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ADVOCACY, POLICY OR PRACTICE STREAM

Title: Still Stepping: More than 20 years of evolution in the 10,000 Steps Program in Supporting Australians to be active

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PURPOSE: The 10,000 Steps Program is a free, evidence-based initiative designed to increase physical activity among Australians. Launched over two decades ago as a whole-of-community pedometer-based initiative, the program has evolved into a scalable digital program that engages individuals, workplaces, and communities. The program demonstrates how iterative change and continuous improvement can support long-term impact. It addresses physical inactivity by offering behaviour change techniques with proven effectiveness to individuals and low-cost implementation strategies to organisations.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Developed by CQUniversity in 2001, the program is underpinned by the social ecological model, delivering a multi-strategy approach through interactive web and mobile apps with support from the project team. Key features include individual physical activity tracking, team challenges, workplace resources, and community strategies.

Program delivery and innovation are led by CQUniversity, with support from State Government partners including Health and Wellbeing Queensland and Preventive Health SA. These partnerships have enabled broader dissemination through system integration and public health campaigns with local implementation led by Coordinators in councils, workplaces, and health services.

Evaluation includes user feedback, engagement analytics, surveys, and implementation case studies. Since 2020, over 242,000 individuals engaged with the program, logging more than 227 billion steps. Returning individuals increased from 21% in 2020 to 46% in 2024, indicating sustained engagement.

Dissemination strategies include integration into state-level preventive health initiatives, workplace wellness programs, and large-scale step challenges.

CONCLUSIONS: The 10,000 Steps Program shows that digital health initiatives can support engagement, but also highlights that web and mobile apps alone are not enough. Its sustained relevance, strong evidence base, and strategic partnerships position it as a model for scalable, long-term physical activity promotion. As Australia continues to address inactivity at a population level, 10,000 Steps remains a resilient and evolving program with untapped potential for future growth.