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# GROWING THE GOOD LIFE 2024



# Background



The Growing the Good Life project originated from the adaptation and customisation of The Sunshine Project, itself a spin-off from the 100 Families Project. This initiative was spearheaded by the Davis Park Community Facilitator to support a specific family in a disadvantaged community, helping them to improve their quality of life despite various challenges.

The Sunshine Project, initially designed by Anglicare WA and RUAH, involved a frontline worker supported by a team with expertise in service design, social work, and community development. Each family was allocated \$1000 brokerage and supported over a 2 year period. This project was overseen by a Steering Committee comprising senior leadership from Anglicare WA and RUAH, along with a representative with lived experience.

Imagined Futures, a Collective Impact partnership, provides backbone support to address complex issues through a small, dedicated team. The Community Facilitator role, funded at 0.5 FTE by Communities, offers support to the disadvantaged community precinct of Davis Park in Beaconsfield.

# Background

The Davis Park Working Group which is made up of stakeholders including all levels of government and service providers, oversaw the project, however no brokerage was allocated. The Sunshine Project was adapted to provide one-on-one support to one family in Davis Park for a shorter, unspecified timeframe and named Growing The Good Life project. Unlike the Sunshine Project which had a dedicated support team, the existing working group was used to identify and foster connections to services accessible to the pilot family.

This report is based on a 6-month period from July to December 2024.

Imagined Futures brought significant strengths to this initiative, including established connections and partnerships with various organisations and services, as well as the community facilitator's pre-existing relationships with local residents.



# Sunshine Project 5 Principles

The design team used the following 5 principles as a guide when designing prototypes to test out with families.



## 1. Centre the Families

We started with the family and their priorities, and their experience of help-seeking- rather than centring the system.

- While we still met the system's needs (service eligibility, assessment criteria, case notes, risk assessment, safety planning, collecting data, our expertise about what we wanted them to focus on, etc) we aimed to de-centre or "quiet" these so they sat in the background.
- We aimed for a roughly 80:20 split in the family coach's time, with no more than 20% of their time spent servicing the system.



## 2. Work with Hope

We didn't start with a focus on deficit and need, or even goals at the outset.

- Families created a vision of their good life, which had an emotional connection for them.
- We explored their strengths, positives already in place.
- We started from the things that they had motivation to act on, used creative approaches to support these and used small wins to build motivational capital to attempt bigger actions.



## 3. Connect with Resources

We brought practical resources to the table:

- Physical hands-on help by staff where needed.
- Emergency Relief to stabilise financial situation.
- Brains trust on call for coach to research opportunities and provide advice.
- Warm referrals to specialist supports.
- Introductions to mentors with common interests, social community activities and groups.

# Sunshine Project 5 Principles

The design team used the following 5 principles as a guide when designing prototypes to test out with families.



## 4. Decrease Mental Load

We know that the helping system can unintentionally place additional emotional load on families who are already under immense pressure.

- We met at times and in safe locations that fitted with the family's availability and comfort.
- We fitted around school hours, other appointments, work rosters, transport limitations and anxiety about leaving the house.



## 5. Grow the Good Life

We worked with the concept of the good life as a garden. The good life is not a point of arrival. It is always changing.

- Seeds can be planted and can grow even in the midst of hardship.
- The role for helping organisations is to create enabling conditions for families and communities to grow their good life on their terms.

# Journey Mapping

## GROWING THE GOOD LIFE

### DONNA\* 28 FEMALE

#### Motivated by

- children having a better life than their parents

- PARTNER
- 10 YO DAUGHTER
- 3 YO SON
- 1 YO SON
- 2 DOGS, 1 CAT

#### Superpowers

- Good at organising everyone
- Multitasker
- Supportive and motivated
- Loving mum
- Supportive partner
- Been a family unit for more than 10 years

#### Pain points

- Financial hardship
- Unstable housing - being moved, house in poor condition
- Partners health issues
- Limited family support and role models
- Daughter refusing school
- Parenting is hard
- Addiction in family
- Cost of vet care

#### The Good Life looks like...

##### Connection

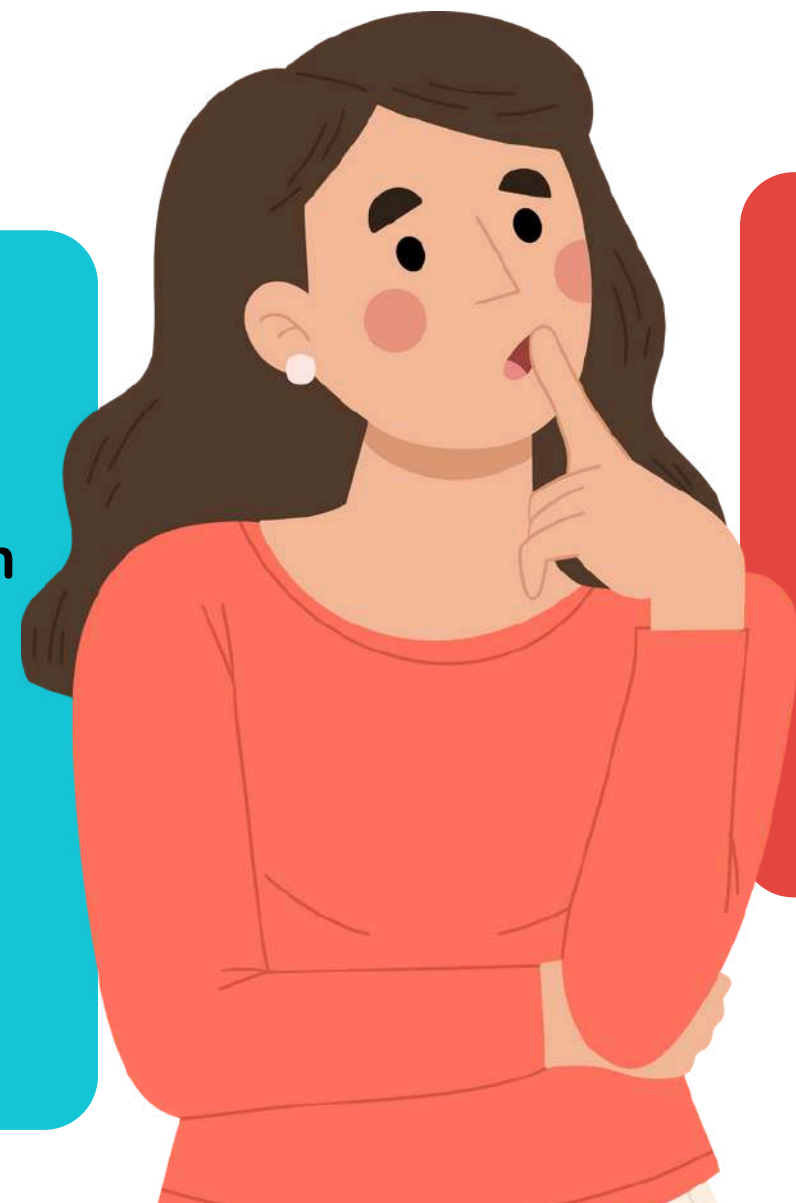
- Family dinners together
- Weekend meals with friends

##### Contribution

- Tidy house for people to come over

##### Independence

- Employment in business support with flexibility
- Financial stability to get out of public housing



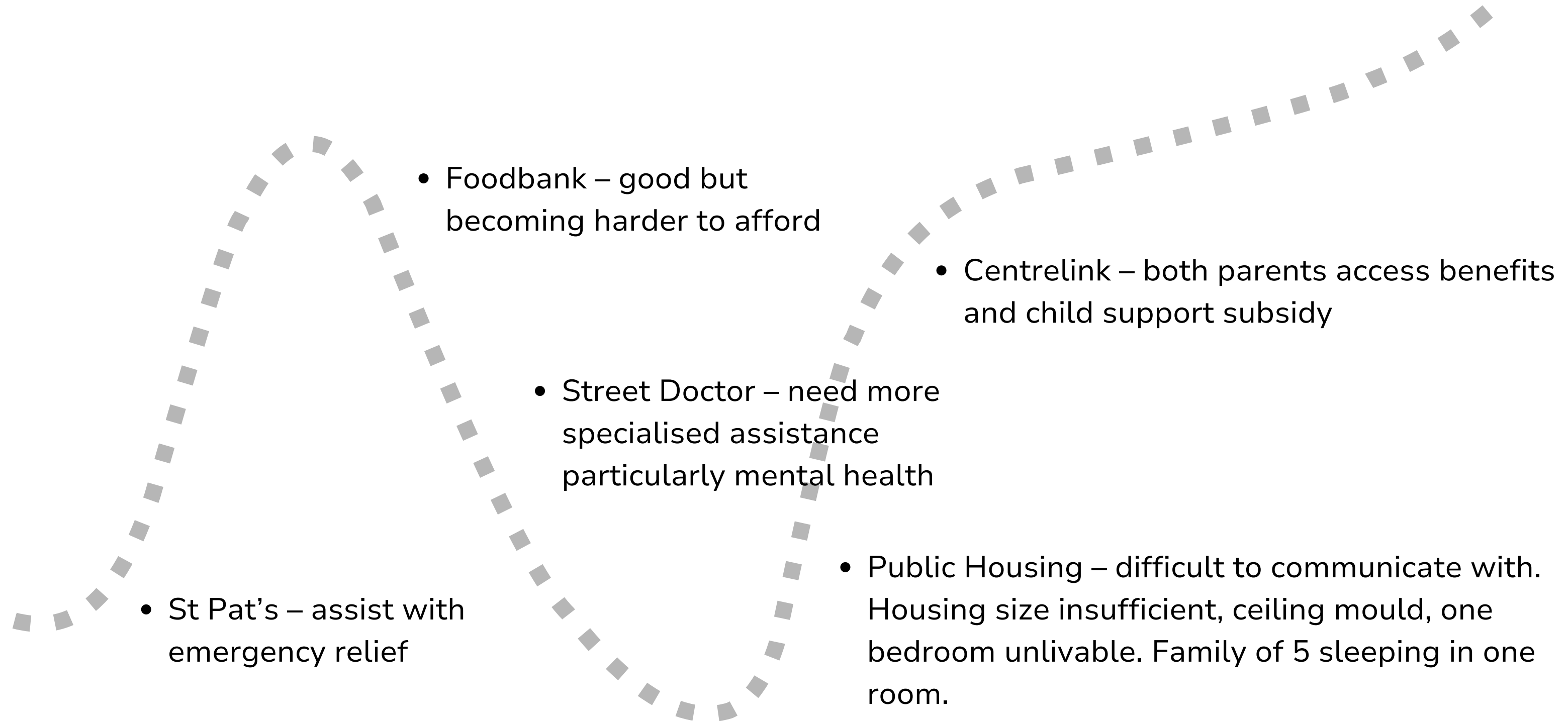
\* Not real name

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# Journey Mapping

Journey so far – key events/reflections on service interventions so far



# JOURNEY MAPPING

## Responsibilities

- Everything other than partner's meals
- Getting kids to school and daycare
- House upkeep
- Managing finances
- Family planning

## Fears

- Unable to cope

## Challenges

- Hard to let go of control
- Finances are stretched
- Not working or having activities outside home
- Partnership not romantic
- Struggle to maintain a routine
- Daughter refusing to go to school

## Decision Making

- Everything other than disciplining the children

## Barriers

- All sleeping in one room due to mould
- Routines chaotic
- Insufficient sleep
- No alone time for partners

## Role Models

- Grandfather, not many others

## Motivations

- Better life for the children than ours

## Current Average Day

- Wake up at 8am, feed and change baby.
- Wake up and get daughter up for school. Breakfast.
- Struggle to get daughter to school before 11am.
- Get toddler to daycare usually around 10.30am (2 hours late).
- Appointments and liaising with services and housework
- Take care of 12 month old, TV, phone
- Pick up toddler and prepare food
- Get boys ready for bed
- Struggle to get daughter to go to bed
- Go to bed late
- Often wake up and find daughter on phone or watching TV late into the night

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# JOURNEY MAPPING

## Ideal Average day

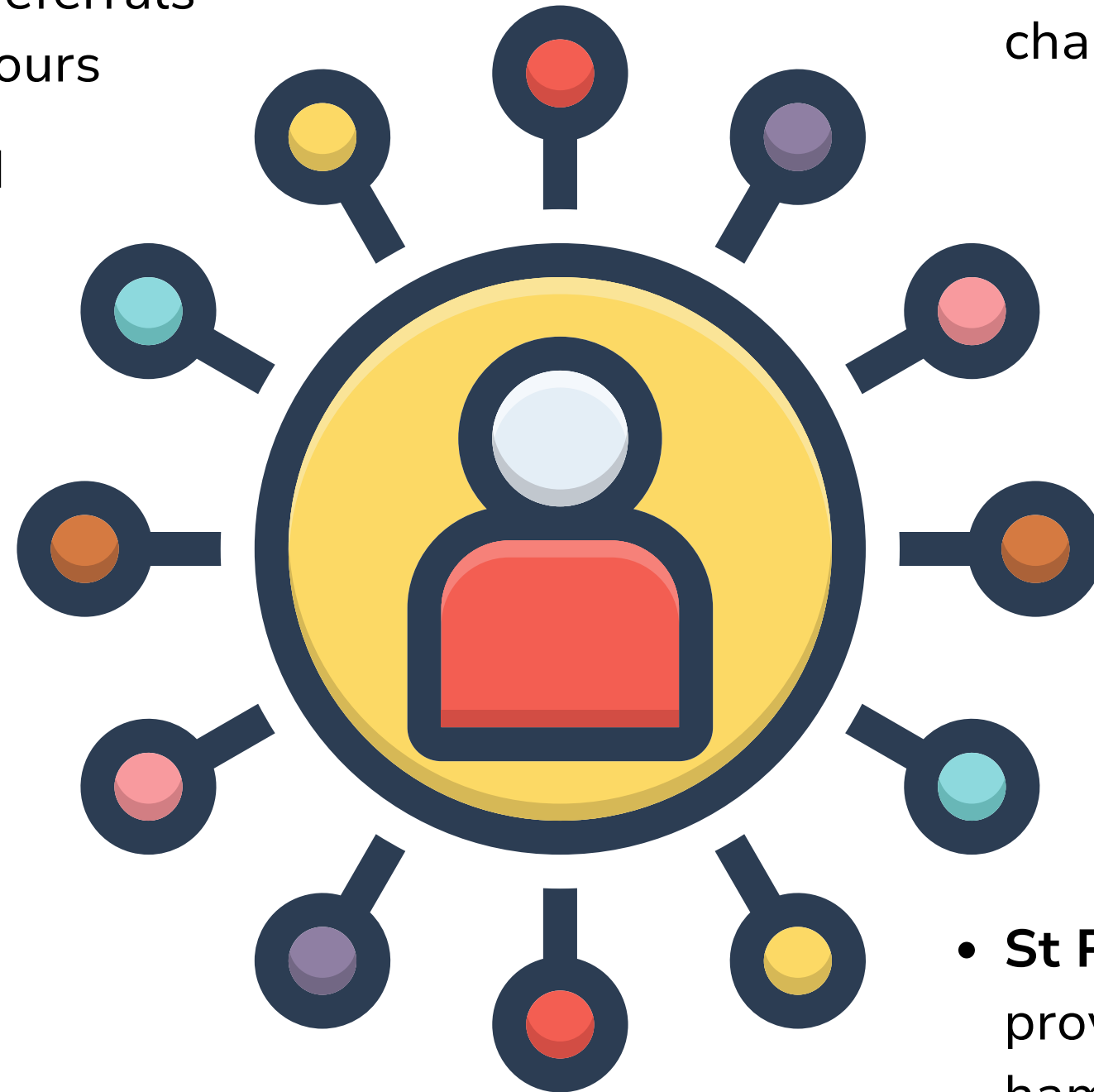
- Get up at 6am and have an hour to self
- Kids up at 7am and daughter gets herself ready for school
- Partner has already left for work
- Daughter to school and toddlers to day care on time
- Work from home managing business/study from home making enough income to be in own home or private rental and out of public housing
- Pick up kids and bring them home to a house large enough for everyone, including the animals
- Cook dinner or take turns cooking dinner for the whole family to eat together
- Boys in bed by 7pm, daughter in bed by 8.30am.
- In bed by 9.30pm



# Formal and informal connections

## Who helps you and who do you help?

- **Imagined Futures** delivers Fridays in the Park, access to food, referrals and connection with neighbours
- **Mum** lives in regional WA and has addiction issues. Visits occasionally but doesn't provide support.
- **Partner's mum and sister** are in touch but provide limited support and have significant challenges of their own.
- **Friends** help when they can but all have their own challenges and family commitments.



- **Partner** is a devoted and loving partner and father who is motivated but faces challenges due to mental health issues.
- **Neighbour** assists with childcare and pet care, short term, where possible. Not reliable due to addiction.
- **Dad** is nearby and reliable but also has addiction issues. Don't have much communication or contact with him.
- **Other community members** could potentially help if asked.
- **St Pats Community Support** provide emergency relief, food hampers as needed

## GETTING RESOURCES

- Imagined Futures provides Fridays in the park – a shared meal with neighbours, coordinates Street Doctor, Foodbank and a rotating schedule of activities and services including vaccination clinic, free vet checks, free haircuts etc. Community facilitator can be contacted any time to be connected to various services.
- Advocacy requirements - Housing
- Connections needed – Counselling, financial, employment, mental health, parenting



# PROJECT TIMELINE 2024

JUL

**Journey Mapping** - Donna provided a background and history of her life and her family's life. Discussed challenges, supports, barriers and what a good life looks like.

AUG

**Stabilising** - Discussed housing needs including repairs of mould, ceiling damage and gutters to enable the second bedroom to be accessible, as well as being moved to a larger home more suitable for her family size. Also discussed financial hardship.

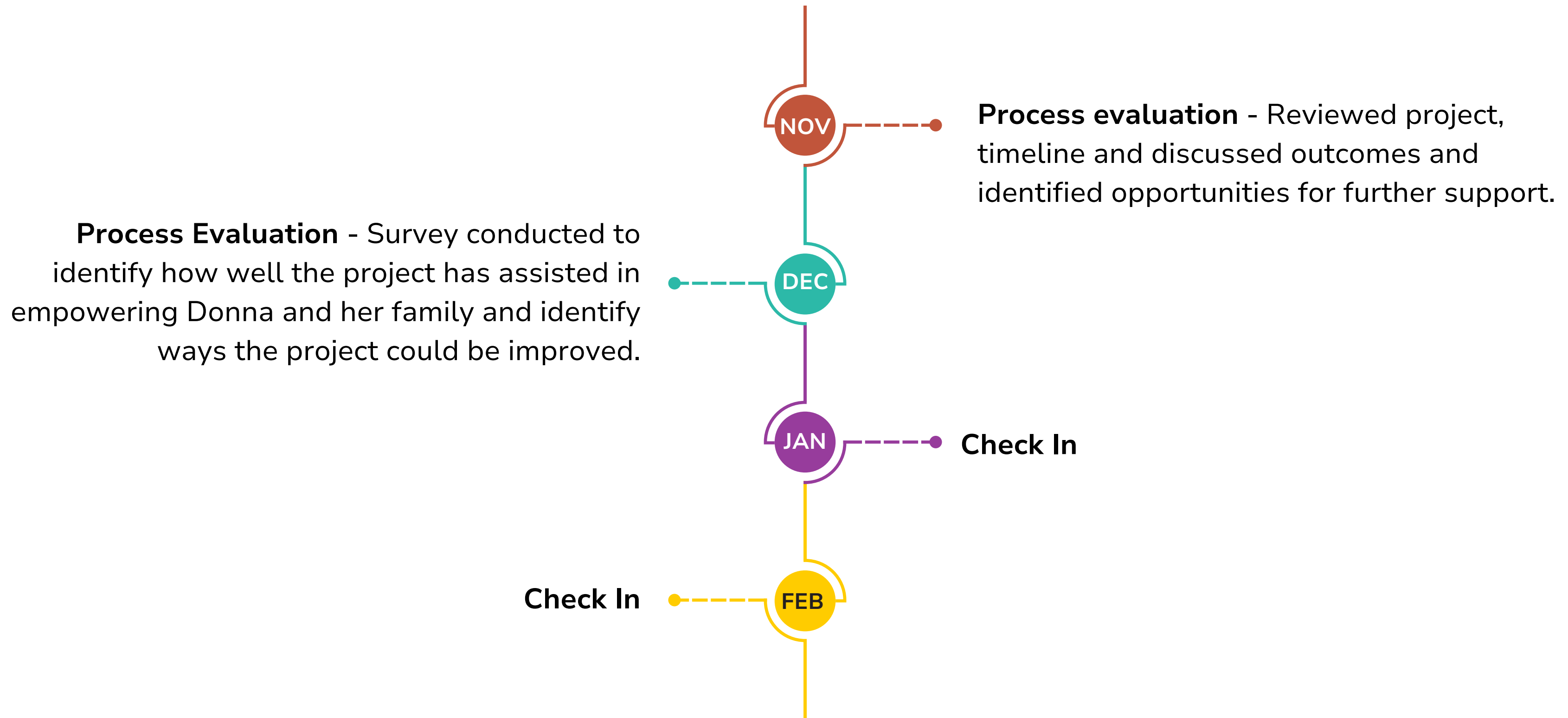
SEP

**Stabilising** - Discussed mental health support needs, parenting challenges and relationship issues. Also discussed goals to improve financial literacy and employment prospects.

OCT

**Family Plan** - Discussed survival strategies, steps taken and connected to resources to provide support going forward.

# PROJECT TIMELINE 2024



Quarterly check in going forward or as needed.

# FAMILY PLAN



## Vision for The Good Life - inputs and actions to move towards, how we might know it's working

### Mum

- In bed by 9.30pm
- Kids in own bedroom
- Find business course to study from home
- Get into routine of studying during the day like you would run a business
- Daily walk with partner
- Weekly walking group
- Family dinner together
- Parenting support – Parent Pathways, Meerilinga Children and Community Services

### Dad\*

- Explore employment – eg. find work in landscaping (even if voluntary to start building networks)
- Seek help in relation to mental health challenges – eg See GP AND Mindspot GP – assessment online
- Daily walk with partner
- Weekly walking group
- Family dinner together

*\*Noting that Dad's goals are outside of Donna's control*

# FAMILY PLAN

## Daughter (10)

- In bed by 8.30pm
- No access to phone (Donna to change passcode)
- Play sleep meditation
- up at 7am, makes own breakfast, gets ready for school.
- Leaves house by 8am
- School daily
- Family dinner together

## Toddlers (1yr and 3yrs)

- 3 yo to Child Care
- In bed by 8pm
- Pick up playthings with supervision



# ACTIONS

- **Housing** - Advocate for Housing to assess house. Housing issued work orders to replace the ceiling and tiles in the second bedroom and clean the gutters so there is no mould in the future.
- **Finances** - Connect Donna with Little Things for Tiny Tots to provide nappies and other needs to free up the family income for other necessities such as food and bills. Connect with the Financial Wellbeing Collective for financial counselling.
- **Health** - Provide access to Street Doctor and mental health resources, partner with On My Feet to provide a regular walking group to increase support network and for social inclusion, increased physical activity and improve mental health.
- **Relationships and Parenting** - Connect to ParentsNext training and Cockburn Family Support Service counsellor. Provide Reward Charts to increase structure and routine
- **Employment** - Provided resources for financial literacy and employment opportunities, Footsteps program with employment workshops being run in Davis Park by On My Feet funded by the City of Fremantle.





# OUTCOMES

## Some of the outcomes achieved:

1. **House improvement** through advocacy for repairs with second bedroom now being utilised. Family are on waiting list to move to a 4 bedroom.
2. **Alleviated financial stress** to the value of \$485 a month through connection to Little Things for Tiny Tots who supply monthly nappies, wipes, and other toddler and baby items.
3. **Increased physical activity, improved mental health and increased social connection** through the family's involvement with a regular Walking Group in partnership with On My Feet.
4. **Increased parenting skills** through enrolment in parenting program, ParentsNext and connection with Meerilinga Children and Community Services.
5. **Strengthened relationship and addressing mental health issues** through individual counselling for both parents.
6. **Skills and support to prepare for work or further study** are in progress with Donna connecting to the Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) program, funded by the Australian Government.

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# OUTCOMES

7. **Wider community empowerment** through extended activities including, free regular vet checks, walking group, Little Things for Tiny Tots supplies, FDV education session, Depression Discussion by Black Swan Health, free books provided by the Footpath Library and free clothing provided by Thread Together.

8. **Alleviated finances and increased knowledge of animal welfare** with Donna's household pets reduced from 13 unsterilised dogs (11 puppies and parents) to 2 dogs (1 sterilised and 1 soon to be sterilised), through connection to free Vet checks and the RSPCA WA discounted sterilisation program. (Benefit also extended to the wider community in the form of monthly pop-up Vet clinics)

9. **Home improvements** through landscaping the back garden which has had the unintended outcome of giving Donna a new passion, and potential employment goal.

10. **Health improvements and finances alleviated** through connection to Street Doctor and Foodbank which operate monthly in the park.

11. **Social connection increased and neighbourhood support strengthened** through weekly shared meals in the park.



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# Feedback

## Donna's Post Project Feedback

- It has been easy to understand the purpose and aims of the Growing the Good Life project.
- The community facilitator listened and learned about my family challenges and needs.
- The community facilitator was flexible in working with my family.
- I felt empowered in shaping the project and providing input into the goals, challenges and needs identification of my family.
- Growing the Good Life has created possibility, focused on potential and developed capabilities within my family.
- My family is better off because of the project.



# Feedback

## Donna's Post Project Feedback

“The project has been an eye-opener for me to opportunities I'd never considered and in building my confidence to improve things”

“Building my independence has been challenging for my partner.”

“Having a monthly catch-up with the community facilitator has been so helpful. She is easy to talk to and a great support”.

“When I leave after the monthly catch-up I feel inspired and empowered”





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