

# Not Rocket Science Building Links with the Community

Community Service Series (Vol 2)

Mark McCracken

Anglican  
Church  
Diocese of Perth



AnglicareWA™  
FOR TODAY. FOR TOMORROW.

## The Purpose of this Resource:

Dear Reader.

Many churches as part of their response to our Diocesan Mission Plan imperative to "Reach Out in Loving Service" have explored how they might grow and develop their links to their local community. Exploring how they might offer care and service to individuals and groups in their locality and so witness to Christ in this way.

This can be a challenging task. It's sometimes difficult to see beyond what we already offer. How we might connect with a community that sometimes seems disinterested in what we have to share or how best to minister in an effective way with limited resources.

This booklet is intended to provide a very basic method for reflecting on this important issue, and to provide some of the wonderful and creative initiatives our people have taken to reach out in the communities in which they live and work. It is intended primarily for Churches in their local mission as a first step for those who want to grow their connections and their ministry in their neighbourhood.

As the title suggests, none of this is high tech social science. It is all based on commonsense ideas and approaches to an important task. When we commit to this agenda, and work together in faithful obedience to God's calling, we can be assured that we will be blessed with fruitful outcomes.

*Clergy:* this document may be a useful addition to your pastoral handbook.

*For worshipping communities:* you might like to include these fact sheets in a file and add to them as further instalments are offered in this series.

If you have any feedback or have your own stories of how your parish has made connections and grown your service ministry, I'd love to hear from you.

Please enjoy the creativity displayed by our people in these pages. Commit yourself in prayer to this important ministry. And, if it meets a need somewhere in your locality, please give some of these ideas a go.

Yours in Christ  
The Rev'd Mark McCracken  
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[mark.mccracken@anglicarewa.org.au](mailto:mark.mccracken@anglicarewa.org.au)  
Ph: (08) 9263 2124  
Mobile: 0403 368 248

### OUR DIOCESAN MISSION IS TO:

**PROCLAIM:** Creatively listening & telling the Good News of Jesus.

**WORSHIP:** Build vital worshipping communities.

**SERVE:** Reaching out in loving service.

Acknowledgements: Our sincere thanks go to Bishop Goldsworthy for her reflection and to Peter Burke (Anglicare SA) for his insightful feedback and contributions to this resource.

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### From Bishop Kay Goldsworthy

Its great that so many Perth Anglicans are “reaching out in loving service” as we dream of doing in our Mission Plan, *Daring to Live God’s Promises*.

We hope that this will mean that we can build our presence in the wider community with integrity. As people turn to an outward focus and make links into local communities through service initiatives, worshipping communities find that even the smallest steps invigorate their parish life, and enthuse and encourage them. We are always astounded at how easy it is to be part of conversations about life and faith and God when we’re serving the community.

It’s not just a programme or a project. It turns out to be about serving an individual neighbour in need, who has questions about God, or who is looking for someone who can pray, and who is open to a new friendship. When we dare reach out to care we are all embraced by blessing- our community and our communion takes on another dimension, our praying takes on new shape and sharper focus, our steps are more purposeful and grace abounds – we know the truth of Jesus new commandment to ‘love one another as he has loved us.’

I invite you to join the growing number of people who are opening themselves up to new friendships and new partnerships of service in our communities.

Yours in Christ

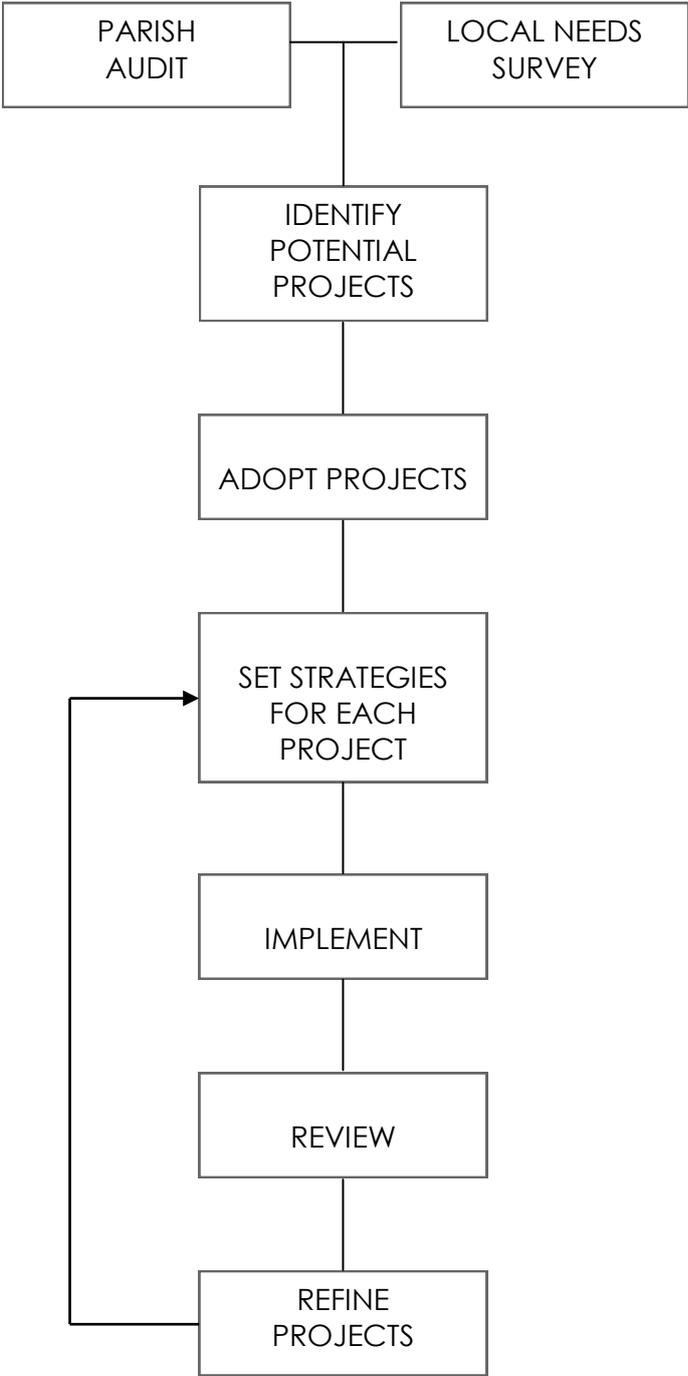
The Right Reverend Kay Goldsworthy

SECTION I

**A simple process for looking at community development projects**

A simple process for developing community projects is described over the next few pages. We've avoided using too many words and details in the hope that each parish that takes up this task will develop things in their own way and style. The whole point of local action is that it arises from local context and addresses needs in a way most suited to that area.

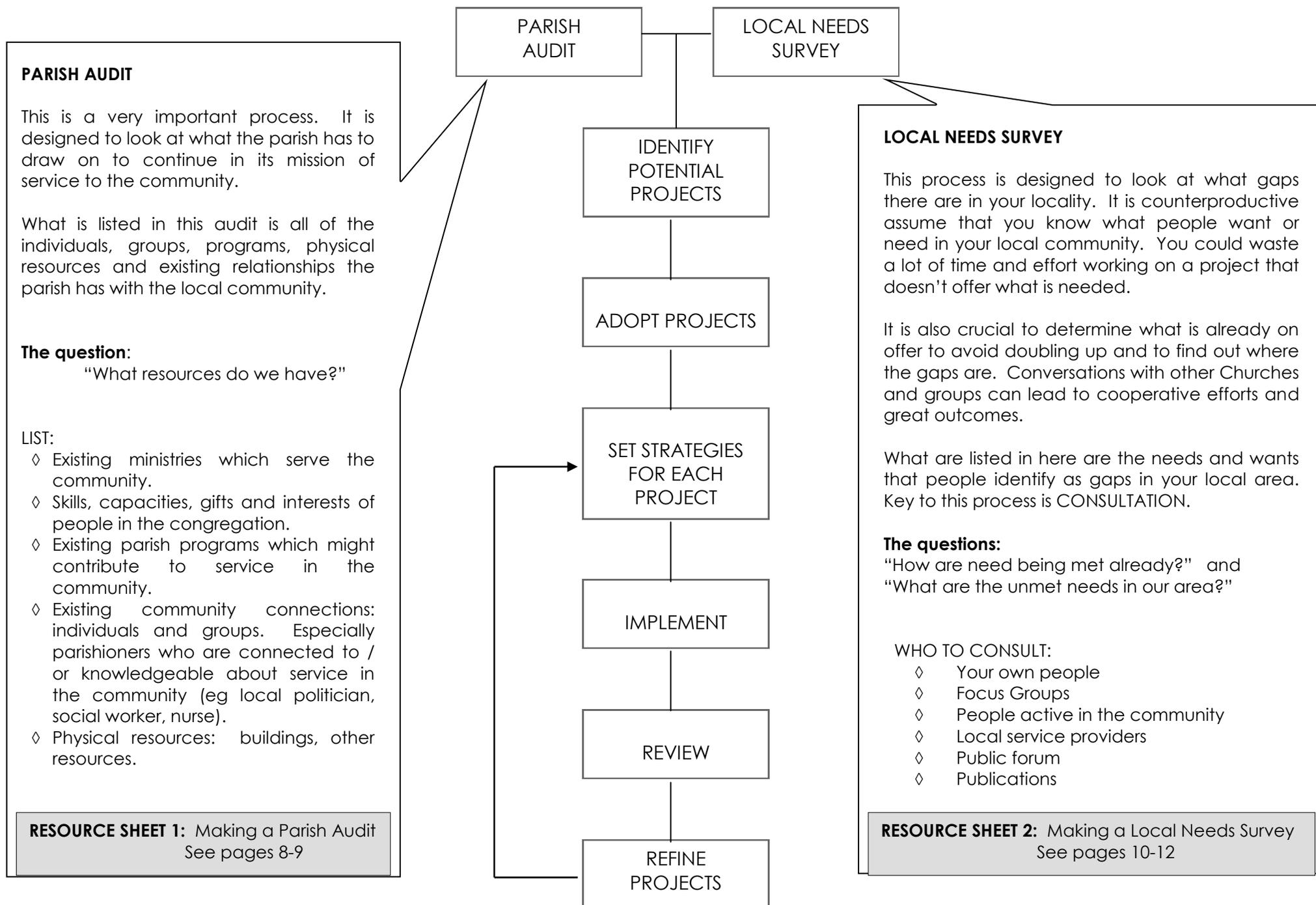
Here's the outline of a process for developing local initiatives from a parish base.



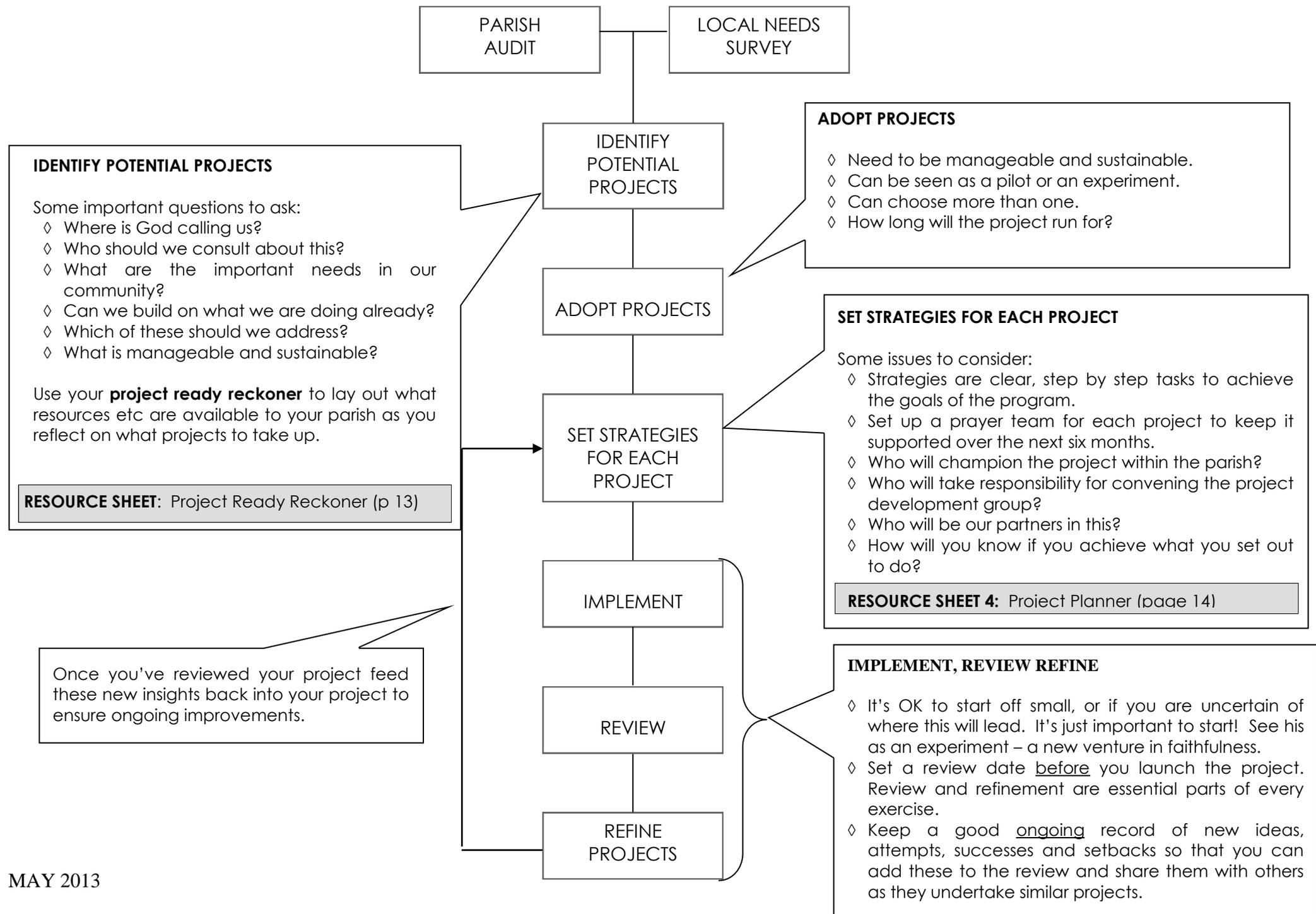
**First Steps**

There are two parts to the first step in this process. The Parish Audit and a Local Needs Survey. See over for more on these.

## STEP ONE: The Parish Audit and a Local Needs Survey



## STEP TWO: Making Projects Happen



## **MAKING A PARISH AUDIT**

This is a very important process. It is designed to look at what the parish has to draw on to embark on the next stage of its mission of service in the community.

**The question before us:** "What resources do we have?"

**What is listed** in this audit is all of the individuals, groups, programs, physical resources and existing relationships the parish has with the local community.

### **LIST:**

#### ◇ **Existing ministries which serve the community.**

What is outlined in this section are those ministries we offer which provide service and community support to people outside of our parish. That is, if we have a parish pantry that provides meals for sick parishioners it does not appear here. If, however, that same program is used for parishioners and others from the neighbourhood who come to our attention, then that constitutes a ministry which serves others from the community.

This is an important list to make.

- It helps provide a more complete picture of our activity in this area.
- It highlights obvious gaps in what we do as a Church.
- What is most helpful in this process is that we can reflect on whether it would be better to develop an existing ministry (grow it, expand coverage, get better resources and make partnerships) rather than create a project from scratch.

#### ◇ **Skills, gifts, capacities and interests of people in the congregation/parish.**

In this section, ask people to identify their own and others skills, gifts, capacities and interests. This can be seen as a process of 'discerning the body of Christ' in a particular community. It may be that these skills etc are evident and much in use but they can also be hidden or unrecognized. The audit process can be a good time to encourage people to imagine how their skills etc can be used differently or can be further enhanced through further learning and a new engagement.

Our people are our greatest asset. We have many parishioners who are connected to or knowledgeable about service in the community. Good people to look for in your congregation are local politicians, social and community workers, nurses, all of those people who work in the area of community need and service.

Also helpful are those parishioners wise in the ways of your neighbourhood. Elders if you like. People who are part of the fabric of your locality, and who play a big part in your suburb, town, or council.

Again, here is a perfect starting point when we make connections to other groups who serve in our community and who might become our partners in this important calling.

### **Parish programs which might contribute to service in the community.**

In this section we list those ministries in our Church which do not yet have a direct mandate to serve in the local area but which might be:

- ◇ Expanded to meet the needs of others outside of our parish;
- ◇ Used as a partner to any new projects we develop (see below for an example); or
- ◇ Which could provide resources to any new project (eg Ladies Guild providing 'start up resources' through fundraising efforts).

*For example, if the project is to make connection to socially isolated people the following parish ministries could be used to get in touch with, or supply activities for them.*

- ◇ *Op Shop (a place where people come through all of the time);*
- ◇ *'Shut in visiting': a perfect place to find people who could do with some social networks and activity.*
- ◇ *Wednesday Coffee Shop (meet people needing this support and a place to offer them contacts with others);*
- ◇ *Craft Group (a perfect place to direct people looking for contacts with others)*

### ◇ **Physical resources.**

These include our buildings, finances, access to material resources (eg people willing to donate goods and services to our projects) and so on.

Some parishes have valuable unused or underutilised space. A simple community initiative would be to search out a community group with slender funding and offer that space free or at cost. Then it's possible to build further projects and links with that group to create a significant outreach to the local area. This will mean learning to share our space with others for sake of mission.

When considering this issue, however, it's important to pay attention to the ways in which use of your centre may affect existing centre tenants.

### ◇ **Existing community connections.**

Every Church exists in a community network. The local ministers group, the various groups that use our facilities, partnerships the parish already has in place. The politician who attended our last commissioning and the community service agency that runs their playgroups from the hall.

Here is an invaluable network of individuals and groups that can be contacted for advice, consultation, resources, referral and perhaps even partnership.

## **MAKING A LOCAL NEEDS SURVEY**

This process is designed to look at what gaps there are in your locality. It is counterproductive to assume that you know what people want or need in your local community. You could waste a lot of time and effort working on a project that doesn't offer what is needed. Therefore an important part of this process is to find out what is already happening in the community – what services are already provided to meet the needs of people. By doing this you achieve several things – you put a human face on your parish by going to ask such a question; you build up a resource list of information which could be useful in referral or in promoting your new project; and you find out what the gaps in services are and can begin to imagine how to respond.

### **The questions before us:**

“How are needs already met in the community” and  
“What are the unmet needs in our area?”

**What is listed** in here is a list of existing services in the area and a list of the needs and wants that people identify as gaps in your local area.

**What is key** in this process is CONSULTATION both to find out what is already happening and what is not happening which gives us an idea about how we can engage in new and creative ways.

## **WHO CAN WE CONSULT?**

### ◇ **Your own people**

It is always good to remember that we as the Church are not outside of the community. Rather we help to make it up! Our people belong to groups outside of Church, have children at the local school, hold office in various community organisations and interact with their neighbours all of the time.

When considering local needs it is always helpful to consult your own people on two topics:

- a. Their own ideas about what would be helpful in their area. This has the added benefit of raising your people's awareness of what the Church is doing in this area of loving service, and increasing their commitment to projects adopted by the parish. and
- b. Ask them to do some research with people they are connected to locally. Ask them to check with their clubs, neighbours, other parents at school, and so on about what they would like to see in their community. This also has the benefit of creating a network of possible volunteers or participants in any future project.

### ◇ **Focus Groups**

Focus groups are used by a range of professions whose task is to discern community attitudes towards a broad spectrum of issues. They are easy to form, and provide a bonus – they leave you with a network of people who may be interested in being involved in a project either as a participant or volunteer.

The best way to create focus groups is to use your existing networks. For instance; if you think a project engaging young parents might be of value, find the times when these sorts of people gather at your Parish Centre. These might be:

- ◇ The playgroup;
- ◇ The Sunday evening family service;
- ◇ Parents waiting to pick their children up from dance classes;
- ◇ Parents of children in the Sunday school.

Be creative about when you meet with people you think might be able to help in this way. For instance, give your people a sheet with the questions on it and ask them to survey others when they meet at their sporting and social gatherings. When one of your retirees goes to bowls – why not ask some questions over tea or at the bar afterwards, that sort of thing.

Most people are willing to help – especially if there is no special effort to attend a meeting. If they are already there – it is easy to ask them for 20 minutes of their time and find out what they think about a particular issue.

Once you gather these people together the task is to spend a short and focused time looking at a series of specific questions. It's important to keep the questions mostly the same throughout discussions with each focus group so that you will have standard information to compare at the end of the process.

Questions in focus groups can be very general or quite specific – depending on the detail you require. You can even meet with a focus group more than once – in order to get them to help you refine the project to meet the needs they have identified.

For example:

- ◇ Focus Group: Parents of primary school aged children
- ◇ Meeting 1:
  - Question 1: "What community activity would help you be better parents?"
  - Question 2: "What do you think other parents in our local area would want?"
- ◇ Response from the group: "Some presentations on managing children's behaviour."
- ◇ Meeting 2:
  - Question 1: "What topics would be useful to parents of young children in our area?"
  - Question 2: "When should these workshops be held?"
  - Question 3: "Would you come to a workshop like this?"
  - Question 4: "what sort of fee do you think would be manageable?" etc

Focus groups should be short, sharp and to the point, but conducted in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Results should be recorded and then collated for consideration by the working group.

◇ **People active in the community**

Your Shire president or CEO, or local council member, librarians, community activist, member of your Church who are involved in local issues, sporting club presidents and others all provide a rich source of local knowledge and perspectives on what your community might need.

Consulting and building links with these sorts of community leaders is also an invaluable step in terms of growing our parish presence in a locality, hopefully developing greater trust and cooperation, and letting others know that the Church is here and engaged in the life of our community.

◇ **Local service providers**

Most local areas have community workers involved in a wide range of services and activities. For instance the local shire or council, State government agencies such as the Department for Communities, local schools, along with a range of non-government community organisations, provide a range of services to our neighbourhoods.

As part of any local needs survey, a phone call, email or visit to anyone providing community service to your locality is invaluable. This is also a useful way to build links and partnerships with others reaching out to our community. Some of these people and agencies might become partners in your project.

◇ **Public forum**

Calling people together to discuss an issue is always a difficult task. If the agenda is a general conversation about what might be good to have in our neighbourhood it is often difficult to get people to attend. If it is over a contentious issue, feelings can run high and a meeting needs to be carefully managed. Still, if you need to quickly develop an understanding of community feeling on an issue this might be one avenue.

◇ **Publications**

There are a lot of studies and surveys available at your local library, council and also on the web. Depending on how much detail you need – you can check Census material to discern the demography of the people in your locality. Also – an approach to someone working in a particular area of concern (say youth) can give you access to specialist research and analysis.

◇ **Your ideas**

As we have said earlier in this resource, the best solutions and strategies are those developed by the people on the ground. Your ideas about how to reach people from your community are very important as they reflect your local knowledge and connections.

**PROJECT READY RECKONER.**

<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>GOAL</b> (meeting what need)	<b>PARISH ASSETS</b>	<b>EXISTING CONNECTIONS</b>	<b>COMMUNITY RESOURCES</b>	<b>POSSIBLE PARTNERSHIPS</b>
1					
2					
3					
4					

Resource Sheet 4: **PROJECT PLANNER**

Project Name: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Managed By</b>	<b>Resources Required</b>	<b>Desired Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>

## Developing a Community Project: A Hypothetical

Here is a hypothetical based on a parish in the metropolitan area.

### Background

St Mark's is a solid parish with a number of existing groups. Financially stable. Wanting to explore ways in which the parish can connect more significantly with the community. As it is a hills suburb the township is the area where most community services and activities are offered. St Mark's is close to the centre of all of this.

### Parish Audit

This revealed the following:

- Infrequently used office space. *(Two offices, with the parish office used Monday and Friday mornings. Other times are through occasional use by the rector).*
- Successful Op Shop. *(In the parish centre. Open three mornings a week, Monday, Thursday and Friday).*
- A small but lively playgroup. *(Made up mostly of non-parish young mums and their toddlers. Meeting once a week on Monday afternoon).*
- A small craft group. *(Made up of mainly retirees. Meeting once a week on Wednesday mornings).*
- Community garden at the local school. *(A good relationship with the school leadership. We send parishioners to work alongside students in the garden).*
- Market café: *(Held on Saturdays at the local community markets. Well patronised. A great opportunity to make some money and meet the local people).*

### Local Needs Survey

- This suburb is made up of relatively well off people who own their own homes.
- There is a growing number of retirees and older people who are becoming more house bound. There are also a number of young families buying into the area as older people move into retirement centres.
- There is one other playgroup in the area but it has a waiting list.
- There are not many local community activities as the district is a small one within driving distance of other larger centres.
- There are not a lot of facilities for community groups and services (offices etc) and what are available are expensive.
- The town council is very active and interested in creating community spirit and activities.
- The High School has a number of programs which connect to the community and are always interested in more support. A couple of areas they mentioned were tutoring for struggling students (a 'homework club') and possible work experience opportunities for some students.

### Potential Projects

After reflection, prayer and discussion within the parish three projects were identified.

1. LinkUp
2. Homework Club
3. Café Work Experience

A rough sketch of what is involved in these projects is listed in the Project Ready Reckoner (page 16) and then some strategies are developed (see page 17).

**Project Ready Reckoner**

PROJECT	GOAL (meeting what need)	PARISH ASSETS	EXISTING CONNECTIONS	COMMUNITY RESOURCES	POSSIBLE PARTNERSHIPS
<b>1. LinkUp</b>	Friendship opportunities for socially isolated people and young parents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Meeting rooms</li> <li>◇ Op Shop (lots of customers / passing traffic)</li> <li>◇ Craft group</li> <li>◇ Play group (mostly mums from outside of the church)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ People we meet in the Op Shop</li> <li>◇ People we are visiting through our pastoral care group</li> <li>◇ Mums in the playgroup</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Unsure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Shire community worker</li> <li>◇ Child health nurse</li> <li>◇ Playgroups association playgroup (keen to refer as their waiting list is full).</li> </ul>
<b>2. Homework Club</b>	Helping students in the High School with their homework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Our people who are willing and able to assist.</li> <li>◇ Our meeting room if the school would like to hold this off campus.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Chaplain</li> <li>◇ School principal</li> <li>◇ Our current work with the school community garden project.</li> <li>◇ Mary works in the school library.</li> <li>◇ Rob is a senior teacher at the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ School library if the program is to be on campus.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇</li> </ul>
<b>3. Café Work Experience</b>	Providing some opportunities for the hospitality students at the High School to work in our Market Café.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Market Café</li> <li>◇ Ken and Rami (Café managers) are very keen to supervise students. Ken has a teaching background.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ As above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ School hospitality course teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ TAFE (CareerLink)?</li> </ul>

## STRATEGIES

**Project 1: LinkUp.** A project which looks to build up connections through the groups which already exist within the parish in order to offer some friendship networks for socially isolated individuals in the community and also young parents in the area.

### Strategies

- ◇ Have a meeting with the leadership of the Op Shop, craft and play groups. Canvas this idea and if they are open to it develop some ideas and strategies. These could include:
  - Change the timing of the playgroup and craft group to the same as the Op Shop opening times. Advertise clearly where the groups are meeting around the Op Shop.
  - Consult with the Op Shop volunteers and ask them to be on the look out for people using the shop who might benefit from participation on the Craft Group or Play Group and encourage those people to give these groups a try.
- ◇ Approach Church Council for some 'development funding' for the craft group and playgroup.
- ◇ Make up some simple cards advertising each group and have them on display in the Op Shop and maybe even give them, out to appropriate people.
- ◇ Our pastoral visitors could encourage some of their 'shut ins' to come to the craft group.
- ◇ Contact the local Shire community worker about each group. Also have a discussion with the Playgroup association playgroup leader about making referrals to our playgroup. Advertise on some of the community notice boards and at the library.
- ◇ Run this LinkUp project for term 3 to see how it goes and call the leadership together to review.

**Project 2: Homework Club.** A project which works in partnership with the High school to help students with their homework. This is to tutor students and also give some connection to people who might act as mentors to them.

### Strategies

- ◇ Meet with the school chaplain and the teacher responsible for this area. Determine how many students might be helped in the first stage of this project and how many volunteers we will need from Church and other sources.
- ◇ Set guidelines for volunteers (what government clearances they will need, what educational standards they need to have etc).
- ◇ Work out where and when this tutoring will take place.
- ◇ Advertise, recruit and orientate/train volunteers (with the help of the chaplain / teacher).
- ◇ Have a launch at Church or the school.
- ◇ Get the project underway for term 2. Review in term 3.

**Project 3: Café Work Experience.** Providing some opportunities for the hospitality students at the High School to work in our Market Café. This is to offer them some work experience, meet some community people and make networks and (as a bonus) help us in our café

### Strategies

- ◇ Have further discussions with the chaplain and the hospitality teacher and maybe some of their students. Make sure Ken and Rami (café organisers) are involved.
- ◇ Set guidelines for what is required by the school for the student and café volunteers who will be supervising them.
- ◇ Work out some basic orientation for students when they come to help at the café.
- ◇ Keep the parish informed in the parish bulletin.
- ◇ Have a few trial placements at the café.
- ◇ Review and if we continue refine the process.
- ◇ Have a full review at the end of the year along with a parish function ('graduation') for the students and their families.

A **Project Planner** (page 19) is used to summarise the plan for each project. All of this is implemented, and later on reviewed and then refined.

**PROJECT PLANNER**

**Project Name:** LinkUp (making connections with our community)

Strategy	Managed By	Resources Required	Desired Outcome	Completion Date
Meet with the leadership of the Op Shop, craft and play groups.	Rector, Mission team	Tea and biscuits	On board with the idea	
Church Council approval and development funding	Rector	Outline of the project and some financial information	Council endorse this project and give some small start up funding.	
Change the timing of the playgroup and craft group to the same as the Op Shop opening times.	Group leaders	Parish office	New times that match up.	
Op Shop volunteers consultation and orientation. Be on the look out for people using the shop who might benefit from participation on the Craft Group or Play Group and encourage those people to give these groups a try.	Op Shop manager and Rector	Project outline	Volunteers aware of what is required and committed to the idea.	
Advertising Cards, posters and flyers.	Parish secretary	Parish Office	Cards, posters / signage	
Our pastoral visitors could encourage some of their 'shut ins' to come to the craft group.	Pastoral visitors team leader	Advertising cards	Some of the people we visit attending the craft group.	
Contact the local Shire community worker about each group.	Parish secretary	Cards, posters	Council refer to and support the project	
Playgroup association: contact playgroup leader about making referrals to our playgroup.	Church Playgroup leader	Cards, poster	Playgroup association makes referrals to our group from people who are on their waiting list.	
Advertise on some of the community notice boards and at the library.	Parish Secretary	Posters / flyer	Some community awareness of the project.	
Run this LinkUp project for term 3 to see how it goes and call the leadership together to review in term 4.	Rector, a few participants and team leaders.	Short reports from leaders of the different groups.	Review and refine the project.	

## **CURRENT PROJECTS**     *Some great examples of our community service.*

**Victoria Park Deanery** provide a combined Aged Care service. It is coordinated by a lay leader from Kensington Parish, who listens carefully to the staff and residents of several Aged Care places on her patch. She coordinates pastoral care to many aged care centres on behalf of the deanery and ensures needs are met quickly and in an integrated way.

**Wongan Hills Parish** coordinated an "Expo" for babies and early childhood, taking over the town Civic Centre. There were dozens of stall-holders and hundreds of people through the Expo, which took a lot of work to plan and run, but makes the Church's presence very visible in the local community.

**West Nedlands** Parish linked with Anglicare to offer a Kinway parenting program. Kinway is Anglicare's department that offers courses and counselling for all kinds of relationships. The program was called "Parenting with Grace" and was developed through consultation with Anglicare presenters.

**The Joondalup Deanery and Schools** are planning to offer a series of relationship education sessions and courses to people in their local area. They will do this through Anglicare presenters and offer a range of subjects at a number of their school and parish venues.

**Forrestfield Parish** have reflected very carefully on their community service and connections. They say: "We have asked the question "How can we make our existing programmes more effective, and use them to build bridges to the community? On the last Friday of each month, we hold a Market Day and approximately fifty members of the local community pass through our doors to be greeted by a dozen or more of us. Some come to pick up a bargain, some come for somewhere to go and some come seeking a friendly voice, a smiling face. Then there are those who just enjoy relaxing among friends they know well. Our aim is to welcome them – not just as sellers of bargains but as people with a message of Christ's love to share. At all our markets, we keep customers informed of what we are doing in coming weeks such as our Anzac Day Dawn service and in the last few months, our Mums and Babes group has grown from contacts made at Market Days."

**Thornlie-Kenwick-Huntingdale Parish** work with a coalition of community groups at the end of each year to supply School Hampers to needy children in schools in their area. They liaise with their local school (chaplains or teaching staff) who indicate how many hampers will be needed in the approaching school year. Then the community groups raise money and goods to put together hampers of school supplies for needy junior and senior primary students, and even for some High School students. These are delivered to the school in early January who then distribute them to their students. This project has grown to assist 350 school children with "School Showbags" consisting of basic stationary items common to most school booklists and has created a great opportunity for Christian and community groups to provide support to their local schools. This project is simple and effective and can be planned for well in advance. It connects a number of local groups and offers very practical support to children and young people and their families. This idea has been adopted by a number of Churches around our State.

**Midland Parish** have a commitment to making connections to their local community as part of their mission statement and hold a number of events each year designed to connect to local people. They also have intentionally sought out a number of community groups in order to work out ways in which they might cooperate.

Some of these local initiatives are:

- Becoming founding members of the Midland Youth Consultation;
- Community Seminars, each year the parish commit to offering two seminars on issues important to the local area. Previous seminars include environmental management in the Swan region, suicide prevention and mental health.

**Kalamunda Parish** have a café operating at their local market day. They also have a developing relationship with their local schools – especially through a community garden project at the local primary school.

