

10,000 Steps program - Evaluation Report

Part of Health and Wellbeing Queensland's
Strategic Evaluation of Prevention Programs



Case Study 1

A large regional school with a medium size staff number



Descriptions of the staff composition, local environment, and 10,000 Steps program engagement of the workplaces profiled for case studies.

A regional school with around 100 staff, comprising a mixture of leadership, teaching, and support roles. The physical environment of the school is large, with space for sporting activities. The school has run 10,000 Steps Tournaments annually for the last decade, organised by a sole workplace coordinator. The Tournament is run during Term 3 and is regarded as a highlight of the school year. The coordinator has incorporated the Tournament into a broader umbrella health and wellbeing focussed event with other activities for the staff and local community to engage in during the period of the Tournament. Although the school has a wellbeing group, the Tournament itself is entirely driven by the coordinator.

Huang, Y., Gnani Srinivasan, A., Gadam, S., Kolesnikova, I., Tabosa, J., Kubler, M., Burger, S-A., & Robinson, M. (2024). 10,000 Steps program—Evaluation report. Institute for Social Science Research, University of Queensland: Brisbane

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Case Study 1



The influence of 10,000 Steps workplace resources in determining Tournament success - profiles of how 10,000 Steps resources were used or adapted by workplace coordinators.

- Made good use of the Tournament and Leaderboard functions of the website and mobile app. These functions were a part of a larger annual month-long event dedicated to mental and physical wellbeing.
- The team management function for Tournaments allowed for customised emails and newsletters sent out to participants as updates on Tournament progress (e.g., highlighting achievements of participants):

... it's every Sunday night I write that up, so they'll get it by Monday morning and what do I include in on that. Yeah, I use [10,000 Steps'] statistics. So from the site, that's really helpful. That's how I get who's hit the 20,000 thousand club, who's training for 30,000. (Coordinator)

- Although some resources outside of the Tournament feature were used (e.g., posters), the Tournament was primarily driven by homegrown resources that were adapted to suit the needs of the workplace and community:

... I think the important thing is when [coordinator] creates a tournament, she purposely tries to match people in their year levels or in their friend groups so then that group of people encourages each other to get out. So it becomes a bit of friendly competition. So she'll put into comp things, challenges I showed earlier before everyone else joined. [Coordinator] creates a timetable for our term and it's all based on mind, body, soul and student participation. (Participant 1)

- Due to the high level of involvement in developing additional activities for the umbrella health and wellbeing event, the Resources on the 10,000 Steps website were not currently being utilised.
- Strategies that enabled engagement included creating teams of friends, encouraging friendly competition, providing regular Tournament updates through email, social media, and regular newsletters.



How the social, organisational, environmental, community and policy levels of support for physical activity in the case study workplaces were influenced by Tournament implementation.

- Success of Tournaments was linked to an inherent cultural passion around improving the health and wellbeing of staff.
- Prior Tournament success drove interest and enthusiasm in future implementation and participation.
- There was a motivation to positively contribute to the community, such as modelling positive behaviours to students. This was highlighted by a regular Tournament participant:

... so challenges like that will get you out on the oval, stepping kids will step with you. You're stepping with your friends. You're chatting as you're doing it. It gets everyone involved. You'll see the other teachers out there doing it and there's a little bit of common bantering, like, 'Oh, we went out, we did this many steps, I'm up to this, what are you up to?' So it gets everyone chatting about it and moving and you physically see it. (Participant 1)

- There was substantial buy-in from all levels of staff.
- Tournaments were viewed, not as a discrete event, but rather as one part of a larger, more holistic approach to wellbeing:

... it ties in to a lot of the wellbeing, like, when you look at things that make a person whole. Like, the 10,000 Steps ties into that health component, but there's also, like, we talk about achievement, positive friendship, relationships and all of that. And by adding in those other things, you're covering all those things that contribute to our wellbeing, so yeah, which is really nice. (Participant 2)

- The placement of Tournaments within a larger umbrella event focussed on improving mental and physical health across multiple domains enabled repeat implementation.
- The sole coordinator was regarded as a Champion who drives enthusiasm amongst staff and creates a social environment that motivates participation and valuing community health and wellbeing.

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Case Study 2

A division of a large government department based in a major city, with around 100 staff at the local site.



Descriptions of the staff composition, local environment, and 10,000 Steps program engagement of the workplaces profiled for case studies.

A division of a large government department based in a major city, with around 100 staff at the local site. There are multiple divisions within the workplace with work that is primarily sedentary. There are hybrid work arrangements with some staff working from home and some working onsite. The workplace ran their first Tournament around a decade ago before discontinuing. Since then, the workplace returned to running Tournaments again and have run a handful in the last few years, at the 'shoulder' months of the year, when the weather is neither too hot nor too cold. The Tournaments are coordinated by a team of coordinators as part of their roles as members of the workplace Wellbeing Committee.

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Case Study 2



The influence of 10,000 Steps workplace resources in determining Tournament success - profiles of how 10,000 Steps resources were used or adapted by workplace coordinators.

- Made good use of the Tournament and Leaderboard functions of the website and mobile app for team management.
- The CSV export function was used for tracking team performance and progress. The ease of use of this function was well regarded.
- The Activity-to-Steps converter¹⁷ was a popular feature due to participants already engaging in non-step-based sports (e.g., cycling, swimming) and a desire to use these activities to contribute to their team performance.
- They reported that the remaining online coordinator resources beyond the Tournament function on the online platform were not currently being used to assist implementation.
- Strategies for Tournament implementation include pre-emptive communications in the lead up to the Tournament. This provided the benefit of encouraging individuals to register with the website ahead of time as individual accounts are required to use and log steps on the platforms. The effectiveness of this strategy was described by one coordinator:

... so it's just to start off with, just a sort of, soft kind of introduction, 'Tournament's coming.' And then you know, you sort of say 'This will be the date' and then, you know, 'Sign up coming.' Get them starting to talk in the office. (Coordinator)

- The use of in-person and informal 'organic conversation(s)' were noted as useful strategies for recruiting first-time participants.
- The use of incentives or prizes were also used to encourage engagement.



How the social, organisational, environmental, community and policy levels of support for physical activity in the case study workplaces were influenced by Tournament implementation.

- Tournaments were originally initiated by the work of the Wellbeing Committee, as part of a broader initiative for improving health and wellbeing in the workplace.
- Repeated implementation has resulted from prior success. As a result, Tournaments have become a regular calendar event. The influence of successes of prior Tournaments alongside the drive of the Wellbeing Committee was highlighted by one of the workplace coordinators:

... I think it's becoming a bit of a stalwart in our calendar of events and – you know, with the right people driving it, and the wellbeing committee, that will be up to the wellbeing committee to keep that alive. But yeah, I think it will continue to be a standard feature in our event calendar. (Coordinator)

- The larger organisation had embraced a new mental wellbeing framework, likely influencing support for continued Tournament implementation.
- The workplace and industry had norms of providing conditions to staff that support for greater work flexibility, wellbeing, and physical activity options.
- Although completing the Tournament was seen as a 'KPI' to leadership, manager buy-in had nonetheless been helpful to drive engagement and demonstrate 'permission' to embrace physical activity in the workplace.



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Case Study 3

A large regional local government organisation with hundreds of staff members across a wide variety of roles



Descriptions of the staff composition, local environment, and 10,000 Steps program engagement of the workplaces profiled for case studies.

A large regional local government organisation with over 500 staff across the entire organisation. The staff is a mixture of people working in offices conducting sedentary work and a large population of outside workers who are more physically active in their roles. The organisation has been running Tournaments for around 2 decades by a team of coordinators, with different staff taking on the roles of Tournament coordinators over the years. Although the leadership of running Tournaments has changed between divisions within the organisation, the event has continued and is part of the work conducted by the health and wellbeing group within the organisation.

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Case Study 3



The influence of 10,000 Steps workplace resources in determining Tournament success - profiles of how 10,000 Steps resources were used or adapted by workplace coordinators.

- Made good use of the Tournament and Leaderboard functions of the website and mobile app for team management.
- Due to repeat implementation and a high level of experience with Tournaments by this workplace, few online resources were utilised by coordinators at the workplace.
- However, health and physical activity facts available on the 10,000 Steps website were often used in regular communications with participants. These were described as a convenient conversation starter at the workplace. This enhanced the informal person-to-person aspect of coordinating.
- Coordinators opted for homegrown resources instead, such as homemade certificates for Tournament completion. These certificates were seen as less easily habituated to, relative to ready-made resources such as posters. As a result, staff are more likely to notice and pay attention to them:

... I mean, things can go up on the wall and they just become – you know, you just don't see them. You're blind to the, because, you know, you just walk past them so many times. But that's one reason why I left that certificate up out there because I thought it was good to just keep reminding people, you know. (Coordinator)

- The Activity-to-Steps converter / cheat sheet was a popular feature due to participants having an interest in using their existing activities to contribute to their team performance.

... But I'm pretty sure that cheat sheet came from the resources because we distributed that throughout everyone and that started a whole different level of conversation about 'Wow! They've even said this uses calories. And this uses calories'. (Coordinator)

- Strategies that enabled successful participation included a commitment to providing one-on-one assistance, especially to troubleshoot the website registration process to new users.
- It was important to reassure participants that the core objective of the Tournament is to 'have fun' rather than reaching a step goal in order to get participant buy-in and engagement.
- To ensure continued participation, the coordinators send out regular emails at the start of the week, with fun facts, as well as team progress on the Leaderboard.



How the social, organisational, environmental, community and policy levels of support for physical activity in the case study workplaces were influenced by Tournament implementation.

- A long-standing history of running Tournaments had contributed to its current longevity in implementation and success.
- The Tournament coordination was run by the work of the Health and Wellbeing Group of the organisation, as part of a broader portfolio of improving mental and physical wellbeing of staff.
- The informal social aspects of the Tournament was a strength of its success. Enthusiastic coordinators who leverage social capital and networks encourage repeat and first-time participation.
- The workplace and industry had an inherent interest in improving the wellbeing of the community through the work that they do, contributing to the enthusiasm towards Tournaments and the health of staff overall.
- A focus on enjoyment and camaraderie rather than achieving a step goal had been successful in encouraging participation in Tournaments. This was demonstrated by the perspective of a coordinator:

... but we just kept assuring everybody [...] It's about a team effort and not everybody's going to be doing everything every day. You know, it's all about us just a combined group. No one's a loser here. We're all winners. That's the one message, I think, that 10,000 Steps really gets out there. Yeah. It doesn't matter what level activity. You're a winner because you're active. (Coordinator)

- The placement of Tournaments within a larger umbrella event focussed on improving mental and physical health across multiple domains enabled repeat implementation.
- The sole coordinator was regarded as a Champion who drives enthusiasm amongst staff and creates a social environment that motivates participation and valuing community health and wellbeing.

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Case Study 4

A large technical services company based in a major city with over 200 staff at the local site with more staff at other sites across the state and the country.



Descriptions of the staff composition, local environment, and 10,000 Steps program engagement of the workplaces profiled for case studies.

A large technical services company based in a major city with over 200 staff at its local site, with more staff at other sites across the state and the country, as well as staff who work remotely. There is a mixture of staff working in offices conducting sedentary work and outside staff who conduct skilled technical manual work. The organisation has run Tournaments for a few years, since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. A small handful of staff participate in the Tournaments every year. The Tournaments are run annually, around Spring to ensure that staff across various Queensland will collectively have good weather outside. The Tournaments are run by a handful of workplace coordinators and this work is done as part of their roles in the workplace Wellness Group.

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Case Study 4



The influence of 10,000 Steps workplace resources in determining Tournament success - profiles of how 10,000 Steps resources were used or adapted by workplace coordinators.

- Made good use of the Tournament and Leaderboard functions of the website and mobile app, particularly because of its ease of use.
- The CSV export function was used for tracking team performance and progress.

...I like to see, you know, how many steps people are doing and yeah. I think we walked enough that we walked across the country and back or something like that. (Coordinator)

- Few other online coordinator resources were utilised beyond the Tournament and Leaderboard functions on the website.
- However, health and physical activity facts available on the 10,000 Steps website were often used in regular communications with participants to make Tournament updates sent to participants more interesting.
- The Activity-to-Steps converter was a popular feature for participants who were already engaging in non-steps-based physical activity.

... but yeah. I think most of us are pretty - we're all doing either running or walking or cycling or swimming or something. So you know, I think the cyclists and swimmers don't get the steps, but because they have the exercise period in there that you can put in. I've done it now. I cycle. Then their steps get up too whatever they should be. (Coordinator)

- Strategies for encouraging engagement were viewed by the workplace as homegrown, adapted to the conditions of the workplace itself rather than drawn from the program coordinator resources. However, many of these strategies aligned with strategies provided by the Program such as sending regular email updates, getting support from leadership to encourage participation, encouraging the sharing of photographs of walks with team members, and a prize incentive for the winning team.



How the social, organisational, environmental, community and policy levels of support for physical activity in the case study workplaces were influenced by Tournament implementation.

- Tournaments were an event initiated by the work of the Wellness Group, as part of a broader portfolio focussed on improving multiple aspects of health and wellbeing of staff.
- Tournaments were seen as an easy-to-use physical activity event to implement amongst staff.
- Due to prior success in implementation, Tournaments had become part of a greater body of initiatives dedicated to wellbeing throughout the year.
- Team leaders supported the initiative and were an important conduit for encouraging participation. Leadership was seen as leading by example by participating while demonstrating authentic support for the initiative.

... I'm not saying this about our organisation particularly, but I think there's a lot of lip service about these things. Like, the directors and everybody on board so that they're out walking or whatever they're doing, so you know, they're leading the charge as well. It's not just lip service. (Coordinator)

- The staff were a mixture of sedentary workers and active workers, with Tournaments being an opportunity for sedentary workers to reflect on levels of physical activity while there was less perceived benefit to active workers.

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Case Study 5

**A division in a large media organisation
based in a major city.**



Descriptions of the staff composition, local environment, and 10,000 Steps program engagement of the workplaces profiled for case studies.

A large media organisation based in a major city. The organisation comprises a mixture of different divisions where staff work within teams. The most recent tournament run from this organisation was in 2022 with participants solely from one divisions, with a first-time coordinator. The previous couple of Tournaments were office-wide and spread across divisions. The Tournament was run as part of a month of wellbeing initiative.

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Case Study 5



The influence of 10,000 Steps workplace resources in determining Tournament success - profiles of how 10,000 Steps resources were used or adapted by workplace coordinators.

- Made good use of the Tournament and Leaderboard functions of the website and mobile app. The Tournament and team management functions were adapted to suit the needs of the division itself.
- Although the workplace implemented Tournaments in the past, new coordinators lacked ready knowledge or existing mentors to support Tournament implementation. Contacting the 10,000 Steps Project Team was described as an important resource to rapidly learn how to implement the Tournament, due to limited time to get started.

...I think I ended up doing a lot of one-on-one email supports and telephone calls to people in Central Queensland [...] University. And then said, 'This is what I want to do, how do I do it?' And then they were able to send me links to the.

– I think it was all basically there in the resources, I just didn't – I was too lazy to start looking or didn't – wanted a quick way to solve it because I needed to solve it pretty quickly to say, 'Yeah, this will work' and get it ticked off. (Coordinator)

- This workplace did not customise or use any of the online resources provided to them, instead relying primarily on the Tournament function on the website and mobile app.
- The Activity-to-Steps converter was well used by participants who had an interest in capturing their existing physical activity as part of their steps performance.
- Strategies employed by this workplace included pitching the Tournament at team meetings and providing regular weekly updates on Tournament progression. Skills unique to the media industry were also leveraged such as building in an emotional element into Tournament communication and messaging to encourage participation.



How the social, organisational, environmental, community and policy levels of support for physical activity in the case study workplaces were influenced by Tournament implementation.

- Although implementation of Tournaments at this workplace had been conducted by different coordinators over the years, awareness of the Program through prior implementation had nonetheless led to future implementation.
- A greater focus of the workplace towards improving workplace health and wellbeing led to the most recent Tournament.

...I mean, you know, even the federal government is talking about – their budget is being based on wellbeing. So it's a new buzzword. So if you've got the resources to tap into the buzzwords of wellbeing, you know. (Coordinator)

- Although leadership buy-in was not present, Tournaments were still viewed as a valuable 'KPI', with no opposition. Tournaments and similar initiatives were thus people-driven, rather than management driven.

... Actually, the organisations look for ways to tick a box and if you can tick a box with this and you've got an off-the-shelf package that you say, 'Hey, roll this out in your workplace', you know, that's part of the game, isn't it? (Coordinator)

- Due to the work of the industry, the workplace had greater interest and knowledge in the value of health and wellbeing in society and the community.