

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Mentor Program off to a Great Start

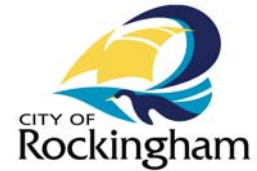
“How much time do we actually spend with our young people truly listening and being there just for them?” asks Arbie Pattiselanno, the Project Officer for the Rockingham Youth Mentoring Program. “Life these days is busy and hectic and coupled with financial burden and pressures for parents to be working – Youth Mentors offer young people the opportunity to reconnect with their community”

The Rockingham Youth Mentoring Program managed by the City of Rockingham Youth Services was launched this month. Although recruiting volunteer youth mentors was the toughest challenge, the mentors that applied to the program were passionate and an inspiration for young people.

The program commenced with four inspirational Volunteer Youth Mentors who were then matched with four young males. The program will continue for the next six months and focuses on “*Supporting the pathways of Young People*” - Youth Mentors do this by developing a relationship with their mentee and working towards improving their connection to community, life skills experience, self esteem and confidence.

There was a significant demand from the community for male mentors with over 90% percent of referrals and enquiries received for the program being for young males. Currently, the program targets young people aged 10 – 17 years of age.

Although no longer accepting referrals for this program – the City of Rockingham Youth services is keen on hearing from prospective mentors and young people interested in the program so as to gauge further need and sustainability for such a program.



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Arbie said his highlight of the program development process was seeing the young people involved in the program for the first time and hearing their issues with self esteem, low confidence, experiences of bullying and issues with socialising with their peers.

“One young man could not wait to hear from the program and meet his mentor; he couldn’t stop asking his mother all week when he was going to meet his mentor!” Mr. Pattiselanno said.

“It’s only early days, but mentoring has demonstrated capacity to make some positive changes in young people lives and the program hopes to report on some good outcomes later on this year,” he added.

The program acknowledges the support received from the Department for Communities, the Kwinana Industries Council and those involved in the mentor program reference group who partnered on this local community initiative.

**For more information on this unique program, contact the City of Rockingham Youth Services at the Station Youth Centre on 9528 8690 or access their website at [www.rockingham.wa.gov.au/Community\\_Services/youth-mentoring.php](http://www.rockingham.wa.gov.au/Community_Services/youth-mentoring.php)**