

St Patrick's Community Support Centre

Volunteer Management Activity

Breaking down barriers to volunteering



St Patrick's Community Support Centre (St Pat's)

St Pat's provides community housing and specialist support services for people facing homelessness.

To achieve our mission to end chronic homelessness we provide a range of services aimed at people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Services include housing, health, crisis intervention and emergency relief, social inclusion and specialist outreach and support services.



St Pat's Client/Resident Pathways Program

The program has implemented a targeted volunteer program for St Pat's service users (clients and residents) that have the potential to engage as volunteers but lack the confidence, skills and support to enter via our generalist volunteer program.

The project was designed to engage more of our clients and residents in volunteering. Participants were clients and or residents that fell into one or more of the VMA identified target groups;

- First Nations People
- People with a disability
- Vulnerable Women
- Youth
- Unemployed
- New Arrived Migrants



Our Approach

Co-design - At the beginning of the project we held co-design sessions with our clients and residents and case workers and staff that would be supporting the volunteers.

This included a series of:

- One-on-one sessions – using co design methods to get as much feedback as we could
- Focus groups
- Individual interviews
- Steering group meetings



Trial, test and learn period

Phase 1 involved trailing different approaches

Some projects worked well and continue today, while other projects didn't get past the first trial.

Our definition of success is – *the volunteer continued volunteering.*

Lessons learnt

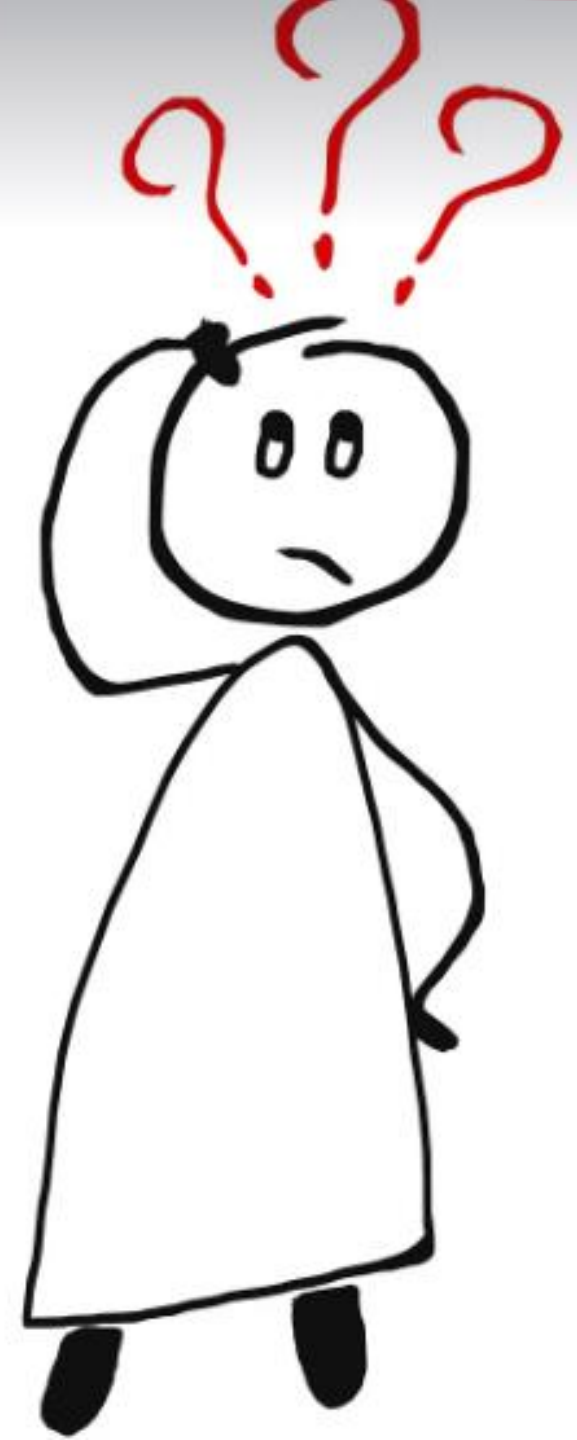
- The most successful projects were when;
- The volunteers were engaged in volunteer work that was meaningful and addressed a need at St Pat's
- The volunteers felt supported and not judged by the staff who were supervising
- All staff need to be 100% on board with the project and understand the purpose of the project



Trial, test and learn period

More Lessons Learnt

- Clients and residents need to be 'volunteer ready'.
- Our definition of 'volunteer ready' means;
- The person is no longer in crisis and is ready to thrive. This usually means the person is in stable accommodation, and are managing any other issues in their lives, such as health, and substance use.
- We have found when people aren't 'volunteer ready' they have not been successful on the program.
- Clients and residents removed themselves from the program usually due to other issues happening in their lives.
- Two had to be exited by the Volunteer Coordinator due to unstable behaviour.



Case study

Client Volunteer Story – Art and Chill table

- Required a lot of support initially from the VC to get the project up and running.
- VC support has decreased with time.
- The table has been a popular addition to the weekly timetable.
- It has provided a space in which clients and residents can sit and chill out and case and outreach staff can engage in a relaxed way with their clients.
- Volunteer is now looking at further study opportunities.



Our Model

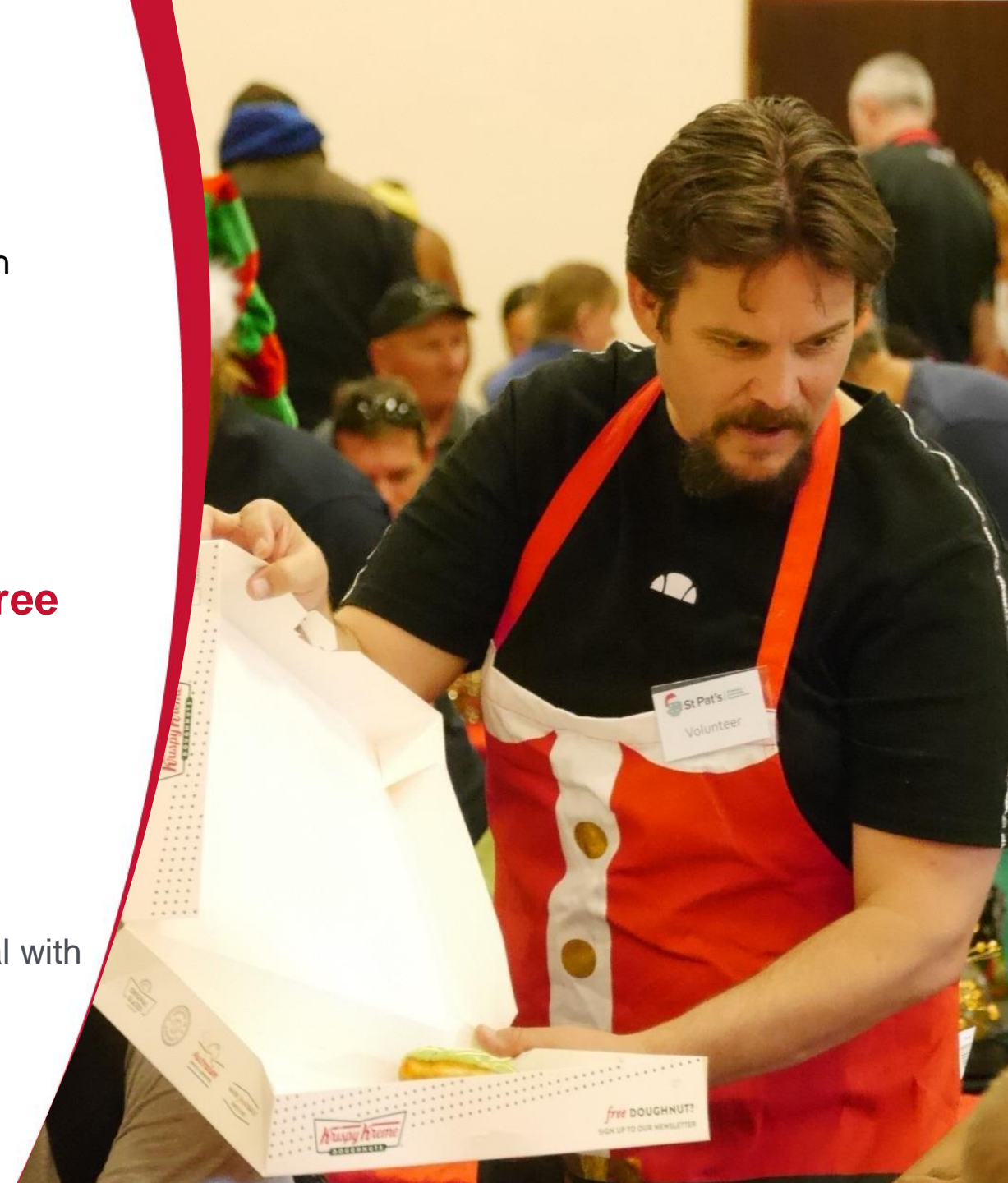
With current resources we can only take five clients/residents in the program at a time

Referral

- Clients are referred from a case worker.

Pre-volunteering sessions for a minimum of three weekly sessions

- 1-hour weekly sessions
- Extended interview
- Filling in required forms
- Working through some possible scenarios and how to deal with those scenarios



Our Model continued

Join Client/resident volunteering team

- 2-hour weekly volunteer sessions with small group of other client/residents for minimum of 5 weeks.
- Volunteer Coordinator runs these sessions.
- Small tasks to work on as a group.
- Volunteer graduates from this program when they have met the key competencies to be ready to join our regular volunteer team.
- Once competencies are met a police check is completed.

Join the current volunteer team

- Regular check in's from VC.



Number of people participating

- 4 First Nations people
- 6 People with a disability
- 5 Women that met vulnerable criteria
- 2 Newly arrived migrants

NOTE – Volunteers meet one or more of these categories

- All were unemployed or on a disability pension
- We currently have 11 clients and residents who are volunteering at St Pat's
 - 2 in St Pat's kitchen
 - 5 in the St Pat's donation warehouse
 - 1 in the St Pat's Community Store
 - 2 on the front desk
 - 1 hosting an art table



St Patrick's Community Support Centre

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Volunteering WA

Empowering people and communities to enrich Western Australia

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St Pat's

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Support Centre



Australian Government

Department of Social Services

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