

## Local Government Homelessness Knowledge Hub Case Study



ST. PATRICK'S  
COMMUNITY  
SUPPORT CENTRE



Submitted by **City of Fremantle**  
Case Study **Library Connect**

## Background

The City of Fremantle's Library Connect program is an access point for vulnerable people experiencing financial, housing or other distress in the Fremantle area and provides an alternative front-facing service.

The program is a collaboration between the City and St Patrick's Community Support Centre (St Pat's) commits a support worker at the library to build connections with community members and on-the-spot advice, referrals and support.

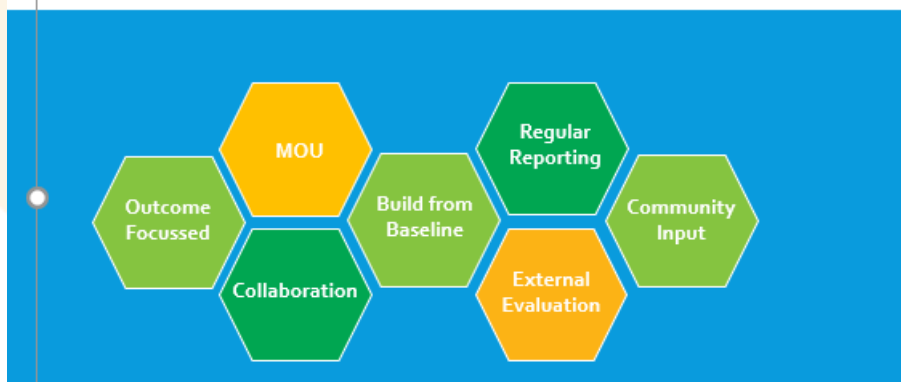
In advocating for this program the Administration staff had to demonstrate consideration of the below to Elected Members.

### What factors do Councils consider when supporting community projects?



In negotiating agreements between partners to ensure accountability and measure success both parties considered:

### What mechanisms are used to negotiate arrangements ensure accountability, and measure success?



**'Outcome focussed-** Leave egos and logos at door, focus on outcomes  
**MOU** – have agreed on clearly defined roles and responsibilities and clear lines of accountability  
**Collaboration-** Having a clear shared vision, shared goals, shared governance  
**Build from baseline:** Start with baseline data  
**Regular Reporting:** Regular meetings, reporting back and open lines of communication  
**External Evaluation:** Brought in an external expert to evaluate, action research – continuous improvement and learning as we go along: be flexible and open to change  
**Community Input:** Community co-design process with stakeholders including community/lived experience but also other providers'

## Case Evaluation

The program is evaluated by the Home2Health research team a collaboration between the Institute for Health Research at The University of Notre Dame, and the School of Population and Global Health at The University of Western Australia.

Opening the door to evaluation ensures continuous improvement and learning as the program goes along making it flexible and open to change. This is done by exploring the levels of engagement, measuring changes in staff knowledge and the ability of the program to successfully respond to people's needs.

In the first four months there were 187 contacts. A greater number of requests from women compared to men and from Aboriginal people and people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds. Issues were financial difficulties, housing difficulties, domestic and family violence, mental health issues, and a lack of support to manage these issues.

Gloria\* is a woman in her late twenties. She has one child, and only recently came to Perth after escaping a family violence situation. Gloria wasn't across all the local services and was unsuccessful in accessing services she did contact (she either didn't meet service criteria or services were at capacity).

Library Connect supported Gloria with referrals, finding housing, employment support, emotional support, emergency relief, and accessing Centrelink.

Julie\* a woman in her late fifties, has significant mental health issues, and has experienced family violence and trauma. Julie describes herself as vulnerable and isolated.

Library Connect supported Julie with emotional support, financial issues, emergency relief, and engaging with the community – both socially and with services. Julie engaged with the support worker on four occasions who helped set up an email address and provide access to her emails on her phone. Practical support was provided through food and phone vouchers, and a reference was provided for priority housing.

\* Some details have been changed to protect the identity of participants and pseudonyms have been used.