Public Service Commission

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# App transforms interactions with people experiencing homelessness

The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) runs the Assertive Outreach (AO) program, through which its employees actively look for and engage with people who are experiencing street homelessness.

The DCJ wanted to create an efficient digital solution for AO staff as the day-to-day administration of the program was manual and resource-intensive. The solution was the Journey on Home (JoH) app, created in partnership with Telstra and Concentrix Catalyst.

The JoH app is the first of its kind in social housing across Australia. It enables consistent reporting and provides users with all necessary client and support information to effectively assist engagement. AO staff members collaborated on its design and user-tested its features.

How the app works
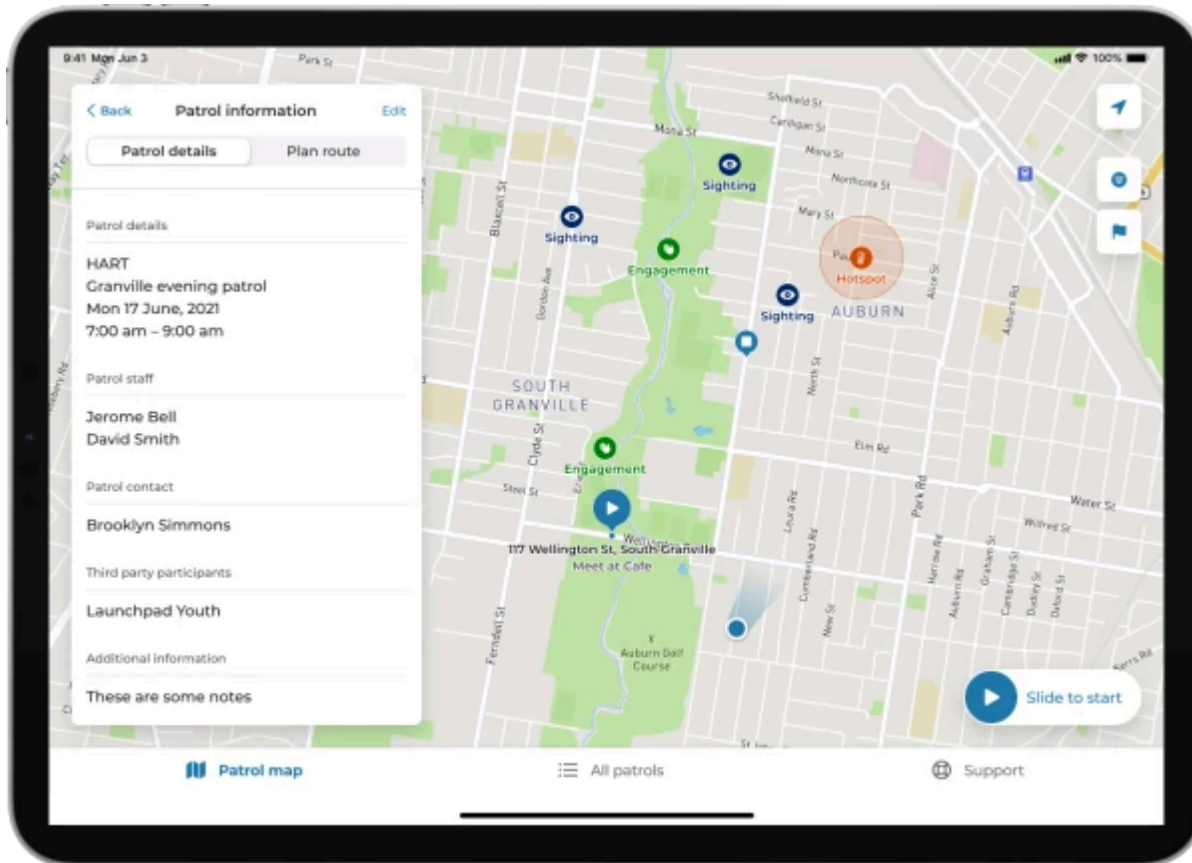
JoH is a standalone, secure iPad app that uses mapping functionality to plan and schedule street patrols. It is a single source of information that captures client information and related data in one place, facilitating referrals to support providers. It improves staff members' ability to connect people with specialised support services that meet their needs, such as temporary accommodation, health services, and financial and wellbeing support.

Over 3,989 engagements have been recorded as at September 2023. AO staff now have improved reporting capabilities and access to better quality data, spending 50% less time on administrative tasks.

Building client trust

Staff feedback has validated the success of the app, with one staff member saying: "You can clearly tell this app was developed by current or former frontline housing staff. It is very user friendly, and everything is relevant and current to what we do".

By simplifying and standardising engagement reporting, the JoH app has enabled frontline workers to shift their focus to building trust with clients and helping them find the right supports. It has improved clients' service experiences, as they no longer need to retell their story multiple times.