

# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS & PLACEMAKING FRAMEWORK



THRIVING COMMUNITIES FOR ALL PEOPLE

 **EVOLVE**HOUSING





Evolve Housing resident, Mark and Kelpie Sam.





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# WHAT WE DO FOR OUR RESIDENTS

At Evolve Housing Group, we aim to do more than put a roof over our residents' heads. We offer people a place in a thriving and inclusive community, with access to a variety of programs and tailored support to enhance every part of their life. Our purpose is to enable more people to live in quality homes in thriving and inclusive communities.



## A HOME

Our social and affordable housing residents are offered a home that is well suited to their needs and budget. Our properties are of a high quality and amenity that supports community connection. We are responsive to support and maintenance requests and manage our residents' tenancies fairly.



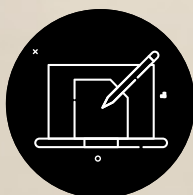
## A NEW SKILL

We offer support for residents who wish to access training, employment pathways and workshops relating to digital skills and money management.



## A PERSONAL SUPPORT PLAN

Social Housing residents who may require extra support are offered a Personal Support Plan to address personal health, wellbeing, education, training and employment needs.



## A GRANT OR FINANCIAL HELP

Our residents have access to a variety of grants to help them get active within their community and improve their lives. We offer grants to support secondary and tertiary students, and to support young people to access sporting and physical activities.







## AN EXPERIENCE

We aim to create thriving and inclusive communities where people belong and feel connected. We regularly hold events and activities that cater to the needs of our residents. These events are an opportunity to meet neighbours, feel part of a community, and enjoy new experiences.



## A BRIGHT FUTURE

With quality, safe and secure housing in a connected community, our residents can focus on improving their health, happiness and overall wellbeing. We are proud to offer housing and support across the housing continuum, encouraging housing independence.



## A VOICE

Our residents can advocate on behalf of their communities through our Resident and Maintenance Advisory Groups, and our Reflection Reconciliation Action Plan working group to inform Evolve Housing programs and initiatives. There are also opportunities for residents to volunteer and get involved in our resident phone service called the Friendship Aged Network.



THRIVING COMMUNITIES FOR ALL PEOPLE

# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Evolve Housing Community Connections and Placemaking Framework is a blueprint for working with newly established and existing social housing neighbourhoods to foster community growth, enhance capacity, and strengthen connections.

It reflects our commitment to nurturing a sense of belonging, fostering self-reliance and inclusivity where everyone can thrive. This pivotal step towards creating vibrant, sustainable places to live that empowers our residents will be a guiding principle, ensuring that every member of our community is heard and supported.

As the demand to build more social, affordable and mix tenure housing is increasing, the need to provide placed based support is increasingly important as it provides guidance to transition and integrate individuals and families into a neighbourhood. It will also assist to build an inclusive and cohesive broader community.

This framework is designed to support Evolve Housing's 2024/28 Strategic goals to 1. Deliver exceptional client service and, 2. Improve lives and strengthen communities. It will also support our existing variety of services and programs that connects individuals to the services they need as well as utilising community engagement activities and programs to provide measurable positive impacts.

By implementing an Evolve Housing Community and Placemaking Framework, we envision a future where social and affordable housing neighbourhoods are resilient and empowered to make informed decisions, increase their quality of life and positively participate in society.



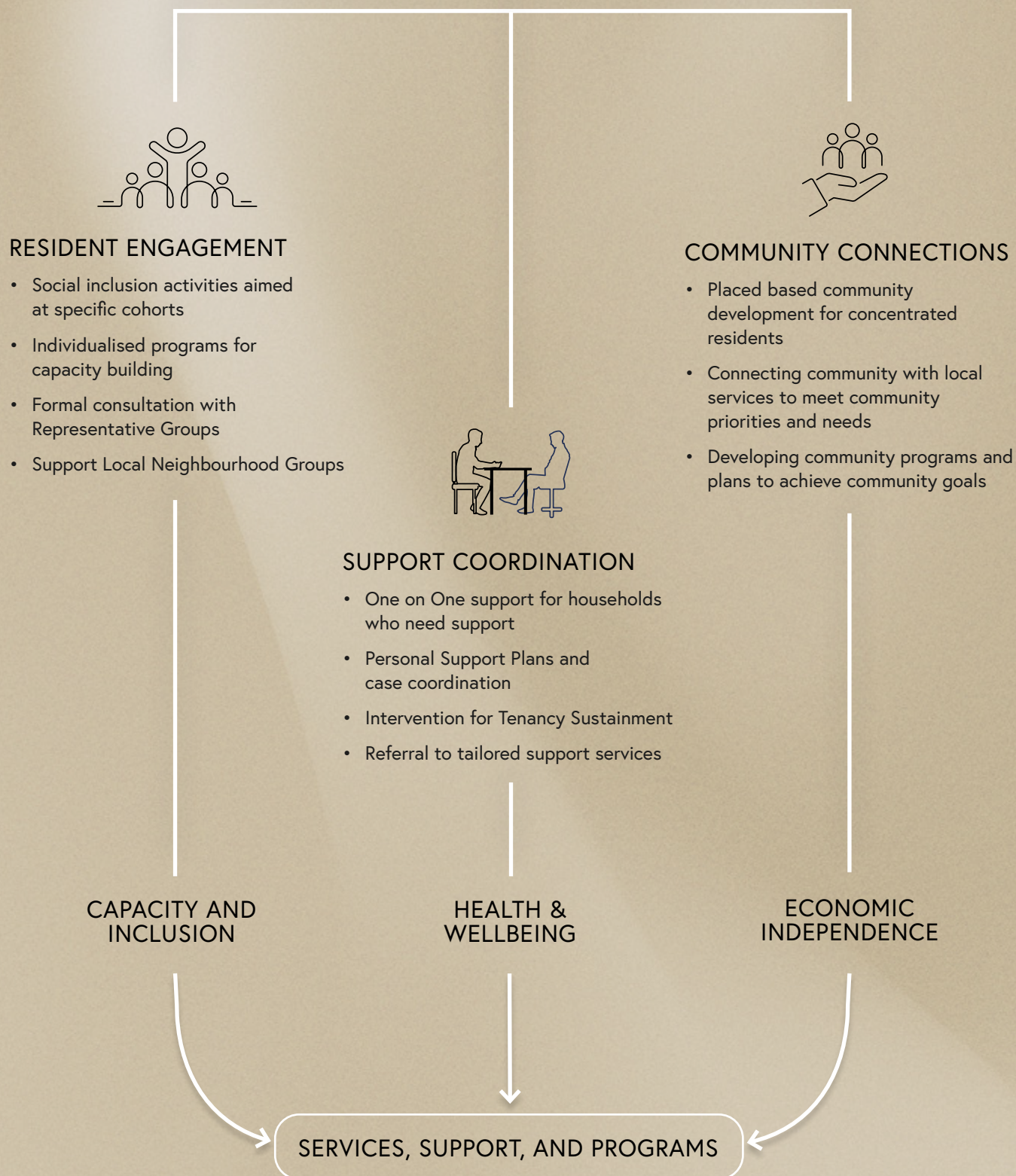




Evolve Housing Christmas Party 2024



## SUPPORT CONTINUUM MODEL





## 2 WHAT IS PLACEMAKING?

There are several ways Placemaking can be delivered within a community. The Evolve Housing principle is to adopt a holistic, hands-on approach that focuses on the strengths of a particular area, space and or place to build capacity and create cohesive communities.

Placemaking relies on working collaboratively with residents, stakeholders, and the broader community to establish connections between already existing spaces and places to people. A one-size-fits-all approach cannot be used as each location, city, suburb, is unique. They have different strengths, resources and needs which underpins the rationale for a framework that is built on principles and objectives to allow adaptability across a culturally rich and diverse social and affordable housing communities.

### 2.1 THE SOCIAL OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

The successful measures of applying the Placemaking Framework aligns with the seven key objectives of the Evolve Housing Social Outcomes Framework. These are:

#### 1. EMPOWERMENT

We encourage residents to pursue their life goals and voice their needs with confidence.

#### 2. FINANCIAL WELLBEING

We support residents in increasing their financial capacity.

#### 3. EDUCATION AND SKILLS

We remove barriers to participation and facilitate access to develop skills.

#### 4. SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY

We facilitate opportunities focused on inclusion and participation.

#### 5. HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We partner with specialist support providers to provide tailored support.

#### 6. SAFETY

We work with residents to create safe and inclusive neighbourhoods.

#### 7. HOME

We provide best practice tenancy and property management.

The Social Outcomes Framework guides the development of outcome measures that will be used to track the capability and wellbeing of people receiving social and affordable housing assistance due to Evolve Housing's readily available resources and services. It will also outline the impact of these services we deliver to our residents and how it has improved their overall wellbeing.

It is also important to understand the relationship between Resident Engagement, Support Co-ordination, and Community Connections as a collaborative model in building sustainable communities and promoting successful tenancies.

Implementation of the model explained in the Support Continuum Model through coordination across business streams residents are supported using a holistic approach.

The engagement team provides opportunities for inclusion and engagement through social activities and events for all residents. With the support coordination team who provide specialised tailored case management support sustain tenancies and finally, the Community Connections team who coordinate placed based community programs and activities to build community cohesion.

This approach ensures residents receive the support needed and provides an opportunity for resident to contribute to the wider community by way of bringing in local services and working collaboratively to deliver information sessions and services regarding education and training, employment, and reducing social isolation.



### 3 PLACEMAKING FRAMEWORK

The objectives of the Placemaking Framework are aligned to Evolve Housing's Social Outcomes Framework, strategic direction, and organisational objectives, this includes:

#### 1. COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Our goal is to empower residents as a collective; to equip them with tools, resource and opportunities. We aim to enhance capacity, self-sufficiency and resilience of our residents and the communities they live in.

#### 2. COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Building strong social networks through facilitating social gatherings, cultural events, and collaborative projects that foster relationships among residents and encourage a sense of community connectedness.

#### 3. PLACEMAKING EXCELLENCE

Building on our successes, using evidence based models that showcase best practice. Our approach to placemaking emphasises community engagement, design innovation, and sustainability.

#### 4. BROADER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We recognise the importance of engaging with the broader community. By forging partnerships with local businesses, organisations, and government agencies, we aim to bridge gaps and create opportunities for mutual support and growth.

#### 5. MEASURABLE IMPACT

To ensure the success of this framework, we will establish clear performance metrics and evaluation processes. Regular assessments will enable us to adapt and refine the strategies as needed.





An artist's impression of the Arncliffe Estate redevelopment. The image shows modern, multi-story apartment buildings with balconies and large windows. In the foreground, there is a paved plaza with a pattern of light and dark tiles. A few people are visible, including a person in a white shirt and blue pants walking on the left, and another person in a blue shirt and white pants walking on the right. The background features more trees and a clear sky.

## CASE STUDY BUILDING RESIDENT AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS IN ARNCLIFFE

In response to addressing the increasing accommodation crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic, Evolve Housing was given a vacant site which consisted of 142 units waiting for redevelopment in Arncliffe to manage over a two-year period. This kick started the process of allocating individuals and families experiencing street homelessness, into one, two or three-bedroom units across older style refurbished unit blocks.

During this process, Evolve Housing identified the need for residents to build connections with each other, access to local services and the wider Arncliffe community. Securing a one-off funding grant from Vincent Fairfax, a Community Connections Coordinator was employed to create and deliver positive social outcomes by implementing a placemaking model. Being located on site within the community established trust and created opportunity to learn about tenants' experiences and better understand their needs and feedback. By working collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders, we were able to deliver a variety of activities, events and services aimed at building capacity and community resilience.

Internal stakeholders included a Housing Manager, Community Engagement Team, Support Team and Maintenance Team. External stakeholders included Max Solution, Southeast Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD), Gift of Bread, Neami, 3Bridges Community Outreach Team and Southeast Sydney Recovery College.

With the support from SESLHD, a "health drop-in" service was established exclusively for the residents who were linked to local GPs, mental health providers who provided education around women's health, men's health, children's oral health, drug and alcohol and breast cancer screening. An employment support service, Max Solutions attended the onsite Arncliffe Hub once a week and provided information and referrals for residents who wanted to enter education, training and/or employment.

A Cooking with George Workshop was established in response to residents' ongoing feedback regarding their neighbour, George, who shared his love for cooking. The workshops' objective was to teach residents how to cook on a budget using ingredients they may already have in their pantries. This is an example of placemaking in practice.

Adopting the Placemaking Framework in the Arncliffe community, achieved many positive outcomes. This included, seven residents entering employment, eight residents entering a form of education and training, an average of 15 residents participating in events or programs conducted onsite. Survey results indicated an increased level of overall satisfaction with their overall health and wellbeing.

Artist impression of the Arncliffe Estate redevelopment with a mixed community of social housing tenants and private owners.



## 4 PLACEMAKING IN PRACTICE

To ensure a consistent and evidenced based approach is used, the below principles and components are applied when working with communities and are woven into the outcomes that are continuously measured across the project timelines:

### 4.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles guide the practical approach on how Evolve Housing works alongside communities:

#### 1. LISTENING TO THE COMMUNITY

Develop trusted relationships with the people who regularly use the space to provide valuable insights and perspective. Developing multiple channels to learn about critical issues and what is meaningful to our tenants. Where every individual's rights and well-being are prioritised and upheld. Having an awareness of possible trauma or issues which may affect specific communities and individuals who reside there. In this approach, community housing initiatives are designed with an understanding of the traumatic experiences some residents may have faced and the importance of fostering a sense of safety, belonging, and dignity.

#### 2. COLLABORATION AND CONNECTIONS

Identify potential partners who are aligned to the Evolve Housing purpose and values to work in partnership to connect services and people.

#### 3. CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

Focus on what opportunities are achievable, upskilling, and empowering people to increase their quality of life, by taking on new goals and aspirations while contributing to the economy.

#### 4. COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Support and encourage the emergence of community leaders from diverse backgrounds to actively participate in decision-making processes and advocate for the needs of their respective communities.

#### 5. COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS

Facilitate and host events and activities throughout the year in line with major calendar dates, marking important events/activities to the local community that are culturally appropriate and inclusive.

#### 6. EVALUATING AND MEASURING IMPACT

Programs and activities will be meaningful and measurable to monitor and evaluate impact that aligns to the social housing outcomes framework.

### 4.2 KEY COMPONENTS

Evolve Housing has identified four key components integral to achieving successful placemaking in any given community. These are purpose-built amenities, accessibility, identity and visual cues. These key components are further discussed as follows.

#### 1. AMENITIES

A space or place that is both practical and conveniently located in a common area location, accessible for all users to enjoy. This may be a designated space at the specific site, or an established resource identified such as a local community centre. This should be a space that is easily transformed for various purposes and will increase the level of engagement and encourage residential participation in a variety of activities, programs, and events.

The placemaking approach may also incorporate a few different designated spaces for each site depending on practicalities such as time of year, accessibility, and appropriateness for the planned activity.

Evolve Housing aims to develop connections and utilise spaces within the community that have been created for community use. This may involve community consultation to adapt and repurpose spaces where the community identifies they are not usable for their needs.

## 2. ACCESS

Ensuring spaces and places are suitable and accessible for all, including for disability access and are culturally appropriate. Identified spaces should be welcoming, safe and secure environments that are practical whether the residents are living, working, visiting, or accessing services or events that are being delivered.

## 3. IDENTITY

Recognising and establishing a theme for the space is an important element of placemaking. Each individual site and community Evolve Housing will be working with will have their own opinion on how they would like their space to look. Residents are at the forefront of how a space or place will be identified and utilised.

## 4. VISUAL CUES

Continuously creating visual cues and information sharing help define a space or place through signage, posters, use of furniture, design, and layout. This will let residents know what services, activities, events, or programs are available.



Evolve Housing Christmas Party 2024



## 5 IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

To increase the likelihood of successfully implementing a placemaking approach, Evolve Housing have identified the following six step process that we implement when working with various communities.

### STEP 1 RESEARCHING PLACE

Once a site is identified, Evolve Housing will take some time to familiarise ourselves with the local community. This will include research and data collection through various means and could include one of the following:

- Census data to analyse demographics.
- Explore internal data and statistics to gain better understanding of the cohort of the Local Government Area (LGA).
- Research and Network with local service providers – GP, mental health, training and employment, family services, domestic and family violence services, charity organisation's, children's services, play groups, support groups, etc.
- Begin to establish relationships with local service providers.
- Networks – joining and attending relevant network meetings and forums relating to domestic violence, community safety with the local police to build connections and rapport in the community.
- Amenities – being aware of local amenities such as libraries, leisure centres, youth and/or community centres or hubs.
- Scope the site to see suitable spaces to facilitate community engagement activities, programs and general consultations.

### STEP 2 IMAGINING PLACE

Envisage an environment and community ideal for the cohort. Evolve Housing will work collaboratively with the identified community to define what place means to people of all ages and backgrounds and how we can decrease isolation, improve social and economic stability and identify what creating a safe and secure environment looks like to them. This can be done through:

- Community consultations – seeking direct feedback from people living and working in the community.
- Surveys and questionnaires – seeking suggestions on what people would like to see happen within the communities they live in.
- Creating opportunities for residents to communicate with staff at local community drop ins.
- Share information on staff availability and encourage resident participation and feedback.
- Build on existing spaces and work with the community to improve and make them more purposeful, such as a community garden or unused green space.

#### EXAMPLES OF THIS IN PRACTICE:

##### • **NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

A questionnaire that residents complete to identify levels of support needs. This includes a Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI) that residents score their overall health and wellbeing at a given time.

##### • **NETWORKING**

Attending various community forums or network meetings in the local area as an opportunity to build relationships for potential collaborative work with external stakeholders.





Resident Amanda at the Arncliffe Vegepod garden.



## STEP 3 PRIORITISING IDEAS

Utilising the results of Step 2, Evolve Housing will work innovatively to prioritise the needs of the community. We will also work collaboratively with relevant stakeholders to address the immediate needs of the community.

Priorities identified from the Arncliffe case study that can be transferable to other communities include:

- **SOCIAL ISOLATION**  
To decrease social isolation, think about appropriate activities or programs we can develop and increase social inclusion.
- **UNEMPLOYMENT**  
Working collaboratively with local training and employment services to provide much needed services in their community by attending their 'place' as needed.
- **MENTAL HEALTH**  
Exploring ways to deliver relevant workshops, trainings, information sessions, and referral pathways.
- **COMMUNITY SAFETY AND OWNERSHIP**  
Managing illegal dumping, creating safe spaces, clean environment, promoting community cohesion.

## STEP 4 CREATING A PLAN

Using the information gathered from previous steps, Evolve Housing goes on to create, develop and implement the placemaking plan for the identified community. When creating a calendar, developing a schedule and organising a data collection database is in progress, we take into consideration the following questions:

- What are the immediate needs of the community?
- How can this be organised and delivered?
- How will it be communicated to the community?
- What stakeholders need to be involved.

### EXAMPLES IN PRACTICE:

- From the research and community consultation conducted as previous steps suggested, a Community Engagement Calendar was created for a 12-month period for two previous communities Evolve Housing managed.
- Offered flexible and adjustable delivery of events outlined in calendar due to unforeseen incidents. Rearranging the calendar to suit the needs of the community and their cultural requirements.
- Ensuring each program or event provided through Evolve Housing has a plan and a purpose; i.e. Delivering Community Garden Workshops provide residents experiencing isolation an opportunity to decrease social isolation and participate in an educational workshop.

## STEP 5 DELIVERY

This is the implementation step. Using the plan created in the previous step, and following all necessary steps, the success of placemaking in practice will be the focus. Success measures will differ for each community and will be the starting point from which a community is formed.

Evolve Housing continue to deliver activities, events and programs chosen by the community to increase their engagement and minimise social isolation.

- **SOFT LAUNCH WELCOME EVENT**  
Initial informal gathering to introduce key Evolve Housing staff to residents in a specific community. It is also an opportunity for residents to mingle and get to know their neighbours in a supported setting.
- **CARETAKER PROGRAM**  
Identifying community leaders who have the capacity to ensure the site is maintained and tidy. Caretakers are provided with tools needed to conduct duties within their scope.
- **RESIDENT ADVISORY GROUP (RAG)**  
A group of residents volunteering to advocate for their community and provide feedback to the organisation on how to improve services.
- **SENIORS YOGA**  
Providing an opportunity for seniors over 55 to participate in an activity that will assist with mobility, decrease isolation and a chance to mingle with neighbours.

- **PARTNERS IN WELLBEING**

Attending a Morning Tea gathering and taking on the stop referrals for anyone seeking assistance with mental health issues. A staff member from Moonee Valley City Council attended a block meeting and shared valuable information on disposing of hard waste appropriately.

- **MONEY MINDED WORKSHOP**

Providing some basic understanding of budgeting, reducing debt, saving money and managing credit cards. This workshop helps residents to better manage their money and take control of their finances to assist with maintaining their tenancy.

## STEP 6 EVALUATION

Evaluation begins at the start of the planning process. Identifying outcomes and impacts is a way to measure success when delivering placemaking. Evolve Housing is committed to conducting ongoing evaluation and enables flexible delivery of placemaking and adjust relevant plans where appropriate.

Qualitative and quantitative data will be used to demonstrate the outcome of the placemaking approach in the community. To ensure the appropriate data is collected, key questions to be considered:

- How will we measure community and organisational impacts?
- How are you going to capture the data?

### EXAMPLES IN PRACTICE:

- Spreadsheet of participation at each event
- Resident suggestion box at block meetings and larger events such as 'End of Year Celebration'
- Team evaluation and reflection following events.
- Anecdotal feedback from residents
- Snapshot surveys and QR codes (linking to short surveys) at events.
- Share information on 'ihear' and how complaints and compliments can be submitted to the organisation.



Resident George at the Arncliffe Vegepod garden.



## 6 IMPACT AND EVALUATION

As part of the Placemaking Framework Implementation process the Community Connections Team will allow regular opportunity for evaluation and measuring of the impact of all programs being delivered. Reporting on how each implementation project meets set KPI's and aligns with Evolve Housing Social Outcomes Strategy will also be completed at regular intervals.

TYPE OF EVALUATION	FREQUENCY	REVIEWER
Team Meeting	Weekly	Senior Manager
Event Evaluation	Following each Community Engagement Event	Team and Senior Manager
Engagement Report	Quarterly	Senior Manager / GM Resident Services
Placemaking Implementation Progress Report	Bi – Annual	GM Resident Services/ GET
Annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey	Annually	Residents
Environmental Social Governance (ESG) Report	Annually	Senior Manager

## 8 REFERENCES

**Australian Institute of Health and Welfare**

<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/homelessness-and-homelessness-services>

**Four Design Principles for Community Placemaking**

<https://www.snyder-associates.com/community-placemaking-design-principles/>

**Glen Eira Placemaking Strategy 2023–2027**

<https://www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/media/14188/placemaking-strategy-2023-2027.pdf>

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**Project for Public Spaces – What is Placemaking**

<https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>

**Public Engagement Framework 2021-2025**

<https://www.vic.gov.au/public-engagement-framework-2021-2025>

**Supporting intersecting cultural needs of gender and age by increasing cultural safety and humility for Housing First initiatives**

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**Measuring Social Housing Outcomes**

**Desktop review of evidence | Interim Report (NSW Government, Family and Community Services 2016)**

[https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/file/0008/388349/3779\\_FACS\\_Measuring-Social-Housing-Outcomes\\_Cover.pdf](https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/file/0008/388349/3779_FACS_Measuring-Social-Housing-Outcomes_Cover.pdf)

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## ENVIRONMENT

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LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE








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