Media Release (for immediate release)

Shepparton Community Share – local not-for-profits sign cooperative agreement

On Tuesday the 9th of August, four of Shepparton's key not-for-profit community service providers will sign an agreement to enhance cooperation. The four agencies are **The Bridge Youth Service**, **Connect GV**, **FamilyCare** and **Primary Care Connect**.

Funding to develop the agreement was provided by the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust, which conducted a Shepparton specific capacity-building grant round in mid-2015. Rebecca Lorains, CEO of Primary Care Connect acknowledged that support – 'The encouragement from the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust has been fabulous. It gave us time and support to work on actions together.'

The cooperative framework will be known as Shepparton Community Share. 'The funding has allowed us to design shared projects that will help each agency and the whole community,' said Carolynne Young CEO of Connect GV. Connect GV is responsible for a project to test the partners' IT and Communications capacity and develop simple, cost effective options to support better exchange of information in the future.

Each of the Shepparton Community Share agencies has decades of experience in delivering local services. The project aims to enhance their capacity, according to Melinda Lawley CEO of The Bridge Youth Service. 'The best part of this exercise is that we can work together, respect each other's independence and in the process do more for our local community,' said Ms Lawley.

Documentation to support the agreement was provide pro bono (free of charge) by national law firm Colin Biggers & Paisley, via the Justice Connect referral process. David Tennant, CEO of FamilyCare expects the agreement to help the network for some time to come. 'The guidance from our legal advisors allowed us to develop a model that will continue after the funding has ceased,' said Mr Tennant.

Further comment:

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