



# COVID-19 Response Plan 2020–21

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The Imagined Futures Leadership Group has developed a 12-month plan to guide a coordinated whole of community response to mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 across the South West Metropolitan region, through:

- building on established relationships
- maximising our collective resources
- engaging with our community
- leveraging community strengths
- being proactive and seeking to intervene early
- facilitating rapid responses to a changing and unpredictable environment

The Imagined Futures partnership brings together commonwealth, state and local government departments, not-for profit agencies, businesses, philanthropists and community members across the local government areas of Cockburn, Fremantle and Melville. Imagined Futures recognises that tackling complex social issues is beyond the capacity of any single organisation to resolve, and that the only way to effect large-scale change is through working together, pooling, and mobilising the resources available in our community to achieve shared goals.

The partnership's approach is informed by principles for collective impact, and has a proven track record of working in a way that goes beyond information exchange, to developing shared strategies and delivering collaborative projects. Imagined Futures is recognised by the State Government as the District Leadership Group for the South West Metropolitan Region. It is auspiced by St Patrick's Community Support Centre Ltd.



# Coordination and Collaboration

COVID-19 has had an all-encompassing impact on our community. While to date Western Australia has managed to control the spread of the virus, the ongoing social and economic impacts on our community remain uncertain. The country is in a recession and financial aid packages are set to end on 27 September 2020. We continue to experience rapid change and now, more than ever, there is a need to coordinate our efforts and promote opportunities for collaboration. This will ensure we are best placed to build on our community's strengths, embrace new opportunities and minimise the negative impacts of COVID-19.

## Strategy

Ensure Leadership Group membership composition reflect our priorities

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Communicate our region's issues and priorities to local elected representatives and relevant Government bodies – e.g. State Recovery Advisory Group

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Leverage existing networks

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Encourage members to present COVID-19 project proposals to the Leadership Group for their feedback and potential endorsement or for collective impact projects auspiced and managed through Imagined Futures

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Increase community engagement

## Action

Review membership – encourage participation from Health/Mental Health stakeholders and Aboriginal stakeholders and others as identified including better connection to the broader community including lived experience, where possible by leveraging, connecting with, and supporting existing community networks.

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Review frequency of Leadership Group meetings to facilitate timely responses

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Distribute minutes to local MPs and government bodies

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Map networks and link into them

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Identify relevant data sources to inform our priorities and monitor our impact

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Examine opportunities to secure new funding for projects which meet priority and gap areas identified by the Leadership Group to be pursued collectively through the backbone

# Communication and service navigation

The breadth of social and economic impacts on the whole community is expected to drive greater numbers of people seeking assistance, many of whom have never accessed services before. An ongoing concern is ensuring that these people are aware of the support available to them and how to access these supports. Timely access to services will help to prevent new cohorts from entering a cycle of disadvantage. Further, a broader understanding of what services are available will enable community members to help support family, friends, and neighbours.

## Strategy

Investigate merit of a joint communication project to raise awareness and promote early access to services across our region.

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Seek to leverage off, and localise, existing campaigns and initiatives e.g. WA Primary Health Alliance's mental health campaign, WA Connect and the State Emergency Relief Committee's communication strategy.

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Investigate the viability of a triage model.

## Action

Identify relevant broader campaigns

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Examine existing triage proposals

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Develop project scope

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Seek COVID-19 funding opportunities



# Housing and Homelessness

Members of the Leadership Group have identified a significant increase in the numbers of street-present people in Fremantle since COVID-19 restrictions came into effect. This increase highlights insufficient accommodation options for these people, and it is also having a significant impact on local small businesses.

## Strategy

Reinvigorate Imagined Futures Housing and Homelessness Working Group

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Look for opportunities to advocate  
– e.g. Common Ground project

## Action

Progress establishing Terms of Reference for the group

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Establish regular meetings



# Family Violence

Consistent with the experience nationally and at a state level there has been an increase in the reports of family violence across our region. As an illustration, the Fremantle Legal Centre has recorded a 30% increase in the number of family violence cases. Police have also recorded a rise in family violence complaints across the broader metropolitan region. Despite the increase in reports, there has not been a corresponding increase in the number of referrals to local men's behaviour programs.

## Strategy

Identify systemic issues as they arise and identify appropriate action including communication to appropriate government body

## Action

Investigate blockages in the flow through of reports to intervention programs and facilitate/ advocate for solutions



# Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

At the local level members have observed a general increase in levels of aggression and anxiety across the community. There has been an increase in complaints to Local Governments and the Department of Housing in relation to difficulties with neighbours and anti-social behaviour. Teachers at schools, where Imagined Futures operates, report difficulties transitioning back to school and an increase in anxiety amongst many of their students. Concerns have been raised about the potential for greater impacts across the broader community as financial and other stressors mount. The Commonwealth Government has developed a National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan to address the expected rise in mental ill health and suicides.

## Strategy

Support and build capacity of existing and emerging community networks (e.g. Fremantle Minds/ Alliance Against Depression)

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Build on existing relationships with schools to connect teachers, families, and students with mental health supports

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Recruit relevant expertise on to the Leadership Group

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Promote access to community supports such as sporting clubs

## Action

Imagined Futures/WA Primary Health Alliance/Fremantle Minds to meet to discuss opportunities for working together

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Members to identify appropriate representatives to approach

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Link schools with mental health expertise in the community (e.g. Suicide Prevention Coordinator)

# Vulnerable People

The impacts of the pandemic have been disproportionately greater on vulnerable people in our community and this disadvantage is being compounded by a digital divide. Imagined Futures' existing working groups—Youth Initiative and Davis Park—have a track record of engaging with vulnerable communities. There is opportunity to use these existing structures to respond to the challenges of COVID-19.

## Strategy

Refocus youth programs in schools

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Davis Park facilitator to prioritise identifying COVID-19 impacts on residents and linking to additional supports

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Advocate for a full spectrum of service delivery modes to be offered (both online and face to face)

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Advocate for increased resources to enable service providers to meet demand

## Action

Work with schools to identify impacts of COVID-19 on students involved in our programs and tailor responses

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Identify additional resources to support schools (e.g. sporting programs), and communities (using an Assets Based Community Development approach)

