

Public Submission Cover Sheet

Please complete this sheet and submit with any attachments to the Sustainable Health Review Secretariat

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Title	Mr <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs <input type="checkbox"/> Ms <input type="checkbox"/> Dr <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>
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Publication of Submissions

Please note all Public Submissions will be published unless otherwise selected below

- I do not want my submission published
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Submission Guidance

You are encouraged to address the following question:

In the context of the Sustainable Health Review Terms of Reference listed below, what is needed to develop a more sustainable, patient centred health system in WA?

- Leveraging existing investment in Primary, Secondary and Tertiary healthcare, as well as new initiatives to improve patient centred service delivery, pathways and transition;
- The mix of services provided across the system, including gaps in service provision, sub-acute, step-down, community and other out-of-hospital services across WA to deliver care in the most appropriate setting and to maximise health outcomes and value to the public;
- Ways to encourage and drive digital innovation, the use of new technology, research and data to support patient centred care and improved performance;
- Opportunities to drive partnerships across sectors and all levels of government to reduce duplication and to deliver integrated and coordinated care;
- Ways to drive improvements in safety and quality for patients, value and financial sustainability, including cost drivers, allocative and technical efficiencies;
- The key enablers of new efficiencies and change, including, research, productivity, teaching and training, culture, leadership development, procurement and improved performance monitoring;
- Any further opportunities concerning patient centred service delivery and the sustainability of the WA health system.

Submissions Response Field

Please type your response into the field below. Alternatively you may provide your submissions as a separate attachment (Suggested Maximum 5 pages).

Prevention is always better than cure and with the WA Health Public Health system seeing health costs, births, hospital admissions and population (not to mention an ageing one) increasing, the need for sustainable healthcare has never been more critical.

Aligned with the recognition by many health insurance agencies that simply “paying-out” on increasing healthcare costs (especially those of a preventable nature) is unsustainable, finding “smarter ways” of addressing public health will require innovative, cost effective, evidence-based, and scalable solutions.

Noting that the context of the Sustainable Health Review is “to develop a more sustainable, patient-centred health system in WA,” this submission proposes that the introduction of preventative health mechanisms (prior to the need for patient admission), will have the greatest impact upon the service management and delivery of future tertiary clinical practice. By providing at-risk populations or “potential future patients” with healthy lifestyle technology driven solutions, empowered individuals can be assisted to decrease their own health risk factors and give them opportunities to avoid becoming future disease statistics.

As mentioned in the recent WA Health Annual Report for 2016-17, chronic disease has been calculated as costing WA Hospitals over \$715m per year, of which, up to a third of this disease burden in Australia can be prevented through risk-factor reduction. With the release of the 3rd iteration of the WA Health Promotion Strategic Framework targeted across 2017–2021, the WA Department of Health has reaffirmed its recognition of the importance in reducing the toll of preventable chronic disease and injury among community groups. Common risk factors mentioned include: being overweight or obese, having a poor diet, not getting sufficient physical activity, smoking, and consuming alcohol at harmful levels (Government of Western Australia, 2017a).

Acknowledging the importance placed on “more preventative and less reactive” approaches to healthcare by the Sustainable Health Review Clinical Reference Group, we wish to pose the opportunity for WA Health to engage with our organisation Webble Guys, to trial our own research-developed and innovative preventative health solution, Webble Move!

Physical Inactivity (Sedentary behaviour)

A recent WA Health Department report, indicated a continuing upward trend in obesity (~30% of the population) among a sample of 6,000 surveyed West Australian adults. A separate child health report based on 800 parental responses, stated that one-quarter of 5-15yr olds were considered either overweight or obese. Interestingly, only 39% of children reported getting enough physical activity compared to 56% in 2007. In a response to the latest figures, WA Health Chief Health Officer, Professor Tarun Weeramanthri said that the low number of children meeting physical activity levels, as well as increases in obesity and overweight rates among both adults and children, remained concerning (PerthNow.com.au, 2017).

Sedentary behaviour (such as prolonged sitting) has been indisputably linked as a risk factor for cardiovascular disease, type II diabetes, overweight/obesity, many types of cancer and even the

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reduction of lifespan and the attributable decline in Quality of Life (QoL) that such circumstances bring. As severely impacting as these health risk factors can be for those affected, the prevailing current knowledge is that regular bouts of exercise can serve as an effective combatant for the above health issues as well as improving musculoskeletal health, elevating mood and reducing the symptoms of depression and anxiety. Extensive literature review here: <http://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses/1624/>

With globally “Unprecedented scientific agreement that exercise medicine provides greater benefits to health than any single pill”, the value of regular, low-intensity exercise is not to be underestimated (Boone, 2016). The same text refers to the renowned Dr Robert E Sallis, Past-President of the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and founder and chairman of the 'Exercise Is Medicine' global movement, stating in his editorial that “Exercise is medicine and physicians need to prescribe it”.

While the Australian Government’s 2014 inclusion of age-relevant sedentary behavioural guidelines into the existing physical activity guidelines was an important milestone for Public Health in Australia, the guideline has hardly translated to substantive health benefits as a national population. Despite the increase in public awareness, unfortunately the reality is that many desk-based employees, through no fault of their own, have limited work-time capability or opportunity to reduce their sedentary work practices.

Recent figures from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare’s annual health expenditure report, indicate that it is the recurrent health costs of Western Australians (or \$6,907 per person in 2015-16) that most significantly contribute to what is now 10% of national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Deloitte’s estimates of Australia’s healthcare expenditure and lost productivity costs associated with physical inactivity in 2016, were reported as being almost AU\$70 billion dollars.

WebbleMove!

In realisation of this, Public Health PhD research conducted in association with HBF as an industry partner was undertaken from 2010-15, resulting in the development of an innovative program to reduce sedentary behaviour within desk-bound corporate workforces. The emerging commercial application now called WebbleMove! prompts users to perform regular health-benefiting physical activity tasks within their own environment, and offers convenience, light-hearted team-based competition, social engagement, as well as an employer-approved and sustainable approach. WebbleMove! is designed to be a workplace fixture to create and help organisations embrace active life/work-styles, as opposed to the typical program participation outside of work hours (exhibited by corporate employees) and limited 12–16 week program durations, following which, sedentary behavioural health risks return.

Accessible via a range of technologies (web-browser, mobile/tablet app), WebbleMove! (software) and Thera-Band® (resistance exercise material), is a highly customisable solution to addressing sedentary populations in a variety of low physical activity environments. Examples of these typically sedentary domains include: office workplaces (desk-based roles), education institutions, hospitals, aged-care facilities and among disability service clients.

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By providing physically inactive “at-risk” populations with management endorsed, Exercise Physiologist (EP) reviewed exercise tasks, significant impact could be achieved in promoting health system sustainability. Of further note, the introduction of WebbleMove! into population groups allows for the visitation of EPs for managing participants in a preventative approach, rather than the rehabilitative approach in which pre-existing patients consult retrospectively with them. Following a presentation about WebbleMove! at Edith Cowan University (ECU) in 2015, 23 out of 23 third year EP students indicated their preference for working within a preventative approach as future allied-health clinicians.

Reported comments from HBF employees following research participation included:

- 1) After years of suffering with chronic back pain, your program has had a significant effect on reducing this by up to an estimated 90%. I am also now much happier at work and even my sleep has improved due to a reduction in pain.*
- 2) As a workplace trainer at HBF, my trainees wanted to participate with me doing exercises every time I was prompted as a research participant. I found this was extremely well adopted, improving trainee learning focus and completely avoiding the 3.30pm slump, commonplace with long days of sedentary computer-based training.*
- 3) As a result of participation, I have felt more energetic upon arriving home, have started walking more which encouraged my husband to walk with me and as a result he has lost weight. In a case of leading by example, our kids now also walk more instead of spending so much time in front of the television and PlayStation.*

While public awareness of sedentary behaviour has garnered corporate management support for the provision of sit-stand desks, this infrastructure has limited employee health and wellbeing value and commensurately poor ROI for businesses. Despite their popularity, these “passively active” approaches offer considerably insignificant (but better than none) metabolic rate enhancement. Recent news articles have recently started publicly highlighting this fact (The Conversation, 2017). WebbleMove!’s regular exercise participation constitutes a truly active approach to increasing participant metabolism (leading to health benefit) as a result of resistance material enabled exercise (muscular strength challenge) as recommended by the Australian Physical Activity Guidelines. Sit-stand desks are also not integrable solutions for the diverse range of areas in which WebbleMove! can be applied (examples of this include: hospitals, aged-care and disability service environments).

Developed here within Western Australia, during a now completed ECU PhD, WebbleMove! is a digitally disruptive approach to physical inactivity and has been trialled among ECU staff with continuing plans for future staff usage. From a support and value recognition perspective, the research contributing to the digitally disruptive approach represented by WebbleMove!, has been promoted through the ECU and City of Joondalup’s collaborative project “The Link”: <https://thelink.space/successstories/webble-move-webble-guys/>

Participation data collected by WebbleMove! can be selectively presented to management to indicate sedentary department issues (something previously unmeasurable) or allow for external promotion of their corporate social responsibility. Some of the evidence-supported but

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estimated benefits of low-level physical activity uptake in a variety of user-domains is below.

Prospective WebbleMove! participant (i.e. employee) and provider (i.e. employer) benefits

	Participant benefit			Participant & Provider benefit	Provider benefit
	Health	Mental health	Social	Productivity	Corp Social Responsibility
Corporate (employee)	Reduction of poor health risk factors, increased metabolism	Improved stress reduction, enhanced workload management, decrease in mental health incidents	Workplace social inclusion, improved team building skills among staff	Healthier and socially engaged staff are more productive	Organisations can externally promote their CSR (often attracts higher quality job applicants)
Education (student)	Reduction of poor health risk factors, increased metabolism	Improved stress reduction, enhanced workload management	Enhanced communication skill development	Healthier children perform better academically	Schools already publicly compete for best student grades
Hospital (patient)	Increased metabolism (faster healing equals shorter hospitalisation & decreased costs)	Enhanced mood management, less pharmacological dependency	<i>Not an objective, but potential exists</i>	<i>Not an objective (for an individual)</i>	Hospitals improving patient outcomes could externally represent their CSR
Aged-care facility (resident)	Reduction of poor health risk factors, better general well-being (mobility & functional capacity)	Enhanced mood management, less pharmacological dependency	Enhanced resident social inclusion and activity engagement	<i>Not an objective (for an individual)</i>	Aged-care facilities enhancing resident health outcomes could externally represent their CSR
Disability Services (individual)	Reduction of poor health risk factors, better general well-being (mobility & functional capacity)	Improved stress reduction, enhanced mood management	Enhanced client social inclusion and activity engagement	<i>Not an objective (for an individual)</i>	Disabilities services improving client outcomes could externally represent their CSR

Webble Guys believe that preventative health advocates like ourselves have an important role to play in creating sustainable health management in WA, by innovatively seeking to prevent chronic disease-related hospitalisations. We have found that by offering socially engaging opportunities for users to not only decrease their sedentary life/work-style related risk factors, but by empowering individuals to improve their own health and wellbeing (inc mental wellbeing), a diverse range of benefits occur for multiple stakeholders.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer a public submission to the WA Health – Sustainable Health Review, and we would welcome further communication to discuss the above.

Kind regards,

Dr Darren Webb (PhD)

Director (Research)

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(References available upon request)