

UNE takes 10,000 Steps to a Safer Workplace

More than eight teams from the University of New England will take part in an exercise program that will chart their progress on a virtual walk from Italy to Denmark, visiting universities affiliated with UNE along the way.

They will announce their participation in the “10,000 Steps” program on Monday 26 October, when the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alan Pettigrew, launches UNE’s involvement in Safe Work Australia Week (25-31 October).

The launch, at 12:30 pm in UNE’s Central Courtyard, will also feature presentations by Sport UNE instructors, and healthy refreshments will be served.

The 10,000 Steps program encourages people to count the steps they take during the day as part of a team effort. Using pedometers donated by the University and MBF, the teams from UNE will be able to convert their real walking into virtual progress along a 2,597-km itinerary through Europe, requiring a total of approximately 3,000,000 steps.

“The University is committed to the health and wellbeing of its staff, and participation in 10,000 Steps is the latest in a suite of strategies – comprising UNE’s Work Health Program – that support this commitment,” said Bronwyn Pearson, Deputy Director of Human Resources Services at UNE. “We encourage everyone to join a team and have some fun while clocking up the kilometres. “

As an incentive, Sport UNE is offering all 10,000 Steps participants who are still active after three weeks of the program the opportunity to attend a free Total Body Workout (TBW) class each week, commencing in mid-November and going through until the week before Christmas. They will also receive a complimentary Sport UNE voucher when they attend each TBW class, which will entitle them to a free gym session, group fitness class or pool visit. Kathie Hunt, Sport UNE’s Operations Manager, said Sport UNE hoped that this incentive would “assist UNE staff to stick with their exercise”, and for it “to become an important part of their lives”.

“Activities such as 10,000 Steps contribute to improving the safety culture in workplaces,” said UNE’s Occupational Health and Safety Officer, Daphne McCurdy. “Safety culture is more than just a matter of ensuring compliance – it’s about providing an inclusive environment that has strategies in place to ensure the work health and wellbeing of all staff.”

Published reports reveal that 54 per cent of Australian adults do not exercise enough, 60 per cent of those over 25 are overweight and 30 per cent have high blood pressure, the prevalence of heart failure is burgeoning, and the prevalence of diabetes has more than doubled since the 1980s.

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