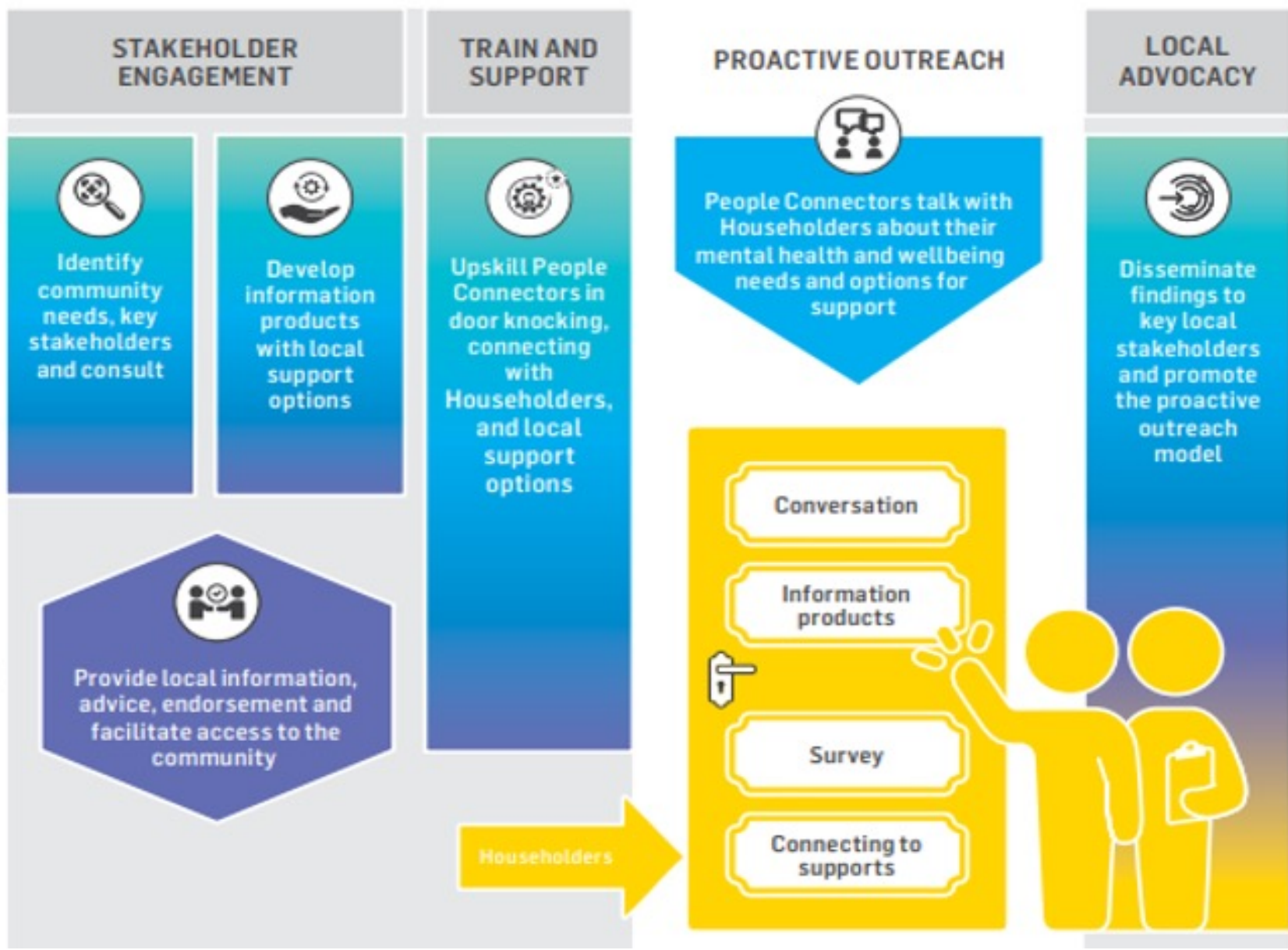


# Reaching people through doorknocking: An underutilised method that provides rich learnings

Learnings from a doorknocking project for mental health

*Lisette Kaleveld*





# The People Connector role



Proactively reach people through doorknocking to have conversations about how they are, what supports they might need, and share information



Invite householders to complete a survey about mental health, and use the data locally to understand community needs





## PROJECT OVERVIEW

PROJECT COMPONENTS	INFORMATION AND REPORTING	ACDC SURVEY
Goals for the project and the research	Site briefings	Purpose of the survey
Roles and responsibilities	Equipment, resources and information products	Research ethics
Promoting the project in the community	Mapping the site	Privacy, confidentiality and consent
Project evaluation and focus groups	Recording project activity	Completing the survey
Stakeholders newsletter	Fortnightly report	Resolving data or technology issues
Post-doorknocking activities		Different ways to complete the survey



## DOORKNOCKING PROTOCOLS

NAVIGATING DOOR-KNOCKING	SAFETY	RESPONDING TO SPECIFIC SCENARIOS
Safe doorknocking practices	Work health and safety	Challenging or unsafe situations and strategies to manage
Engagement guidelines and techniques	COVID management	Householders at risk of harm
The script at the door	Risk assessment and risk management	Children and young people under 16
Responding to signs on doors and letterboxes	Incident management protocols	Family and domestic violence
Procedures for different dwellings		Individuals experiencing acute emotional distress or states they are suicidal
Delivery in rural and remote locations		Concern for an individual's physical health, or a medical emergency
		Householders in circumstances of squalor and/or hoarding



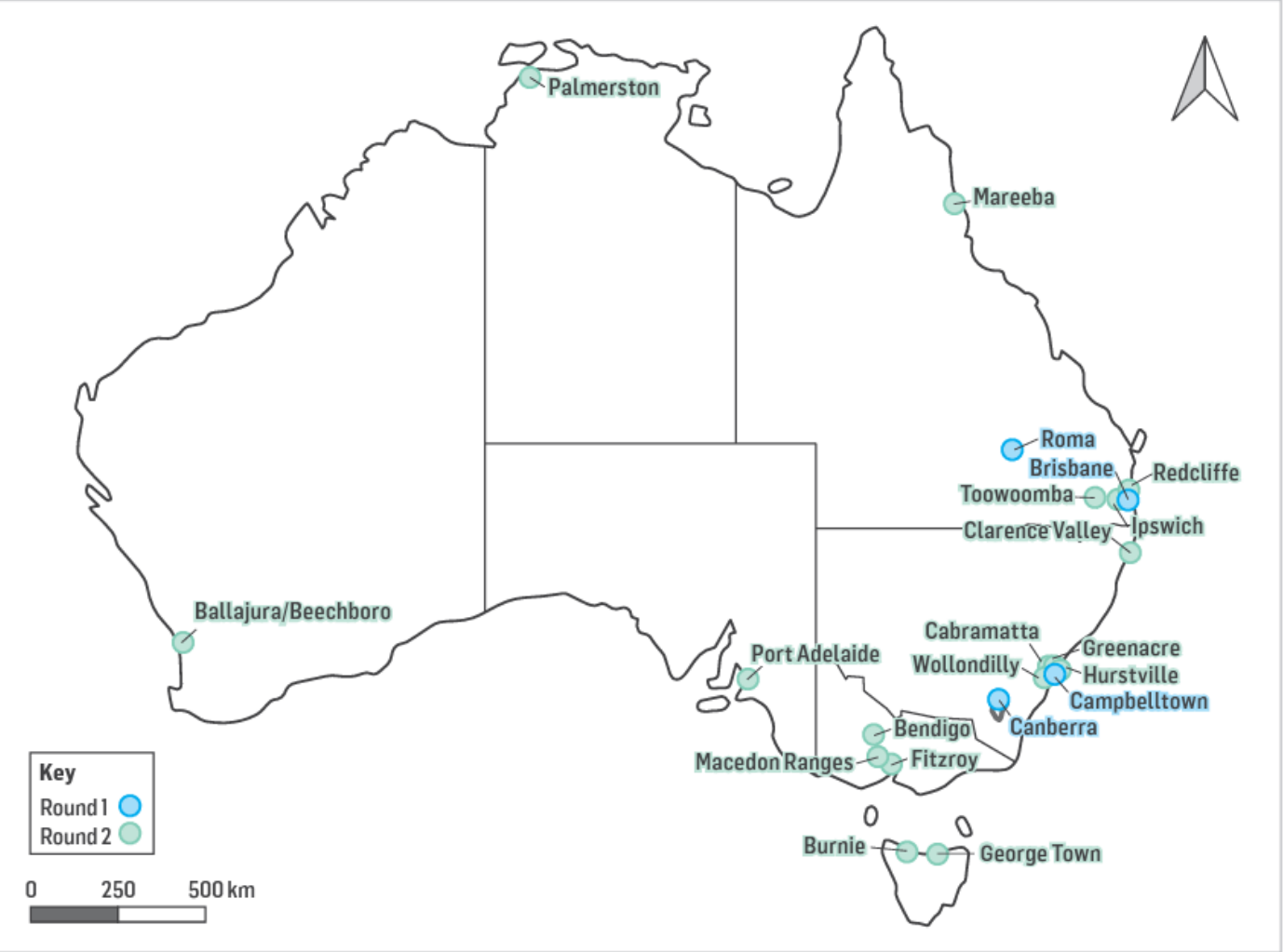
## ENGAGING WITH HOUSEHOLDERS

QUALITY CONNECTIONS	ENGAGING WITH SPECIFIC POPULATION GROUPS	SUPPORTING HOUSEHOLDERS
Active listening	Cultural awareness	Identifying unmet needs
Building rapport	Cultural sensitivity	Assisting a householder connect with a service
Motivational interviewing	Use of interpreters services and translated surveys	Referrals
Strengths based approaches		Follow-up visits
		Making connections to supports and services



## MENTAL HEALTH AND SELF-CARE

MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY AND SKILLS	SELF-CARE AND SUPPORT
Trauma-informed practice	Reflecting practice
Mental health promotion and stigma	Diffusing and debriefing
Recovery oriented approaches	Community of practice meetings
Vicarious trauma and triggering	Aboriginal Workers Circles



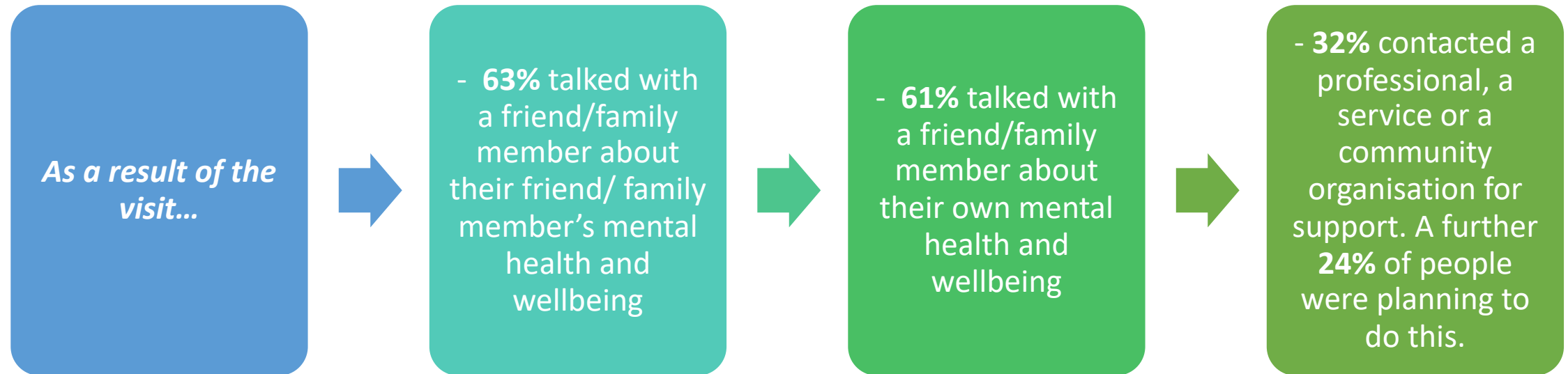
# 1. Don't be afraid of doorknocking



## 2. An effective engagement tool

- The quality of the connection: trust, a safe space, a caring stranger who is willing to listen
- The holistic, 'no agenda' approach to understanding needs, which is not service-centric
- Flexible; People Connectors had a willingness to spend time helping address barriers to finding help

### 3. A highly personalised approach





## 4. Engaging people who were hardly reached, or living in disadvantaged communities

- Low barrier engagement; all that is required is that you be home and willing
- For householders, it was a chance for connection that breaks down social isolation or loneliness
- Community members were trained as doorknockers and they wanted to visit places where they thought there was a need



# 5. The value of a grounded data collection approach



- **Access to ‘less heard’ voices** – through their connection skills
- **Reduces power imbalances** – data collection is ‘with and for’ the community
- **The added value of lived experience** of community issues/similar struggles
- **Gathering better data** – keeping conversations relevant and meaningful
- They ensure data quality by **collecting data appropriately** for their community members

# 6. Localised understandings of need

734 doors knocked on in Palmerston.

- **458** conversations
- **162** householders responded to the survey

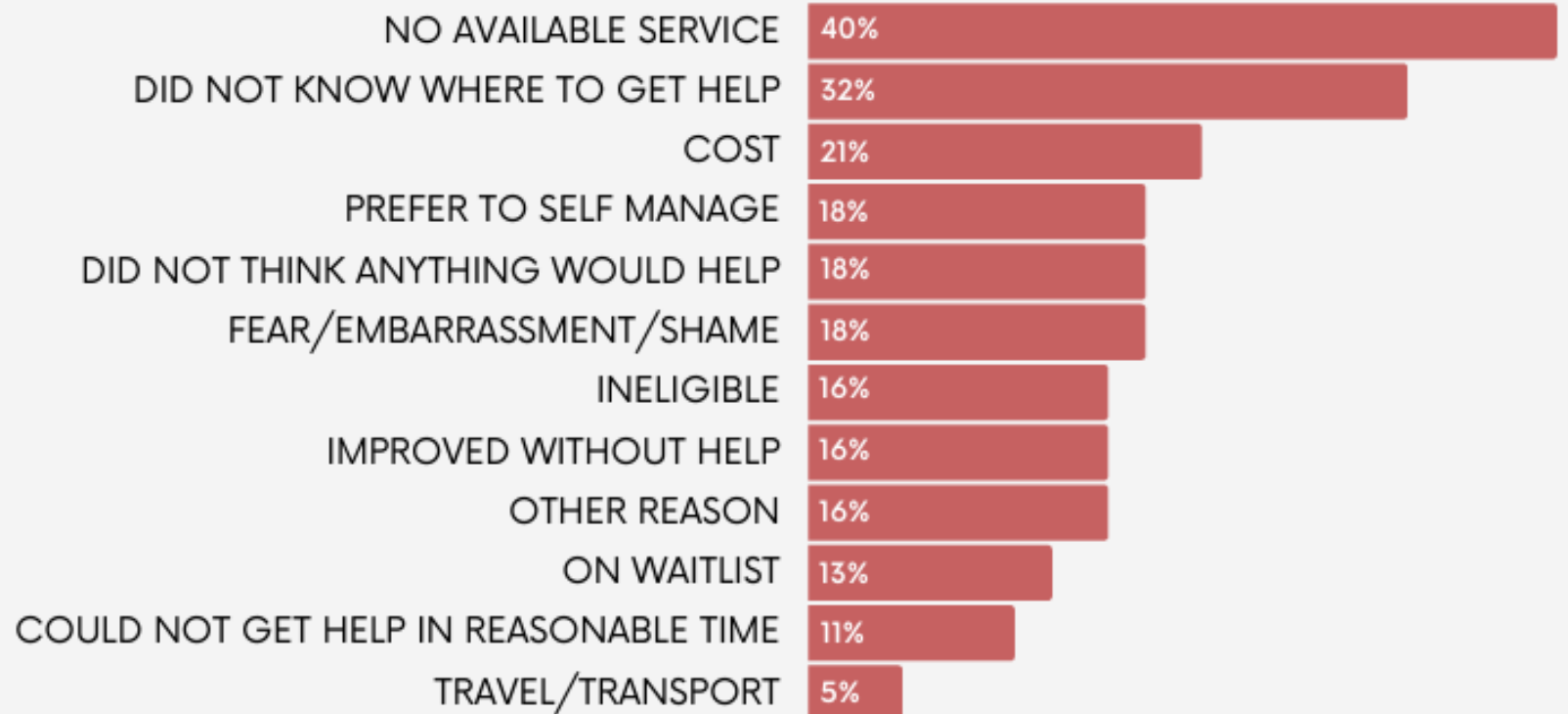
*"We've learnt that males don't like to talk about mental health, and this is a big issue in the Palmerston community. Then there's also a lot of people, including kids, who don't know what mental illness is, or they just don't want to know. A lot of multicultural families we spoke to said there's never been issues with mental illness in their family, so it's not even recognised in that household at all."*

– People Connector

# Palmerston

## BARRIERS TO HELP-SEEKING

REASONS FOR HOUSEHOLDERS NOT RECEIVING HELP FOR MENTAL HEALTH INCLUDED\*:



\*Multiple responses permitted; refers to the householders who wanted to seek help for their mental health but did not get the help they needed.

# 7. Doorknocking conversations were responsive to different conditions

- Stigma ranged from 3% in Macedon Ranges to 57% in Burnie

**TABLE 3** Variation across communities in the % of people who experienced certain barriers to accessing supports and services

Location	I was afraid/embarrassed/ashamed to ask for help	I couldn't afford the service
Ipswich	15%	20%
Macedon Ranges	3%	14%
Port Adelaide	11%	21%
Bendigo	11%	16%
Burnie	57%	18%
Georgetown	23%	25%
Redcliffe	14%	39%
Fitzroy	16%	26%
Mareeba	29%	24%
Clarence Valley	24%	38%
Toowoomba	19%	41%
Wollondilly	39%	18%
Palmerston	18%	21%
Hurstville	14%	28%
City of Swan	19%	34%
Cabramatta	24%	29%
Greenacre	17%	17%

## 8. Doorknocking can be personally impactful

- Going door-to-door provides a **grounded experience and understanding of a social or geographical community**
- People Connectors became **more invested in their communities**, and creating localised solutions
- Becoming empowered to affect positive change and think about social justice

# 9. Local interest in using the data

*“We understand that the surveys are really important for lobbying for government influence, funding, information services and supports as well.”*

***(People Connector)***







## **Traditional research**

- An expert with specialist tools and skills
- Unbiased and independent
- Extractive or transactional

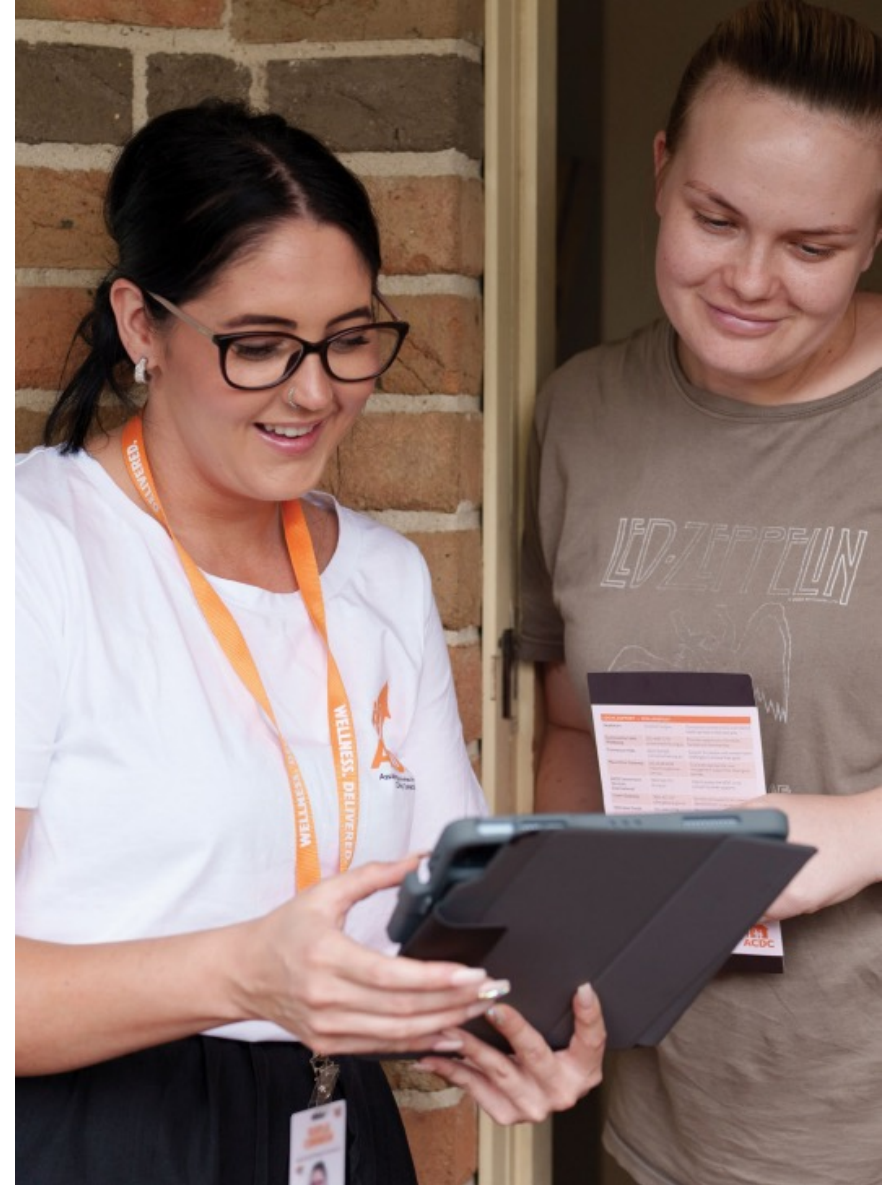


## **Community development**

- Inclusive capacity building to support local decision-making and action
- Consciousness raising
- Transformational and relational

*“I mean, we’re basically researchers, aren’t we, that’s what we are. And so, our role is really to enable the potential for the community to get greater funds for mental health and wellbeing in their area.”*

**(People Connector)**



# 10. Summary of learnings about doorknocking

## 1. Engagement skills

QUALITY  
CONNECTIONS

ENGAGING  
WITH SPECIFIC  
POPULATION  
GROUPS

SUPPORTING  
HOUSEHOLDERS

## • 2. Benefits to data quality

**Access to 'less heard' voices**

**Reduction of power imbalances**

**Data collected appropriately**

**Informed by knowledge of  
community**

## 3. Benefits for communities

**Evidence is grounded in experiences**

**Insights retained**

**Motivation to use evidence**





<https://www.csi.edu.au/research/door-to-door-for-mental-health/>