

# Talk N Walk

## PILOT INFORMATION FOR SCHOOLS

### What is the Talk N Walk Program About?

- We know that being physically active is a great way to help you lead a healthier and happier life.
- We also know that around age 11, girls experience a dramatic drop off in their physical activity levels. In Australia, 90% of 11–17-year-old girls don't get enough physical activity for good health. Fear of failure, insecurities around body image and developing negative attitudes towards competitive sport and performative physical activity all play a role during these crucial developmental years. The result is often the manifestation of long-term inactivity and lifestyle habits that can lead to serious mental and physical health implications.
- Talk N Walk is about working with girls to find a physical activity option that suits them and the stage they're at in life. The program utilises a simple visually-appealing app (iOS and Android) - **developed with a project team of 60+ 11–14-year-old girls** - to help girls swap catch ups on the couch with active 'Talk N Walks' in the park, on the way to school, or even at the mall. The focus is on friendships, family and feeling good, not on counting steps, competing, or performing.
- This program is important because by walking and talking together, with the encouragement of their friends and family, girls' wellbeing, and sense of belonging and community can be supported as they build a foundation for a healthy lifestyle.



*Often underrated, walking has powerful and wide-ranging health benefits. As per "Walking for Health," a special report issued by the experts at [Harvard Medical School](https://www.harvard.edu), walking helps relieve everyday stresses, clears the mind, boosts your mood, promotes communication, strengthens community, reduces behaviour problems, improves academic performance, and "can have a bigger impact on disease risk and various health conditions than just about any other remedy that's readily available to you".*

Our hope is that Talk N Walk will:

- Improve the social, emotional, and physical health of 11–14-year-old girls who use the app
- Support the development of healthy lifestyle habits, through sustained use of the app
- Increase awareness of the benefits of walking and talking through campaign messaging and,
- Connect 11–14-year-old girls and their families to nature (walking trails, parks and public open spaces) through supporting program resources.

### **Who is doing the Program?**

This program is being done by Nature Play WA Inc. with funding support from Healthway and Telethon. Nature Play WA is a Western Australian not for profit, in partnership with Department of Local Government, Sport, and Cultural Industries, with a mission to support children's mental and physical health through outdoor play. We run the Outdoor Classroom Day Australia campaign, outdoor play events, and we advocate for a return to unstructured play outdoors.

### **Why is my school being asked to take part and what will we have to do?**

We are asking your school to take part in piloting the Talk N Walk app because we know that you have a strong commitment to supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of students. Your school's participation will involve inviting female students aged 11-14 years old to trial the app via either of the following two options:

#### **Option 1:**

- Download and use the Talk N Walk app for four weeks
- Students complete an online survey (15-20 minutes) *after* using the app for four weeks

#### **Option 2:**

- Students download and use the Talk N Walk app for four weeks
- Students then participate in an online focus group session to provide feedback to the Talk N Walk team.

***Please note:*** All that is required of the school is to email (or provide a take home note) a Participant Information and Consent Form to parents of female students aged 11-14 years. The rest of the process is entirely managed by Nature Play WA and participation by students is completely voluntary as specified in the form.

### **Are there any benefits to participating?**

The direct benefit of participating is that 11–14-year-old girls from your school get to trial a new app that was co-designed with girls their age, and to have their say about how we can make it better before it is officially launched. Through the surveys and online focus groups sessions students will have the opportunity to contribute feedback on the design, functionality and content that will directly inform improvements to the app.

The pilot is being led by 2021 Women in Tech WA (WiTWA) Award Winner, Bec Nguyen, and participating in the user-testing process will allow students to have insights into digital health, potentially encouraging them to consider a career in this industry. All students participating will receive a Certificate of Participation and are welcome to request a reference letter to add to their resume. Again this process is coordinated entirely by Nature Play WA.

### **Are there any risks involved?**

Apart from giving up some time, we do not expect that there will be any risks or inconvenience associated with taking part in the Talk N Walk app pilot. We have addressed any foreseeable questions or concerns parents or students might have below and have included them in the Participant Information and Consent Form .

**Parental permission:** The Talk N Walk app involves getting active, walking and talking with friends and family. We would recommend going for a walk with your daughter and trialling the app together in the first instance (only your daughter requires having the app downloaded) so you can see and understand how the app works. At all times, the responsibility lies with the parent/legal guardian in deciding when and where your daughter goes walking with the Talk N Walk app, as well as who she can go walking with.

**Accessing support:** Conversation often flows more easily when walking and in some instances your daughter may find that the conversations she has, and the topics she discusses with friends, leave her feeling like she or her friend need some support to deal with them. We encourage you to talk to your daughter about this possibility and who she can go to for help. Our Talk N Walk mental health support webpage (<https://www.natureplaywa.org.au/mental-health-info/>) includes links to mental health services and helplines.

**Privacy and safety:** The privacy and safety of app users is of our highest priority and our safeguarding practices include:

- No capturing of personally-identifying information
- No in-app purchasing or advertising
- No sharing of accounts or in-app messaging
- No use of the camera, video recorder or microphone on individual smartphones including within the Talk N Walk app. Note: the focus group session will be held as an online Zoom 'meeting' which will be recorded to help with notetaking and analysis. This recording will only be accessed by the Project Team.
- No gathering or storing of location data (location services are used to track distance only)
- No sharing of information with Third Parties and no third-party analytics

The Talk N Walk app **Terms of Use and Privacy Policy** is [available here](https://www.natureplaywa.org.au/talk-n-walk-terms-of-use-privacy-policy/) (<https://www.natureplaywa.org.au/talk-n-walk-terms-of-use-privacy-policy/>) and should be reviewed by both the student and parent/legal guardian to ensure you both understand it.

We will remove student names from the survey and focus group data and, in representing any findings (in reports, on our website and/or publications) direct quotes may be shared but the names of individuals will not be used. Where relevant the school and/or age of the respondent may be referenced (*eg: 14 year old student, XX school*). Only the team doing this project will be able to see the individual responses students give us.

**Focus group session:** If any questions in the focus group discussion make students feel uncomfortable or anxious, they do not need to answer them, and they can decide to stop participating in the discussion. All Nature Play WA staff and contractors involved in the focus group session will hold a current Working with Children Check.

**Will you tell our school the results of the project?**

We will email your school (mid-2022) to share the results of the Talk N Walk user-testing, including our plans to launch the app to the wider public. Results will be general, and no names will be used.

**What happens next and who can I contact for further information?**

If your school is happy to participate in the pilot we will provide the *Participant Information and Consent* form to email to parents of 11-14 year-old-girls **the week commencing on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March**. From that point on all communications will be coordinated by Nature Play WA based on the voluntary involvement of students who complete and return the consent form to us.

To obtain further information or answer any questions you may have, please contact the Talk N Walk Project Manager, **Kellie Hill**, on **0424 175 066** or via email: [kellie@natureplaywa.org.au](mailto:kellie@natureplaywa.org.au)