

10,000 Steps Case Report 38

Rabbit Proof Fence 10,000 Steps Challenge — Darumbal Community Youth Services Inc.



Background:

Working as the Physical Activity Project Officer with Darumbal Community Youth Services Inc. in Rockhampton, I am required to develop and implement programs within the Indigenous community to raise awareness and increase physical activity. The health issues that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population face here in Australia have been well documented in recent times. It is also well known that the majority of these issues can be reduced with physical activity and good nutrition. With the 10,000 Steps program being such a great initiative, it was the perfect way for sedentary people in the community to start getting active.

The true story of 3 Aboriginal girls in 1931 escaping a reserve in Western Australia and following the Rabbit Proof Fence 1600km to return to their home and family holds a special place with all Indigenous Australians. By creating a custom challenge with this connection to Indigenous history, participants were inspired and determined to participate in the program. To enhance this connection, teams were made up of just 3 members to try and get a feel for what the girls accomplished.

Partners Involved:

Bidgerdii Community Health Services

Objectives:

- Increase awareness of the national physical activity guidelines.
- Increase physical activity within the Indigenous community.

Implementation Strategies:

- Forged a partnership with local Indigenous health services.
- Identified a large number of Indigenous organisations in Rockhampton.
- Contacted 10,000 Steps project office to gain ideas and feedback for the Rabbit Proof Fence Challenge.
- Contacted and invited staff of all the Indigenous organisations to participate in the challenge.
- Launched challenge with a bush walk and morning tea at Dreamtime Cultural Centre.
- Conducted an 8 week challenge with team captain's reporting steps to the project coordinator at the completion of each week.
- Distributed weekly newsletters with challenge standings and facts about the real journey along the Rabbit Proof Fence.

Outcomes:

- A total of 35 teams and 105 participants signed up for the challenge.
- Out of the 35 teams, 24 teams competed for the entire 8 weeks of the challenge.

Where to from here:

The Rabbit Proof Fence Challenge created positive interest within the Indigenous community. This was evident by the number of participants involved. After consulting with the organisations the majority would welcome an annual challenge. The challenge would also be opened up to the greater Central Queensland region.

Lessons Learnt:

1. The duration of challenge could be reduced to 6 weeks to maintain involvement. It was around the 4-6 week stage when numbers in participation started to fade.
2. Weekly prizes could have been used to sustain participation.
3. The partnership with Bidgerdii Community Health Services worked well, as they were able to contribute the nutritional aspect of the project to coincide with the physical activity aspect.

This Case Report was developed by:

Name: Lionel Harbin
Organisation: Darumbal Community Youth Services Inc.
Position: Physical Activity Project Officer
Email: lionel.harbin@darumbal.org.au
Phone: 07 4922 6180

Rabbit Proof Fence Challenge Flyer

