

# “Positive Walkers”: celebrating 4 years & an estimated 670 km, understanding its success

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## Background/Purpose

- Following consumer identified needs, the HIV Outreach team, Albion dietitians and consumers collaborated using Heart Foundation Walking to set up “Positive Walkers” in 2018.
- This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> detailed evaluation of “Positive Walkers” and its purpose is to understand the group’s success from the perspective of the Walk Organisers.

## Approach

- Research focus: to investigate the challenges and barriers encountered by Walk Organisers (WOs), and the factors influencing success, including program sustainability.
- All WO were invited to participate including both consumers and clinicians.
- Development of the semi-structured interviews was guided by the Community Tool Box for critical events framework<sup>1</sup>, and Jacob and Furgerson.<sup>2</sup>
- Transcription of interviews was undertaken using AI transcription software Descript and informed by Azevedo et al<sup>3</sup> and Richards<sup>4</sup>.
- Thematic analysis was undertaken with regularly meetings to discuss coding, theme development and analysis. The framework used was informed by Richards<sup>4</sup>.

## Outcomes/Impact

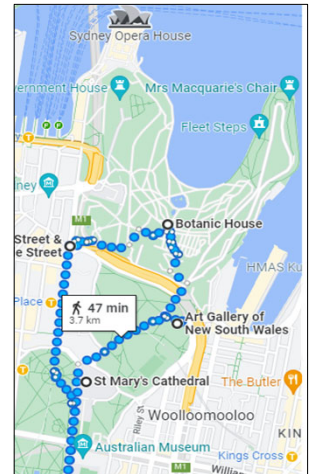
- 9 interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview format. N=6 participants were consumers, n=3 were health professionals.
- 1 WO declined to participate due to ill health.
- Interview duration = 30 minutes

## Main Findings

- The main barriers to participation were route and pace. Route needs to vary, be manageable and enjoyable. Pace needs to be manageable and inclusive. Having 2 WO per walk manages this as well as walker safety.
- Having health professionals involved is appreciated by consumers.
- Participants enjoy information sessions on health topics, e.g. nutrition and MAFLD (metabolic associated fatty liver disease) and bone health.
- The psychosocial benefits are as important to participants as being physically active.

## Recommendations

- Investigate a monthly plan for social outings or education sessions.
- Develop resources for recruitment as numbers are important, ideal being 10-15 participants.
- Involve other health professionals to dietitians to ensure a wider range of benefits.



## Innovation and Significance

- From our previous research we know that ‘Positive Walkers’ provides psychological benefits and contributes to improved wellbeing.
- The findings here are of significance in 1) providing valuable feedback on recommendations for improvement, 2) giving practical insights for replicating this initiative, and 3) ensuring its sustainability.
- It is crucial to ensure the sustainability of ‘Positive Walkers’ which aligns with SESLHD’s ‘SESLHD 2022-25 Exceptional Care, Healthier Lives’ (Partnering for healthier communities and providing person-centred care), and the NSW HIV strategy NSW HIV Strategy 2021-2025: linking and retaining people in care.

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to:

- 1)The consumer volunteers who have taken on the role of WO ensuring that ‘Positive Walkers’ is a success.
  - 2)The walkers without whom there would be no walks.
  - 3)Katherine Johnston, Heart Foundation Walking Area Co-ordinator for providing training, support and ongoing encouragement for ‘Positive Walkers’.
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## References

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