



# Media Release

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## **Cockburn seniors provide pearls of wisdom in return for Youngsters' tech savvy skills**

If you are struggling to master the digital technology side of life, a group of Cockburn's tech savvy youngsters is on hand to help.

The City of Cockburn has embarked on an eight-week trial of Youngster.Co which provides seniors citizens, and even those for whom English is a second language, technical support to operate their small digital devices.

Youngster.Co is a unique intergenerational social enterprise that operates across Australia by linking up young people 16 years and over with the digitally challenged in a model that ensures the youngsters are paid for their time and expertise.

Cockburn was WA's second local government to sign up to the enterprise. Co-founder Tony Rothacker said several other organisations in the Perth metropolitan area had shown an interest in helping youth gain employment experience by connecting seniors with the free community service.

More than 20 Cockburn youngsters have registered with the social enterprise and in its first week, six young people helped 24 seniors with tasks on their digital devices, including uploading the State Government's new ServiceWA app to show proof of COVID vaccination.

Of the Cockburn youngsters already registered, some speak Cantonese, Mandarin, Tagalog, Punjabi, Afghani, Hindu and Mauritian Creole and are available to further support the City's diverse community.

The City encourages more young people, and clients in need of their techy know-how, to register at [Youngster.Co](https://www.youngster.co). Seniors can also book online through [Cockburn Libraries](#) for the free 30-minute sessions.

City of Cockburn Library & Cultural Services Adult Services Coordinator Deborah Rigby said feedback from seniors after the program's first week was very positive, with



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several relieved to receive help uploading the ServiceWA app to their mobile phones.

“The youngsters were very patient, kind and compassionate in helping the seniors and I’m sure the seniors didn’t hold back in sharing some of their lifelong wisdom too,” Ms Rigby said.

“The City is funding the program and we are really proud we are able to support our community in these interesting times.”

Enterprise Co-founder Tony Rothacker said the program provided job opportunities for youngsters and empowered older people to gain confidence when using technology.

“By bridging the gap between the generations, youngsters share their digital skills and vitality while elders pass on some of their stories and wisdom, and both groups gain a greater appreciation for each other,” Mr Rothacker said.

“The main drivers behind starting this enterprise was the link between youth unemployment and youth suicide.

“Studies show that among the root causes of youth suicide is too much time spent on social media. This program enables young people to make use of their digital technology skills in a meaningful way that enriches their community, and by connecting two vulnerable groups at risk of isolation.”

Free weekly sessions in February and March will be held the following locations:

- **Tuesdays** –10am-12pm Spearwood Library, 9 Coleville Crescent, Spearwood
- **Thursdays** – 10am-12pm Cockburn Seniors Centre, 9 Coleville Crescent, Spearwood
- **Saturdays** – 10am-12pm Success Library Community Room, Level 1, 11 Wentworth Parade, Success.



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At the end of each session, Youngsters ask their clients to offer some essential life advice for future reference, and here are some of those pearls of wisdom:

- Never stop learning
- Don't spend your life on computer screens - read more books
- Don't be afraid to take chances
- Look for opportunities and work harder than others.

ENDS

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