

Stepping On – Falls Prevention Program

Description

The Stepping On program is a free, community-based falls prevention program for people aged 65 years and older. The program is evidenced based and aims to build knowledge, strength and confidence by providing participants with information on how to reduce the risk of falling and maximise their independence at home.

The program is for anyone who is living in the community:

- 65 years and older or 45 years and older for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Able to walk independently or with a walking stick
- Fearful of falling or has fallen recently.

The program runs for seven weeks, two hours per week and participants attend a booster session two months after program completion. Topics covered include:

- Home Hazard awareness
- Moving safely in the community
- Safe footwear
- Nutrition and bone health
- Vision
- Medication management
- Leg strength and balance exercises
- Getting up after a fall.

Aims

The Stepping On program is designed to develop knowledge and skills to prevent falls through:

- Increasing awareness of fall risk and helping people to be more informed about the factors contributing to their risk
- Enhancing self-confidence in fall risk situations
- Improving strength and balance.

Achievements

Since commencing in 2012, programs have been delivered across all local government areas in 10 different locations. In 2015:

- 14 programs were completed
- 166 participants completed the program.



Future Directions

- Further Aboriginal and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse groups will be delivered across the Local Health District.
- Additional facilitator training will be held in 2016.
- Local program evaluation will be completed in 2016.
- Long term outcomes of the program are currently being evaluated at a state level by the George Institute for Global Health.
- Enable and support a diverse range of services to deliver the Stepping on Program.

Program Outcomes

- 97% of participants report that the program met their expectations.
- Participants report the main benefits they gained from attending the program were:
 - better balance and strength due to exercise
 - increased confidence
 - improvements in their mobility
 - opportunity for social interaction.
- 79.5% or more of participants improved their performance in all three physical measures at the post assessment.
- 73.9% of participants made further improvements in the 'Timed Up and Go' measure at the Booster session, 2 months after program completion.

Fast Facts about Stepping On

- *Stepping On* guest speakers include: Podiatrist, Physiotherapist, Guide Dogs Association, Dietitian, Road Safety Officer and Pharmacist.
- An assessment is conducted at session 1 and 7 to measure participants' balance and strength.
- Participants are provided with an exercise manual, session handouts and information on local services relevant to the topics covered.

Fast Facts about Falls

- 1 in 3 people 65 years and over fall each year
- Falls are the leading cause of hospital admissions for trauma and deaths of older people
- 35% of people who fall become less active
- Falls can reduce mobility and independence
- Remaining active can prevent falling

