of government approach to strengthen linkages across sectors and to build new capacity is urgently needed. The proposed HWQ will be able to prioritise, resource and fund coordinated approaches to improving health and wellbeing of Queenslanders.

As a health behaviour change expert, I wholeheartedly agree that lifestyle-related behaviours influenced by a complex mix of factors, that rises above mere individual responsibility for one's own health, and that reducing risk factors associated with chronic disease requires more than a single intervention.

In that context, I am very pleased that Queensland Health has supported the *10,000 Steps* physical activity promotion project for over 18 years and this has made a difference. Our program now has nearly 400,000 registered members and undoubtable this has contributed to the physical activity increases reported in the latest Chief Health Officer report. The 2018 QLD Chief Health Officer Report indicated that prevalence of sufficient physical activity increased by 15% over the past 10 years and that walking increased from 120 to 220 minutes per week. However, activity levels are still 9% below the National average, so a lot more work needs to be done.



Strong and independent governance

For strong outcomes in health promotion it is crucial that HWQ is as independent from political processes as possible, and that it is developed in such a way that its independence cannot be undermined by a change in government. As such, it will be important that HWQ can take its own decisions and make its own budget allocations. We therefore support that it is the HWQ board who will decide on objectives, strategies and policies.

In this respect, the composition of the Board will be important and must guarantee that a large number of Board Members will be appointed through an independent process, to ensure conflicts of interested are appropriately dealt with and that the right mixture of skills, knowledge and experience is represented. As such, HWQ will be able to review the evidence and make strong recommendations on investment in policy, legislation and strategy to promote health and wellbeing in Queensland, while also maintaining a very high level of public accountability.

Long-term support for evidence- and population-based programs

The task at hand is enormous. Millions of Queenslanders suffer from one or more chronic diseases and about two thirds are overweight or obese. To make any sort of lasting change will require evidence-based programs with proven effectiveness that are implemented and disseminated over a long period of time. Achieving momentous change cannot be achieved through supporting short-term one-off projects that are more about social marketing rather than actual behaviour change. The sector has been plagued by flashy initiatives that come and go without making a sizable dent and give the impression that health promotion doesn't work. Our *10,000 Steps* program is a notable exception to this rule, and its 18-year funding history is unprecedented for a health promotion project. Despite a small budget (only \$4 million since inception), our nearly 400,000 registered members and annual awareness survey demonstrates long-term investment pays off: more than 70% of Queenslanders know our program exists, while not a single other health promotion project reaches double digits.

In relation to this, it will also be essential that HWQ is provided with sufficient funding to achieve its objectives, and while the 2019-2020 budget allocation of \$33 million is more than welcome, it can only be a starting point if one is serious about achieving the aims (e.g., 10% increase in people at a healthy weight). While government funding is always tight, spending more on prevention will see overall health cost reduce, provided there is a long-term vision and approach underpinned by evidence- and population-based programs that can be scaled up and reach large numbers of people at low cost.

Aside from investing in long-term health promotion programs, it will also be essential that HWQ invests in research projects to examine the effectiveness of new approaches and innovations in health promotion that are directly applicable to the health problems that Queenslanders are facing. Queensland is unique (e.g., its rural, regional and urban determinants of health are different from elsewhere) and therefore it needs programs that are uniquely applicable to Queenslanders.



Continuation of programs with proven success

Finally, HWQ should support existing programs that have already demonstrated strong outcomes. In this context, it would be welcome to see established programs such as *Heart Foundation Walking* and *10,000 Steps* funded through HWQ so that it can hit the ground running and continue the implementation of successful initiatives that are already making a difference. As such, I thought it useful for the committee to provide some more background information about the *10,000 Steps* Program (see next pages), one of Australia's most successful health promotion programs ever.

In sum, *10,000 Steps* support the development of a statutory health promotion commission in and we are supportive of the proposed Bill. I look forward to hearing the outcomes of the Committee's inquiry.

Sincerely yours,



Professor Corneel Vandelanotte.



What is 10,000 Steps?

10,000 Steps is a state-wide multi-strategy physical activity intervention that uses a website (www.10000steps.org.au) and smartphone app (10,000 Steps) as its core implementation strategies. 10,000 Steps aims to support individuals, workplaces and communities to be more physically active, as well as to increase awareness of the benefits of being active in the community. Regular physical activity is a proven way to prevent cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer, and it improves sleep, mood and mental health.

Individual 10,000 Steps participants use a step counter or activity tracker to record their daily activity and work towards the goal of 10,000 steps per day. The 10,000 Steps website and smartphone app allow participants to set goals, record their steps, view their progress and participate in monthly step Challenges via an interactive dashboard. The Health Measures section also allows participants to set goals, record and monitor weight and waist girth. Registered organisations can access our established, evidence-based resources to promote physical activity, create 10,000 Steps 'Tournaments' and develop supportive community or workplace environments to be active. In 2018, a new feature was added which facilitates the implementation of healthy lifestyle challenges focusing on weight loss, waist circumference loss and steps for a set period of time.

The Queensland Government has set 10,000 Steps as their key physical activity workplace health promotion strategy since 2011. 10,000 Steps is one of the longest running and most successful health promotion programs worldwide, and this was recently recognised by the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* who featured 10,000 Steps as one of a few health promotion 'bright spots' from around the world that really work. The success of the program is in part due to its outstanding ability to collaborate with Government Departments, Health Services, NGO's, workplaces, community organisations and other health initiatives.

Over the extended funding period (2001-2018), the 10,000 Steps program has shown outstanding ability to meet the project performance measures and deliverables. The program has exceeded its performance measures for workplaces, community and Tournaments within the current 2016-2019 funding agreement. Evaluations conducted since 2012 with participants in Workplace Tournaments has shown the program has a real-world impact and significantly increases physical activity levels (159 minutes per week) of those who participate.

How does 10,000 Steps align with Government directions?

The main aim of the 10,000 Steps program is to increase physical activity at a population level to improve health and reduce chronic disease, as such it contributes to the *Healthy Weight Strategy* under the *Queensland Health and Wellbeing Strategic Framework*. This framework sets a prevention-focused pathway for creating healthier places where people live, work, learn and play.



10,000 Steps also aligns with the following Queensland, national and global health plans and priorities:

- *Our Future State: Advancing Queensland’s Priorities*,
- *Queensland National Parks, Sport and Racing Plan (2017-2021)*,
- *National Sport 2030 Plan*,
- *Queensland Walking Strategy (2019-2029)* that is currently being developed,
- *Digital Health Strategic Vision for Queensland 2026*, and the
- *WHO Global Physical Activity Action Plan (2018-2028)*.

What has 10,000 Steps achieved?

All time achievements	Monthly achievements
 393,000 members registered	 2600 members registered
 Over 206 Billion steps logged	 Over 1.2 Billion steps logged
 13,500 organisations registered	 63,000 website sessions
 67,700 App installs	 1400 App installs
 Over 6000 team tournaments	 300 Challenge participants

Additional major achievements:

- Over 75% awareness and recognition of the program in Queensland (compared to <10% for other health programs)
- Implemented by 53 out of 77 Queensland local government councils
- 42 scientific journal articles underpinning evidence for the program
- Recognised worldwide as a ‘bright spot’ health promotion program that truly works (*British Journal of Sports Medicine*, October 2018)
- The 10,000 steps concept has been copied around the world (e.g. 10,000 Steps Flanders [Belgium], UWalk [Canada], Vitality Works [New Zealand])

Why does 10,000 Steps continue to be relevant?

Regular physical activity is an important contributor to good health, including reducing the risk of chronic disease and promoting healthy weight. The 2018 QLD Chief Health Officer report indicated that prevalence of sufficient physical activity increased by 15% over the past 10 years and that walking increased from 120 to 220 minutes per week. However, Queensland activity levels are still 9% below the national average. Physical activity is even lower in regional and remote areas of Queensland when compared to major cities. Physical inactivity is one of the top 5 health risk factors, contributing to 5% of the total disease burden in the Queensland population.



Replacing sedentary behaviour with any activity (including light-intensity physical activity) reduces the risk of all-cause mortality, cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes. More physical activity (even small increases) results in more health benefits and new research shows there is no minimum duration of activity to achieve health benefits. This research directly supports the aims of the 10,000 Steps program, which is to get people more active by increasing daily incidental activity. Our program tagline *'Every Step Counts'* is thus more apt than ever.

The 10,000 Steps program has proven to be a project with longevity and continued relevance. We are currently registering over 2,600 new participants every month and there are no signs of this slowing down, on the contrary, many organisations have already contacted us with their desire to implement 10,000 Steps beyond the current funding agreement.

The continued success of the program has been achieved through ongoing evaluation and adaptation. Three major website redevelopments (2006, 2009, 2017) and complete rebranding in 2017 were conducted. To keep up with technology demands we have developed and updated a mobile application and implemented the ability to sync steps via Fitbit (and Garmin, to be released early 2019). We have also continued to review, develop and update resources for workplaces and communities to assist them to promote and create environments supportive of physical activity.

Program Resources



Free resources available to individuals, workplaces and community groups



Team Tournaments



Monthly Challenges with prizes



Free 10,000 Steps mobile app

Who wants to implement 10,000 Steps in 2019?

Many organisations are embedding 10,000 Steps as a physical activity program within their health and wellbeing plans with the following already having direct contact the project to discuss how they want to implement 10,000 Steps in 2019:

- The Hospital and Health Services of: Central Queensland, Mackay, Townsville, Cairns, South West and North West
- Mackay Institute of Research and Innovation (integration with Let's Shape Up), Bundaberg Regional Council, University of Queensland, CQUniversity, Department of Veterans Affairs

Note: Over 50% of Tournaments are conducted every year by Queensland workplaces that are already registered with 10,000 Steps (thus not new registrations). Many are coordinating annual 10,000 Steps Tournaments and incorporating 10,000 Steps as part of health and wellbeing plans.