



OPAL Case Study Blue Lake Fun Run

City of Mount Gambier

Goal: Active Leisure

Theme: Active Play

Strategy: Programs and Services

Summary

The Blue Lake Fun Run initiated by Mount Gambier OPAL ran for the fourth time in 2013. Participants from schools, sports clubs, workplaces and the community gathered together to enjoy the annual event held in early December. The aim of the Fun Run was to increase and promote active leisure and to cater for participants of all ages and abilities.

Our approach

A small group of people representing tourism, sport, local government and the community got together in 2009 to plan the first fun run in collaboration with Life. Be In It. A myriad of details were worked through including route, distances, promotions and registrations with the aim of making this a professionally run event which was suitable for people of all levels of fitness. Runs of 10.4km, 6.8km and 3.2 km were agreed. A major sponsor was found, as were other community sponsors. Council agreed to close the major road where the run would start; this was in the centre of the town ensuring a high profile. Registrations were initially slow but promotions with schools, workplaces

and community groups resulted in over 1000 participants in the first year with more in subsequent years.

Life. Be In It. run an eight-week Active Community Team Challenge encouraging the community to train in the weeks leading up to the event and there are locally supported training programs provided in the newspaper and on the web site, together with local practice sessions for those wishing to build their fitness before the run. There were incentives for teams to join, healthy food, music and dress ups to help make the event a fun family occasion.

Our achievements

Over 1300 people participated in the 2011 fun run which is now a major community event making available an accessible, fun, non-threatening opportunity for people to be active. Figures show a 5% participation rate in Mount Gambier, higher than the City to Bay!¹ In 2012, the Rotary Club of Mount Gambier Lakes took over running this event, donating money raised to local health and wellbeing initiatives and helping ensure sustainability. This transfer brings a new partner to physical activity promotion in Mount Gambier.

New suppliers have been sourced and the café has made healthier options clear for consumers by providing promotional material and prompts throughout the facility.

The Rotary Club of Mount Gambier Lakes was delighted to take on the challenge of the Blue Lake Fun Run event because we could see the positive impact it had on the community. The partnership between OPAL, the City of Mount Gambier and the Rotary Club of Mount Gambier Lakes made the transition easy with our ongoing commitment to ensure we continued to invest in the social, emotional and physical wellbeing of our people. Our Club ensures this successful event will be sustainable into the future.

Morris Dickins, Director Fun Run Committee, The Rotary Club of Mount Gambier Lakes



Opal

Why

Mount Gambier OPAL was keen to support a high profile fun event that was aligned with one of OPAL's key intentions – to increase physical activity for children and families – and would also raise awareness about OPAL's work. There had been discussion amongst local people over a number of years about the feasibility of holding a local fun run as there was nothing else in the south east of South Australia. Mount Gambier OPAL sponsored the first Blue Lake Fun Run in late 2010.

Who

The fun run is organised for the entire Mount Gambier community.

Rationale

The recent National Health Survey in 2011-2012 showed almost one-third (32.4%) of adults aged 18 years and over undertook moderate or high levels of exercise (for fitness, recreation or sport) up from 27.6% in 2007-2008. However, two thirds of the Australian adult population was either sedentary or had low levels of exercise. Recent data for physical activity by children is not yet available but evidence shows that many children do not meet the national guidelines for physical activity and therefore do not acquire the benefits.²

Further, just over a third of Australians aged 18 years and over are in the healthy weight range (35.2%) but nearly two thirds are overweight or obese. Almost 18% of children (aged



five to 17 years) are overweight and nearly 8% obese. The prevalence of obesity is also higher in regional areas compared with metropolitan populations.³

Resources

A variety of resources were produced to promote the event to the community and for the event itself. There is also a Fun Run website – see www.bluelakefunrun.com.au

About OPAL?

The OPAL (Obesity Prevention and Lifestyle) initiative supports children, families and their communities to

eat well and be active. It is South Australia's largest ever investment in obesity prevention. OPAL uses a range of interconnected strategies to build knowledge and skills and change policies and environments in partnerships with others to support healthy behaviour. This case study is one of many linked projects that together are helping children, through their families and communities, to be healthy now and stay healthy for life.

Contact:

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¹ Blue Lake Fun Run: www.bluelakefunrun.com.au/about.html

² SA Health. Think Feet First stakeholder kit. [on line]. Available from: www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/healthy+living/healthy+places/where+we+live+and+play/opal/think+feet+first+step+cycle+scoot+to+school. (Accessed 4 July 2013).

³ Australian National Preventive Health Agency. State of Preventive Health Report 2013. Canberra: ANPHA; 2013.

