

Homelessness Taskforce Shoalhaven

Meeting Date: Monday, 27 November, 2017
Location: Jervis Bay Rooms, City Administrative Centre, Bridge Road, Nowra
Time: 4.00pm

Please note: Council's Code of Meeting Practice permits the electronic recording and broadcast of the proceedings of meetings of the Council which are open to the public. Your attendance at this meeting is taken as consent to the possibility that your image and/or voice may be recorded and broadcast to the public.

Agenda

1. **Apologies**
2. **Confirmation of Minutes**
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3. **Declarations of Interest**
4. **Reports**
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 - HT17.4 Homelessness Policy 6
5. **General Business**
 - HT17.5 Frankston Council - Homelessness in Australia

Membership

Clr Findley - Chairperson

All Councillors

General Manager or Nominee

Tamie Harvie - Community / volunteer – interested in mental health and D&A

Penni Wildi – Community Member / Waminda

Wendy Woodward - Nowra Show Society / community volunteer

Deborah Ferrier – Community volunteer

Lesley Labka - SAHSSI – Shoalhaven Women's Homeless and DV Service

Wendi Hobbs - Shoalhaven Suicide Prevention and Awareness Network (SSPAN)

Rev Matthew Wilson – Nowra Uniting Church

Patricia David – Unions Shoalhaven

Peter Dover – Salt Ministries

Roslyn Poole - ISLHD – Homelessness Mental Health Program

Ashleigh Hudson - Mobile Response Vehicle coordinator (services for homeless)

Max Zalakos – Nowra Baptist Church

Julie Bugden - Shoalhaven Homelessness Hub

Donna Brotherson – Illawarra Forum

Bernard Gleeson - St Vincent De Paul Nowra

Sharlene Naismith – Legal Aid

Natalie Beckett - HARP Unit – Sexual Health & Blood Borne Infections; and Aboriginal community member

Adam Collison - Southern Cross Community Housing

Quorum - 8

Role of the Taskforce

The role of the Homelessness Taskforce is:-

- Provide Council with strategic advice on homelessness and related issues that can be dealt with at a Local Government level.
- Work with Council to address issues, develop options and assist with the identification of preferred solutions as part of Council's decision making process
- Advise on the development and application of a Homelessness Strategic Plan
- Provide comment on relevant Council policies and strategies
- Advocate community views on homelessness issues

MINUTES OF THE HOMELESSNESS TASKFORCE SHOALHAVEN

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 29 August 2017

Location: Jervis Bay Rooms, City Administrative Centre, Bridge Road, Nowra

Time: 4.03pm

The following members were present:

Mayor Amanda Findley - Chairperson

Clr Joanna Gash

Clr Patricia White

Clr Mark Kitchener

Clr Nina Cheyne

Clr John Levett

Clr Bob Proudfoot

Clr Annette Alldrick

Ms Tamie Harvie

Ms Penni Wildi

Ms Patricia David

Ms Roslyn Poole

Ms Ashleigh Hudson – left 5.25pm

Mr Max Zalakos

Ms Deborah Ferrier

Ms Julie Bugden

Ms Donna Brotherson

Mr Bernard Gleeson

Ms Sharlene Naismith

Ms Natalie Beckett

Mr Adam Collison

Others present:

Phil Costello – Director Planning Environment and Development

Gordon Clark – Strategic Planning Section Manager

Jessica Volkanovski – Strategy North Planner

Garon Irwin – Acting Building and Compliance Section Manager

Alan Blackshaw – Community Development Coordinator

The meeting was opened by an Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians by the Mayor.

The Mayor provided an explanation of how the meetings would be run and that for all meetings of the Homelessness Taskforce Shoalhaven, that the door would be open to the public.

An apology was received from Rev. Matthew Wilson, Mr Peter Dover, Ms Wendi Hobbs, Ms Wendy Woodward, Tamie Harvie and Ms Lesley Labka.

Confirmation of the Minutes

Nil

Declarations of Interest

Nil

PRESENTATIONS

HT17.1 Verbal update - Cllr Amanda Findley

**HPERM Ref:
D17/276188**

The committee introduced themselves and provided an update of what they have been doing in the last six months in relation to homelessness and a wish list was created for 2017/18.

The Wish List included:

- Plan and Strategy for dealing with homelessness and any 'incidents' that arise
- Adopting the Affordable Housing Strategy to Shoalhaven
- Permanent Shelter for the Shoalhaven
- Education of the community (possibly a forum)
- Building connections between homeless persons and wrap around services
- Permanent but temporary accommodation
- Future of Public Housing – mapping the way forward and advocating for tenants
- Business Involvement
- Plan and Policy for Emergency nights (crisis accommodation)
- Creating policy that works on the ground (Homeless protocol for the showground as an example)
- Improving life outcomes for those who have experienced / are experiencing homelessness
- What Next? – who can help after the Safe Shelter closes?
- Continue to lobbying for the State Government to get on board with the demonstration affordable housing site at Bomaderry
- Knowing who the homeless are (anywhere between 100 – 375 homeless on any given night in the Shoalhaven)

An Ongoing Action Plan for the next 12 months was created. Categories included: Advocacy, Tiny Homes, Permanent Shelter and Continuing Services.

Please see attachment.

Note: Ashleigh Hudson left the meeting, the time being 5.25pm.

REPORTS

HT17.2 Temporary Housing Solutions as Pathways to Formalised Housing - Tiny Homes & Temporary Emergency Housing**HPERM Ref:
D17/275461**

In relation to the draft Affordable Housing Strategy currently on exhibition, it is aimed identify practical steps that can be taken, enable sharing of information and also promoting associated matters.

Recommendation (Item to be determined under delegated authority)

That the report be received for information and discussion.

RESOLVED (By Consent)

That the report be received for information and discussion.

CARRIED

There being no further business, the meeting concluded, the time being 5.39pm.

Clr Findley
CHAIRPERSON

HT17.3 Rotary Park, South Nowra

HPERM Ref: D17/355108

Group: Finance Corporate & Community Services Group
Section: Recreation Community & Culture

Purpose / Summary

Update re Homeless Campers at Rotary Park South Nowra

Recommendation (Item to be determined under delegated authority)

That Council accept the update report re Homeless Campers at Rotary Park South Nowra for information

Options

1. Recommendation as stated

Implications: Nil

Background

Council, at the meeting of the 22 November 2016, resolved to apply a ban in respect of casual camping at Nowra Showground in tents with the exception of camping associated with an event. Accordingly, Council staff worked to advise those camped at the showground using tents to relocate by Monday 5 December at 12pm.

Campers who were homeless either left the area or relocated elsewhere in the Shoalhaven.

One person relocated, with their caravan, to Rotary Park at South Nowra. Camping is not permitted at this site. Two other groups of campers located to the site in September and October. This resulted in concerns of an illegitimate camping ground being established at Rotary Park.

Council Rangers have been monitoring the situation and maintained contact with the campers.

Local Services have also been providing support and seeking alternative accommodation for those camped at Rotary Park.

In view of the growing number attracted to Rotary Park, concerns of an illegitimate camping ground being established and campers being provided with support and accommodation offers from service providers campers were provided with notification to vacate the park by 10 November 2017.

Community Engagement

Council staff have maintained contact with campers and with service providers

Policy Implications

Council has observed the Protocol for Homeless People in Public Places throughout this process.

Risk Implications

If campers were permitted to remain there is a high risk of others being attracted to the location and an illegitimate camping ground becoming established.

HT17.4 Homelessness Policy

HPERM Ref: D17/355431

Group: Finance Corporate & Community Services Group
Section: Recreation Community & Culture

Attachments: 1. Homelessness Policy [📄](#)

Purpose / Summary

Present the draft Homelessness Policy for committee discussion and consideration

Recommendation (Item to be determined under delegated authority)

That

1. Council endorses the Draft Homelessness Policy
2. Place the Draft Homelessness Policy on public exhibition for a period of 28 days
3. If no further submissions are received the policy be adopted and if submissions are received a further report be presented to Council after the public exhibition of the Draft Homelessness Policy

Options

1. Adopt the recommendation

Implications: Provides a policy structure to the responsibility of Council in regards to Homelessness

2. Council not adopt the recommendation

Implications: Council will continue to respond to homelessness with no clear policy direction

Background

Shoalhaven City Council has witnessed an increase in the number of homeless people “sleeping rough” in public places. This has resulted in Council needing to respond to the situation. There have been questions as to what are the responsibilities in regards to Council and Homelessness and what are the responsibilities of other levels of government. This policy clarifies Council responsibilities and provides direction to Council staff in responding to people who are homeless.

The policy seeks to identify Council’s role in addressing homelessness and outline the organisation’s commitment to strategies to address homelessness. In doing so, it recognises that Commonwealth and State government hold the primary responsibility of funding and providing services to assist those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and that a whole of government approach is required to address homelessness. In this the role of Council is to assist and complement the other tiers of government and the community sector as facilitators of solutions to homelessness and crisis accommodation.

Council's commitment lies in matters relating to land management and planning; advocacy; building the capacity of the community; partnership and service coordination; the recognition of the rights of all members of the community to use public spaces and to participate in community events, services and consultations.

Community Engagement

The draft policy will be placed on public exhibition for a period of 28 days and a subsequent report furnished to Council outlining any comments and suggestions made during this period.

Financial Implications

There are no additional financial implications.



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Website: www.shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au

For more information contact the Finance Corporate & Community Services Group

Homelessness Policy

Policy Number: POL17/88 • **Adopted:** [Click here to enter date] • **Minute Number:** [Click here to enter Minute number] • **File:** 44336E • **Produced By:** Finance Corporate & Community Services Group • **Review Date:**

1. PURPOSE

To identify the role of Shoalhaven City Council in addressing homelessness and outline Council's commitment to:

1. Preventing, reducing and managing homelessness
2. Supporting and building capacity within the community to address homelessness, and
3. Encourage collaboration, community partnerships and evidence based practices

2. STATEMENT

There is no universally accepted definition of homelessness in Australia. For the purposes of this policy Shoalhaven City Council will use the statistical definition of homelessness adopted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to estimate the prevalence of homelessness in Australia.

When a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:

1. Is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or
2. Has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable, or
3. Does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

This definition emphasises the core elements of 'home' such as: a sense of security, stability, privacy, safety, and the ability to control living space. Homelessness is a lack of one or more of the elements that represent 'home'.

3. PROVISIONS

This policy reflects the following principles and commits Council to the following:

1. Understanding the role of local government

Commonwealth and State government hold the primary role of funding and providing services to assist people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The role of local government in addressing homelessness is not specified in Australian legislation.

Shoalhaven City Council recognises that in order to ensure sustainable and consistent solutions, addressing homelessness must take on a whole of government and whole of community approach. The role of Council in addressing homelessness is to assist and complement the work of other tiers of government and the community sector, as facilitators of solutions to homelessness and crisis accommodation.

Shoalhaven City Council - Title

As the issue of homelessness and crisis accommodation is not unique to the Shoalhaven, Council acknowledges the importance of ensuring consistency and continuity between federal, state and regional strategies in addressing homelessness.

Council commits to:

- a) Work with federal, state, non-government agencies and local community groups in planning and implementing federal and state wide plans to address homelessness and a lack of crisis accommodation
- b) Seeking to liaise with other local governments in the region, and other public sector bodies to share best practice, gather accurate data collection and discuss concerns around homelessness and its manifestation

6. Use of Public Spaces

Council recognises the rights of all members of the community to use public spaces and access community services and facilities and that all members have the right to live in a safe and peaceful environment.

Council commits to:

- a) Reviewing local laws and key priority projects to remove the capacity for negative impacts on homeless persons
- b) Ensuring all community members, including people who are homeless, have access to community services and facilities.
- c) Observe the NSW Protocol for Homeless People in Public Places as a guide to responding to the needs of homeless people and ensure they are treated with dignity and respect without discrimination

7. Right to participate

Council recognises that all members of the community have the right to participate in community events, activities and consultations. People who are homeless are some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in our community and may require extra assistance to enable them to participate.

Council commits to:

- a) Ensuring that all Council events, services and consultations are accessible and inclusive of all members of the community, as far as is practicable

4. IMPLEMENTATION

The Finance, Corporate and Community Group will administer this policy

5. REVIEW

To be reviewed within 1 year of the election of a new Council.

6. APPLICATION OF ESD PRINCIPLES

[Click here to enter text. Use @ezPolH2 or @ezPolH3 style for sub headings]

*Shoalhaven City Council - Title***2. The right to housing**

Council faces a real and present housing affordability and homelessness challenge. Access to affordable, secure, appropriate and accessible housing is a basic right for all people and plays an integral role in a socially, economically, environmentally and culturally sustainable community.

Council commits to:

- a) Plan for the provision of affordable housing and has developed an Affordable Housing Policy
- b) Identify Council owned land which could potentially be available for low cost housing, social, community housing and/or crisis accommodation and once identified, liaise with relevant authorities to secure a suitable tenure which would allow its future development for affordable housing purposes.

3. Advocacy

Council has a responsibility to advocate on behalf of all members of its community.

Homelessness is a complex issue with multiple causes and co-existing issues such as upbringing, mental health, physical health, drug and alcohol misuse, family violence, unemployment, low income, poor education, high cost of living, unaffordability of housing and limited supply of social, community and low cost housing.

Council recognises that people who are homeless are some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in our community. Council has a moral obligation to address and advocate for their needs.

Council recognises its role in advocating to other levels of government for the provision of government funded services to prevent, reduce and manage homelessness within the community.

Council commits to:

- a) Advocate for the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged people within the community
- b) Advocate for the provision of state and federal government funded services and evidence based policies
- c) Support local community groups action towards preventing, reducing and managing homelessness

4. Building the capacity of the Community

Council recognises the importance of supporting and strengthening the skills, competencies and abilities of our community members to enable the development of local ownership and community decision making in community development planning and programs.

Council commits to:

- a) Support the community in raising awareness about the nature, causes, experiences and consequences of homelessness.
- b) Build the capacity of the community in collaborating and delivering local projects to prevent, reduce and manage homelessness.

5. Partnership and service coordination

