

Homelessness Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: Thursday, 27 June, 2024
Location: Jervis Bay Rooms, City Administrative Centre, Bridge Road, Nowra
Time: 2:00pm

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. Meeting Conduct Statement
2. Acknowledgement of Country
3. Apologies
4. Confirmation of Minutes
 - Homelessness Advisory Committee - 1 February 2024.....1
5. Declaration of Interests
6. Presentations
 - HT24.5 Homelessness NSW - Ongoing Item - State-Wide Update
Staff from Homelessness NSW will provide an update to the Committee regarding Homelessness issues across the State and developments within the Homelessness NSW organisation.
 - HT24.6 Homes NSW - Formation & Functions of Department
Housing Operations Manager – Homes NSW Illawarra, will present to the Committee regarding the formation and functions of the Homes NSW department.
7. Reports
 - HT24.7 Closing Report - Community Capacity Builder - Homelessness - June 2024.....5
8. General Business

Membership

Clr Findley - Chairperson

All Councillors

CEO (or Nominee)

Dan Harmelin – Community Member North Shoalhaven

Julianne Hopkins – Community Member North Shoalhaven

Peter Brandis – Community Member North Shoalhaven

Keith Davis – Community Member South Shoalhaven

Jenifa Fowler – Community Member North Shoalhaven

Representative - SALT Care

Representative - SAHSSI

Representative - Southern Cross Housing

Representative - Vinnies

Representative - Legal Aid NSW

Quorum – 8 provided that a minimum of one Councillor with voting rights, two community members, and one crisis/homelessness support are present

Purpose

The purpose of the Homelessness Advisory Committee is to provide advice, guided by lived experience and expertise, to Shoalhaven City Council on homelessness and related issues that can be dealt with at Council level. The Committee will work with Council to address issues and identify strategies to assist Council in their decision making processes.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

Community Led Plan For Homelessness

1. Early Intervention & Collaborative Support
2. Community Awareness & Education
3. Advocacy and Lobbying
4. Housing & Accommodation

Role

- Provide Council with advice, guided by lived experience and expertise on homelessness and related issues that can be dealt with at a Local Government level.
- Work with Council to address issues and develop strategies to assist Council in their decision making processes.
- Advise on the development, review and implementation of The Plan.
- Provide comment on relevant Council policies and strategies.
- Advocate for community needs on issues relating to homelessness in the Shoalhaven.
- Continuous monitoring and evaluation of The Plan.

MINUTES OF THE HOMELESSNESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Date: Thursday, 1 February 2024
Location: Jervis Bay Rooms, City Administrative Centre, Bridge Road, Nowra
Time: 2.22pm

The following members were present:

Clr John Kotlash (Remotely)
Clr Tonia Gray (Remotely)
Ms Jenifa Fowler (Remotely)
Mr Keith Davis (Remotely)
Mr Peter Dover - Salt Ministries
Mr Shane Meijer – Southern Cross Housing (Remotely)
Ms Natascha Cowan – Waminda (Remotely)
Mr Michael Paine – Acting Director City Lifestyles

Others Present:

Ms Ruby Hansen-Tarrant – Age Matters (Remotely)
Ms Roslyn Poole - Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (Remotely)
Ms Coralee Rough – ROCC
Mr Blake Richards – My Best Life
Mr Mark Townsend – The Salvation Army (Remotely)
Mr Steven Brandon – South Coast AMS Nowra (Remotely)
Ms Helen Lewis - Homelessness DCJ (Remotely)
Ms Nicky Sloan – CI Group (Joined Remotely at 2.38pm)
Ms Natalie Allan (Remotely)
Mr Carlo Di Giulio (Remotely)
Ms Marsha Makary - Community Capacity Builder – Homelessness
Ms Carly McWalters - Lead - Community Capacity Building

Michael Paine – Acting Director City Lifestyles assumed the Chair, noting that Mayor Findley is an apology, and asked the members present if there were any nominations for the role of interim Chairperson.

Peter Dover was nominated for the position of Chairperson. There being no further nominations, Mr Dover was declared as interim Chairperson.

Apologies / Leave of Absence

Apologies were received from Clr Findley, Tamaryn Townsend, Dan Harmelin, Olivia Todhunter, Amy Haines, Julie Bugden and Maria Lopez.

Confirmation of the Minutes

RESOLVED (By consent)

That the Minutes of the Homelessness Advisory Committee held on Thursday 30 November 2023

be confirmed with the following amendment:

Ms Roslyn Poole be noted as attending at the meeting 30 November 2023.

CARRIED

Declaration of Interests

Nil

PRESENTATIONS

HT24.1 Homelessness NSW - Ongoing Item - State-Wide Update

**HPERM Ref:
D24/27010**

Note: Homelessness NSW is an apology, therefore this presentation will be deferred to the next meeting.

REPORTS

HT24.2 Homelessness Advisory Committee - Reduce Quorum

**HPERM Ref:
D23/520027**

Recommendation

That the Homelessness Advisory Committee accept and amend the Terms of Reference to reduce quorum to six (6), and the community member requirement to '*one community member*'.

RECOMMENDATION (By consent)

That the Homelessness Advisory Committee request Council to accept and amend the Terms of Reference to reduce quorum to six (6), and the community member requirement to '*one community member*'.

CARRIED

HT23.21 Action Table Report 30 November 2023

**HPERM Ref:
D23/448888**

Recommendation (Item to be determined under delegated authority)

That the Homelessness Advisory Committee:

1. Accept and receive the Action Table Report for information.
2. Consider the following action as complete and remove from the Action Table:
 - a. CL23.146 Membership - Homelessness Taskforce Shoalhaven - Appointment - Thrive Together Fair 2023.
 - b. HT23.16 - Homelessness Advisory Committee Terms of Reference Implementation - Voting Aboriginal Organisation - Seek Consensus

RESOLVED (By consent)

That the Homelessness Advisory Committee:

1. Accept and receive the Action Table Report for information.

2. Consider the following action as complete and remove from the Action Table:
 - a. CL23.146 Membership - Homelessness Taskforce Shoalhaven - Appointment - Thrive Together Fair 2023.
 - b. HT23.16 - Homelessness Advisory Committee Terms of Reference Implementation - Voting Aboriginal Organisation - Seek Consensus

CARRIED

HT23.22 Mobile Medic

**HPERM Ref:
D23/477360**

Mr Peter Dover noted that, following this meeting, he will reach out to consult with the appointed members of the focus group and Council staff.

Recommendation (Item to be determined under delegated authority)

That the Homelessness Advisory Committee form a focus group to research the establishment of a Mobile Medic Program in the Shoalhaven.

RESOLVED (By consent)

That the Homelessness Advisory Committee:

1. Form a focus group to research the establishment of a Mobile Medic Program in the Shoalhaven, consisting of,
 - a. Peter Dover - Salt
 - b. Coralee Rough - ROCC
 - c. Cathy Campbell – Southern Cross Housing
 - d. Blake Richards – My Best Life
 - e. Roslyn Poole - Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District
2. Reach out to the University of Wollongong (UOW) Psychological & Social Work departments to seek volunteer interest.

CARRIED

GENERAL BUSINESS

HT24.3 New State Government Agency - Homes NSW - Further Information

The Committee noted that a new State Government agency called Homes NSW had launched today, 1 February 2024. Further information regarding this agency can be accessed via this link: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/homes-nsw>

Ms Helen Lewis advised that she would reach out to colleagues in her department to organise a presentation to the Committee for further information about the functions of this agency.

HT24.4 Service NSW - Presentation to Committee - Savings Finder Program

Mr Blake Richards advised that he had been in correspondence with Service NSW regarding their Savings Finder Program, and that they expressed interest in presenting to the Committee.

The Committee agreed to invite Service NSW to present at a future meeting of the Committee.

The Committee congratulated Ms Nicky Sloane on her nomination and high commendation for the Citizen Award category in the recent 2024 Shoalhaven Australia Day Awards Ceremony.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded, the time being 2:53pm.

Peter Dover
CHAIRPERSON

HT24.7 Closing Report - Community Capacity Builder - Homelessness - June 2024

HPERM Ref: D24/226903

Department: Community Connections

Approver: Jane Lewis, Director - City Lifestyles

Attachments: 1. Position Achievements of the Community Capacity Builder Homelessness - HAC June 2024 [↓](#)

Reason for Report

The purpose of this report is to inform the Homelessness Advisory Committee of the conclusion of the Community Capacity Builder, Homelessness role and share the work completed through the duration of this position and advise on the transition arrangements to support work in this sector.

Recommendation (Item to be determined under delegated authority)

That the Homelessness Advisory Committee accept the Closing Report – Community Capacity Builder Homelessness – June 2024 for information.

Options

1. Accept report as for information.

Implications: No further action required.

2. Request for further information.

Implications: Homelessness Advisory Committee members ask for additional information

Background

In the Shoalhaven Local Government Area (LGA), a number of factors have contributed to an increase in homelessness, including, but not limited to:

- Significant increases in housing prices.
- High unemployment.
- 20-year low, in wage growth.
- Limited affordable rental opportunities.
- Socio-economic disadvantage.
- Closure of the Gateway Caravan Park
- Feedback from local service providers reporting significant strain.
- Issues with a lack of Temporary Accommodation (TA) and crisis support.
- Significant lack of permanent accommodation options.

As a result of the above factors and exacerbated by the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic, there was a significant increase in people presenting at Council camping grounds requiring crisis and housing support from January – June 2021.

In response to this, Council recognised the need for an identified funding to establish a fixed term role to work with other agencies to address homelessness in the Shoalhaven.

The purpose of the fixed term Community Capacity Builder, Homelessness role was to develop, implement, and evaluate strategies that responded to issues surrounding homelessness and work towards immediate, medium, and long-term solutions in addressing these for the Shoalhaven. The identified role also liaised with relevant stakeholders to facilitate optimal outcomes for the community and support local service collaboration and coordination.

Functional responsibilities of the Community Capacity Builder, Homelessness included:

- Development of medium/long-term strategies for addressing Homelessness, housing, and rental affordability in partnership with Strategic Planning.
- Liaison with local services, agencies, and Shoalhaven City Council staff around issues of Homelessness.
- Advocacy with government bodies such as Department of Communities and Justice, and NSW Health
- Build strong partnerships with the Department of Communities and Justice to support Street Counts and other initiatives.
- Support capacity building with Homelessness support services and strengthen service coordination.
- Develop a program of Community Education around Homelessness issues.
- Identify opportunities for early intervention and prevention of homelessness.
- Provide support for ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) Homelessness Census data gathering.
- Assist with case management/connection with services for satellite locations across the Shoalhaven – including Nowra Showground, Berry Showground, Milton Showground

The contract position has been extended twice since it was first recruited in November 2021. The position will be finishing on 28 June 2024 and has been funded for a total of 32 months.

Position Outcomes

The Community Capacity Building, Homelessness has taken a person-centred and capacity building approach to respond to homelessness in Shoalhaven. The Community Capacity Builder, Homelessness has focused on bridging gaps in service delivery and connecting community, including resource sharing, social support, and improved sense of well-being.

These measures are essential for supporting those experiencing homelessness and for maintaining safe and stable housing. To support this approach, this position has built relationships with local specialist homelessness, crisis support and welfare services as well as housing organisations to identify referral pathways for accommodating community members seeking support. Acknowledging that it takes commitment from the whole community to be able to thrive, they have also sought opportunities to facilitate community-led local change.

The below has been achieved through the position since its establishment in 2021 (see **Attachment 1** for additional information):

- Supported the Homelessness Census Data Collection 2021.
- Developed staff guidelines and resources to support staff who engage with community doing it tough.
- Established Primary Homelessness Response Group.
- Re-established the Shoalhaven Homelessness Taskforce (which later became Homelessness Advisory Committee).
- Facilitated the development of the Shoalhaven Community Led Plan for Homelessness.
- Review and update of the Shoalhaven City Council Homelessness Policy.
- Lead for the Thrive Together initiative including Give Dignity Donations Drive and Thrive Together Pop-ups.
- Successfully gained \$52,800 from the Office of Responsible Gambling, Community Development Fund Grants 2022.
- Partnered with Southern Cross Community Housing to develop the Doing It Tough Directory.

Next Steps & Transition Arrangements

The Community Capacity Building Team will continue to support this work as follows:

Primary Homelessness Response Group:

This group meets weekly or fortnightly, as needed and serves as a crisis response mechanism and will continue to operate as such. It was established to be self-sufficient, with the understanding that the Community Capacity Builder, Homelessness position was on a fixed term contract and funding was finite.

The Community Capacity Building Team will work with the group to identify an appropriate lead and support/monitor where staff capacity allows.

Community Led Plan for Homelessness:

The Community Capacity Building Team will continue to deliver on their committed actions of the plan that they lead.

The Homelessness Advisory Committee (HAC) has been set up as an evaluation and reporting mechanism for The Plan. The Community Capacity Building Team will continue to support the HAC going forwards and assist service providers to submit their reports and evaluation to enable progress tracking of the plan. The future review and update of The Plan will be the responsibility of the HAC.

Thrive Together Initiative:

The Community Capacity Building Team will deliver the Thrive Together Fair 2024 in November.

Doing It Tough Directory:

The Community Capacity Building Team will maintain their partnership with Southern Cross Community Housing for review and updates of the guide. This will continue to be reviewed and updates are dependent on staff capacity.

Office of Responsible Gambling, Community Development Funding:

The Community Capacity Building Team will support organisations to deliver the remaining funding of the grant and final acquittal and report. This is due to be completed October 2024.

Incoming Enquiries:

A script has been developed to assist Council's Customer Experience team in answering calls. Queries not covered will continue to be referred to the Community Connections team.

Enquiries regarding crisis support will be forwarded to the Primary Homelessness Response Group to assist.

Homelessness Advisory Committee:

The Homelessness Advisory Committee will continue to be facilitated by the Community Capacity Building team.

The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) are the lead agency responsible for providing support for specialist homelessness services. They also help existing clients of homelessness services with private rental options and support rough sleepers and outreach programs for vulnerable tenants.

Council will seek a meeting with DCJ to discuss how they can further support this sector in the Shoalhaven.

Community Engagement

Council's Community Capacity Builder, Homelessness has engaged with community sector organisations and services to identify potential partners to handover to or take on lead roles for the above established initiatives but has received feedback that services are already stretched and are unable to take on additional work.

Council staff have met with DCJ to discuss the implications of the fixed term position ceasing. The purpose of the meeting was to explore funding opportunities and/or commitment to transition aspects of the work previously undertaken by the Council funded Community Capacity Builder Homelessness. At the time of the meeting, there was uncertainty as to the future of DCJ's work in this space. A further meeting will be requested to explore options.

Financial Implications

Financial implications of continuing to deliver the above work is \$28,000 per financial year. This includes the following:

- Fourteen staff hours per week (Senior Community Capacity Builder):
 - Primary Homelessness Response Group
 - Homelessness Advisory Committee
 - Review and update of Homelessness Policy and staff guidelines
 - Thrive Together Fair
 - Ad hoc advice and referral
- Annual cost of delivering the Thrive Together Fair

Policy Implications

As outlined in Council's Homelessness Policy POL 22/55 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.

The Shoalhaven City Council Homelessness Policy outlines 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.

Council will continue to deliver work in line with Council's Homelessness Policy commensurate with the funding Council has allocated for staff and resources.

Risk Implications

Without an identified Community Capacity Builder, Homelessness the Community Capacity Building Team will have reduced capacity to support community sector coordination and collaboration and Councils support for community service organisations that deliver work in this sector will reduce.

Clear advice has been provided to sector agencies / stakeholders that this position was employed on a fixed-term basis and where possible initiatives that have been designed have been set-up to allow for continuation after the conclusion of this position.

Community Capacity Builder, Homelessness carries local knowledge and broader experience of working in the homelessness sector and has built valuable relationships with local community organisations and individuals that are essential to maintain to effectively carry out homelessness initiatives effectively.

There is a risk that the community will lose confidence in Council and feel unsupported in the current homelessness situation given the relationship and work that has been established throughout the term of the Community Capacity Builder, Homelessness position within Council.

Community Capacity Builder Homelessness Position Achievements

Homelessness Census Data Collection 2021

Council's involvement in the 2022 Rough Sleeper Street Count, facilitated by Southern Cross Housing (SCH), was a key component in DCJ (Department of Communities and Justice) data collection. Shoalhaven LGA has a large area of reserves, parks, waterways, and beaches meaning people sleeping rough in the Shoalhaven LGA may not be as obvious as those sleeping in metropolitan areas.

The Community Capacity Builder for Homelessness and Council Rangers assisted SCH in identifying 'hotspot' locations for rough sleepers in which to conduct the Street Count. Council also assisted by attending to the 'high risk' locations which were inaccessible to SCH staff, to count rough sleepers, including secluded parks, waterways, and bush tracks.

Primary Homelessness Response Group

Established the 'Primary Homelessness Response Group' which meets fortnightly/weekly (depending on need) to improve sector collaboration and co-ordination. The group bring local issues that need to be addressed in particular timely outreach assistance to those experiencing primary homelessness. These meetings involve council staff and local service providers.

Since its establishment in 2021 the Shoalhaven Primary Homelessness Response Group have responded to more than 200 cases of people experiencing homelessness at the Showgrounds, shop fronts, car parks, beaches, parks and other areas across Shoalhaven.

Re-establishing the Shoalhaven Homelessness Taskforce (later re-named the Homelessness Advisory Committee (HAC))

Re-established and strengthened Council's HAC by supporting service providers and community member participation and exploring action items on behalf of the committee.

The HAC, a Section 355 Committee of Council was re-established in September 2021 in response to the emerging local housing availability, affordability, and homelessness crisis.

Through connections built within the community, the Community Capacity Builder, Homelessness position has been key in aiding the input of all members of HAC, particularly the local organisation and community members.

Shoalhaven Community Led Plan for Homelessness

On the 11th of May and 11th October 2022, Community Capacity Builder for Homelessness in collaboration with a working group derived from HAC, facilitated two Community Workshops for Homelessness. The Workshops brought together local government, welfare services, businesses, and community groups, as well as people with lived experience of homelessness. They focused on building upon community assets to develop actions to address underlying causes of homelessness in the LGA.

The Workshops built a foundation for a strength-based, collaborative community approach and identified strategies and working groups that formed the basis for the development of the 'Shoalhaven Community Led Plan for Homelessness'.

The Plan aims to provide a collaborative and unified approach to allow for greater outcomes in addressing the region's Homelessness crisis. Four working groups were established to target the four focus areas of The Plan:

- Focus Area 1: Early Intervention & collaborative support.
- Focus Area 2: Community awareness & education.
- Focus Area 3: Advocacy & lobbying.
- Focus Area 4: Housing & accommodation.

The Community Capacity Builder – Homelessness, was successful in receiving a grant of the \$52,800 awarded from the Office of Responsible Gambling as part of the Community Development Fund Grants 2022, to fund short-term desired outcomes outlined in The Plan.

The following projects have been funded by the grant:

- *Thrive Together Pop-ups*: Shoalhaven City Council, Southern Cross Housing, BCR Communities, Ulladulla Service NSW, Cullunghutti Aboriginal Child and Family Centre.
- *Doing It Tough Directory Printing*: Shoalhaven City Council and Southern Cross Housing
- *Ulladulla Hot Meals: Safe Waters*
- *Leaving Custody Program*: Southern Cross Housing, Waminda, ROCC for Women
- *Families Brokerage Program*: SAHSSI, Salt, Safe Waters
- *Homelessness Outreach Resource Pamphlet*: Shoalhaven City Council:
- *Homelessness Heatwave PPE*: Shoalhaven City Council, St Vincent de Paul

Shoalhaven City Council Homelessness Policy Review

The Shoalhaven City Council Homelessness Policy was reviewed and updated to accurately reflect Shoalhaven City Council's commitment to addressing homelessness in the region.

Staff Guidelines and resources

In response to the increase of primary homelessness guidelines have been developed to support council staff. The guidelines ensure that all staff who frequently engage with people experiencing homelessness are guided to provide respectful and supportive assistance.

Thrive Together Initiative

- *Thrive Together Fair*

This is an innovative initiative that focuses on supporting community service partners to provide an opportunity for community members who are “doing it tough” to connect with local service providers in one place, whilst fostering community connection. Community members are able to access a variety of supports, including utilising the sports centers showers, getting a free haircut, a free hot meal, collecting free sleeping bags, clothes and toiletries. This is also an opportunity to register with health, housing, legal, financial, education, employment and welfare support services, and wellbeing Services. The Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD) also provided health and wellbeing checks and referrals, and a COVID Vaccination Hub for our most vulnerable community members.

There has been an increase in participation both from community members and service providers. Community attendee numbers grew from 300 attendees in 2022 to 350 in 2023, and service providers increased from 35 in 2021 to 80 in 2023.

- *Give Dignity Community Donations Drive*

In the months leading up to the Thrive Together Fair (The Fair), a community donations drive has been held to create the Care Packs that are given to community at The Fair.

In 2022, 250 care packs were created through the generosity of the community who dropped off donations at donation bins that were placed across Shoalhaven City Council facilities. This increased in 2023 to, 500 care packs which were funded through sponsorship from Coles Nowra and donations raised through the

Mayoral Relief Fund. Nowra Church of Christ generously provided volunteers to collate and storage space for pack the care packs.

- *Thrive Together Pop Ups (Pop-Ups)*

Leading on from the success of the Fair, the Thrive Together Pop-ups were developed as small-scale version designed to be easily replicated with a small budget and led by community organisations. They are held across Shoalhaven and aim to increase access to services and resources in regional communities. They are held in partnership with community organisations and are customised to respond to the needs of the local community and include local services in each area:

- *Ulladulla:* 6th September 2023 - Southern Cross Housing, Ulladulla Service NSW, Shoalhaven City Council.
- *Sanctuary Point:* 2nd November 2023 - BCR Communities, Shoalhaven City Council.
- *First Nations Thrive:* 6 March 2024 - Cullunghutti Aboriginal Child and Family Centre, Southern Cross Housing, Shoalhaven City Council.

More Pop-ups are due to take place throughout 2024, led by BCR Communities and funded by the Community Development Fund, granted by the Office of Responsible Gambling, in association with the Shoalhaven Community Led Plan for Homelessness.

Doing It Tough Directory

Due to feedback from internal teams at SCC (Shoalhaven City Council) it was identified that the community needed information which offered them the ability to access support themselves.

In 2022, the Community Capacity Builder, Homelessness partnered with Southern Cross Housing to develop a guide that provided community who were doing it tough with a resource that connected them with a broad range of services and organisations who offer assistance housing, welfare, crisis support, mental health etc. It was decided to combine the Path2Home Guide as a way to do this. 'Path2Home' Shoalhaven was later re-named the "Doing It Tough Directory" for the Shoalhaven region to support community who are doing it tough to access support services, regardless of their homelessness status.

The DIT was updated once more in 2023, and a total of 1800 copies have been printed and distributed throughout the community as well as to Council rangers, customer experience team, libraries, and other frontline Council staff, in addition with local Police, Hospital and Ambulance to assist them when working with community who require crisis support.

The online version of the Doing It Tough Directory is accessible online on Council's Homelessness webpage and the Path2Home website, which also offers an interactive map displaying services and their locations. In addition to the positive impact this has had on the community a strong relationship has been developed with SCH who commented that this has been a great collaborative project and are keen to work together moving forwards.

Community Feedback

Feedback from community members and organisations has been collected on a variety of initiatives led by the Community Capacity Builder, Homelessness position. Some of this feedback includes:

"We decided to work together with Shoalhaven City Council to bring Thrive Together to Sanctuary Point because for some people who are already struggling, getting to Bomaderry is not easy. Having it at the Sanctuary Point Youth and Community Centre meant it was easily accessible for Bay and Basin locals, and parent could pop in after school and preschool pick-ups".

- Rohanna Holland from BCR Communities, regarding the Sanctuary Point Thrive Together Pop Up

"It means the world to me. I'm a pensioner and I need all the help I can get", "It's been a life saver. Things have got so much tougher" and "It's comforting to know there are so many support services out there locally".

- Community attendees at the Thrive Together Fair 2023

"What's good about a day like the Thrive Together Fair is that we can all come together, we share information with one another and just get to meet a lot of people that are need in this area and point them in the right direction if they ask us questions. And really building community here is as well, which has been great".

- Service providers/stallholders, Leanne and Leone from Share the Dignity.

"Thank you for all your hard work and dedication and patience over the past year. We are very grateful for all you do, and you do it with huge grace".

- Corallee Rough from ROCC (with regards to the Community Capacity Builder, Homelessness position).

'With our funding from Shoalhaven City Council and the Office of Responsible Gambling. I am writing to express our heartfelt gratitude for the brokerage provided to SAHSSI Homeless Hub, Salt Care, and Safe Waters to assist clients who were homeless or at risk of homelessness. Your support has been instrumental in making a tangible difference in the lives of those in need within our Shoalhaven community. I would also like to extend a special thank you to you Marsha for your unwavering dedication to your role at the council."

- Julie Bugden, SAHSSI Homeless Hub