

## A new approach for families with complex needs

### The Challenge

We are seeing an increasing number of families facing highly complex challenges. This shows up in the system as homelessness, food insecurity, ill physical or mental health, FDV and other abuse, poor school attendance, poor developmental outcomes, unemployment, engagement with the justice system and more.

Most services are commissioned to achieve against a narrow set of outcomes and only able to respond to a single issue in isolation, with a standardised service offering. For families with multiple, complex needs, the emotional toll of jumping through hoops to access many services is overwhelming. Opportunities to overcome barriers are often missed between the gaps. Families churning through services without resolving their challenges is a waste of Government and families' resources. Unmet needs often escalate into crises, adding further cost.

### The Sunshine Approach

Recognising and centering the family unit as a locus of strength and agency, our model trialled a unique tailored response to enable families to grow their good life. Over the past 2 years, Anglicare WA, Ruah and others have partnered to co-design and explore what can be shifted by starting with the family unit and its aspirations, rather than starting with each problem in isolation. The model took 6 families (27 individuals) through a supported journey over about 12-18 months, in order to:

- **Relieve the Mental Load**- Practical hands-on support to create breathing space and build trust.
- **Imagine**- Orientate families (including kids) to hope and a vision of their good life.
- **Coaching**- Leverage trust to challenge limiting narratives/behaviours and also to self-advocate within the system.
- **Invest**- time, relationships, resources creatively to add momentum to their plan, scaffolding learning, social prescribing growth opportunities and building agency.
- **Measure**- what has changed for the family.
- **Graduate**- transition over to natural and community networks for next steps.



## Outcomes- What we could help families shift

We have found that investing upstream in enabling families to take control of growing their own good life, results in outcomes across a range of outcome indicators that many other services are seeking without success. Cost benefit analysis conducted by external evaluators captured savings to Government across three key domains:

	Out of 6 families	Savings to government p/a
Child Protection	9 children from 5 families avoided Child Protection involvement.	\$4,224 (note: applied per family) p/a (if no order), \$59,292 p/a (if order resulted)
Eviction/homelessness	5 families avoided housing eviction/homelessness	\$13,594 per family
Engagement in employment	2 parents entered/stayed in the paid workforce	\$25,708 per person p/a

### Additional outcomes were achieved around a range of other wellbeing domains:

- Increased sense of hope, feeling in control, confidence.
- Improved relationships with family.
- Increased school attendance.
- Improved outcomes for health and mental health (dental/optical, mental health treatments, assessment & access to developmental/therapeutic support for children).
- Outcomes in adult learning, small business, life skills.
- Increased participation in community life, volunteering, helping others.

## Invitation to Partner

The work of the Sunshine Project offers a flexible but robust model which can be adapted for a range of cohorts and communities in WA. It is a bold and positive approach which draws on a thorough design process.

- ✓ Drawing on research from 100 Families, Hilary Cottam and UK evidence-based models
- ✓ Social sector partnering together
- ✓ Invested own funds to enable design and testing
- ✓ Co-designed with people with lived experience
- ✓ Prototyped over 2 years in Kwinana/Rockingham
- ✓ Place based model connected with joint community response
- ✓ Independently Evaluated
- ✓ Cost Benefit Analysis demonstrates value for money for Government
- ✓ Currently consolidating our model and training materials to be able to scale

We invite you to partner as we take next steps to scale this model.

For more information check out [www.thesunshineproject.com.au](http://www.thesunshineproject.com.au)