



Homeless People Policy

Adoption Date:	17 September 2019
Last Reviewed:	
Next Review Date:	17 September 2021
Division/Department:	Community Services/Community Development
Responsible Officer:	Manager – Community Development
HPE CM Record Number:	19/43678

1 Policy Statement

The Commonwealth and State Governments have the primary responsibility to fund services and programs to assist people who are homeless. Local Governments and community organisations play an important part in preventing, reducing, and managing homelessness through monitoring homelessness and referral to local services.

Council acknowledge the rights of all members of the community, including those who are homeless, to use Council services, programs and public spaces.

2 Application

Background

It is estimated that there are 165 homeless people (primary, secondary and tertiary combined) living in Woollahra (ABS, Estimating Homelessness, 2016). Compared to other LGAs, Woollahra has a comparatively low number of homeless people.

Objectives

- To treat homeless people with dignity and respect and, where possible, to provide them with information about support services.
- To ensure the safety of our community including: homeless people; Council staff; local residents; and visitors to our area.
- To protect the rights of all members of the community to enjoy public spaces and public community services.
- To provide information and education of the wider community about how Council manages homelessness in our local area and how we provide referral support when required.

Scope

This Policy and associated procedure apply to all employees of Woollahra Municipal Council and homeless people in all parks, open spaces, public buildings and outdoor areas within Woollahra Municipal Council area where the homeless person:

- requests assistance;
- appears to be distressed or in need of assistance;
- is displaying behaviour that threatens their safety or the safety and security of people around them;

- behaves in a way that infringes on public health and safety and therefore disrupts other community members from using this public space; and/or
- prevents Council from providing its regular services and park maintenance.

3 Definitions

There is no one definition of homelessness however there are three broadly accepted categories of homelessness as defined by Homelessness Australia:

<https://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au/about/what-homelessness>

Term	Meaning
Primary Homeless	Those who are 'sleeping rough', without a roof over their head, often in public places or in improvised dwellings. This may also include sleeping in cars.
Secondary Homeless	Those in transitional housing such as emergency accommodation (hostels), refuges (youth, women and children), people residing temporarily with friends/relatives.
Tertiary Homeless	People whose living arrangements do not provide them with security of tenure as provided by a lease, or who are living in accommodation which is unsafe or harmful to their health such as boarding houses, caravan parks and rooming houses.

For the purpose of this policy, the primary homeless definition is most relevant.

4 Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Operational Plan

This Policy relates to Themes, Goals and Strategies, outlined in Council's Community Strategic Plan Woollahra 2030 and Priorities outlined in Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan, specifically:

Theme: Community Wellbeing

Goal: A supported, enabled and resilient community

Strategy: Provide support for vulnerable people

Priority: Collaborate with a range of services to provide support for vulnerable people

5 Homeless Support

All notifications from concerned residents with information on homeless people will be noted on Council's CRM system and, if sufficient information is provided, referred to HOST Outreach Team who respond by visiting the area/individual to discuss linking them with an appropriate service.

Council will participate in an annual homeless street count in collaboration with local support services to gather evidence so as to raise awareness of homelessness and to advocate for measures to reduce homelessness.

Council makes available at libraries, Council's customer services centre and Council-owned community venues a list of homelessness support services. The list of homeless support services can also be found on Council's website along with our policy commitment.

6 Documentation/References

	HPECM Ref
The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness – Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).	19/46419
Protocol for Homeless People in Public Places - NSW State Government	19/46411

7 Related Policies and Procedures

	HPECM Reference
Homeless People Procedure	19/65932

This Policy will be reviewed every two years or as required in the event of legislative changes. This Policy may also be changed as a result of other amendments that are to the advantage of Council and in the spirit of this Policy.

Any amendment to this Policy must be by way of the approval of the General Manager.

Policy Amendments

Date	Responsible Officer	Description