**Community led initiatives for newcomer multicultural communities at the forefront of COVID recovery**

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City of Stirling is known as the most multicultural local government in Western Australia. The City’s cultural diversity team has over the past couple of decades engaged with, responded to and learnt much about and from the newcomer communities. The team has looked to engage collaboratively and work alongside communities and service providers to empower grassroots leadership.

COVID-19 was an opportunity for the City to not only respond to meet the needs of our communities where service providers could not, but also allowed us to critically examine how best to support our communities in times of crisis. It highlighted the importance of working with community leaders who are a great source of cultural knowledge, have access to community groups and are already involved in helping their communities. The sector rarely acknowledges the tireless work that community leaders do and COVID-19 demonstrated how reliant we are on leaders more than ever to be a conduit between community and the supports available.

The purpose of this presentation will be to highlight the city’s support of communities during COVID-19 and promote community leadership and its support of the community. The presentation will emphasise that now more than ever, service provision should move away from a ‘providing for’ or ‘providing with’ approach to supporting community led initiatives.

A special highlight of this presentation is that it will be co-presented with a community leader who will share some of their personal/community group’s journey through response and recovery.