

## **Social Prescribing Initiatives: Community Houses Association of the Outer-eastern Suburbs (CHAOS)**

**Service:** Living our best life project

### **Main Component:**

In the City of Knox a partnership between the Community Houses Association of the Outer-eastern Suburbs, Temple Society Australia and the five Neighbourhood Houses is trialling a version of Social Prescribing. The project has been inspired by the work of Mendip Health Connections and Bromley By Bow Centre in the UK. The Knox project, Living our Best Life, includes trialling the role of volunteers as community connectors (link workers) to support a formal referral system.

Now that lockdown has ended, volunteer Community Connectors are supporting individuals referred by Health Practitioners to join in community activities. They are assisting participants to learn about their choices, providing introductions to community agencies, and where necessary, accompanying the participant for their first visit to ensure that they feel supported and confident.

A community mapping exercise resulted in the development of an online directory of services and support in the City of Knox. This will be the main tool for Community Connectors to identify potential activities and services for their participants.

The project also includes a Talking Café. This weekly event enables people to drop in to a local cafe and find out about how to join in community activities and chat to volunteers about what's happening in Knox. During 2020 the Talking Cafe has operated online in Zoom and via conference phone call. In early January it will change to a weekly, face to face event.

**Who is this for?:** People aged 65 and over who are socially isolated, lonely or at risk of social isolation

**Outcomes:** This project is a pilot funded as an Ageing Innovation project by the Wicking Trust. The key aim is to trial the use of volunteers as the link workers and facilitators of engagement once a social prescription has been issued. The project has been extended to April 2021 as formal referrals only commenced in October 2020 due to Victorian restrictions.

### **Organisations-involved:**

CHAOS Network, Temple Society, Equity Trustees, Wicking Trust

**Links:** <http://knoxlearningalliance.org.au/news/living-our-best-life-project/>

### *Source:*

Leanne FitzGerald, Project worker,  
Community Houses Association of the Outer-eastern Suburbs (CHAOS)  
livingourbestlifeproject@gmail.com