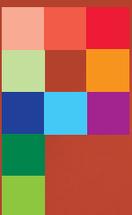

Parramatta City Council Homelessness Policy

November 2011



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Parramatta City Council Homelessness Policy

November 2011



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Acknowledgements

- City of Sydney
- Greater Western Sydney Region Homelessness Committee
- Homeless people
- Homelessness NSW
- Judith Stubbs
- Mercy Foundation
- Nepean Taskforce Against Homelessness
- New South Wales Council of Social Services (NCOSS)
- Parramatta Local Businesses
- Parramatta Regional Homelessness Interagency
- Street Count Volunteers
- University of Western Sydney (UWS)

Abbreviations

ALGA - Australian Local Government Association

AHURI - Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute

COAG - Council of Australian Governments

HNSW - Housing NSW

HPIC - Homeless Persons Information Centre

LGA - Local Government Area

Metro Strategy - Sydney Metropolitan Strategy

NAHA - National Affordable Housing Agreement

NPAH - National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness

NPSH - National Partnership Agreement on Social Housing

PCC - Parramatta City Council

PIAC - Public Interest Advocacy Centre

RHAP - Regional Homelessness Action Plans

SEPP - State Environmental Planning Policy

State Plan - New South Wales State Plan

UWS - University of Western Sydney

VPA - Voluntary Planning Agreement

Definitions

Homelessness

(from Australian Bureau of Statistics and developed by Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2001))

Primary homelessness – applies when a person lives on the street, sleeps in parks, squats in derelict buildings, or uses cars or railway carriages for temporary shelter. (Rough sleepers fall into this category of homelessness).

Secondary homelessness – is used to describe people who move frequently from one form of temporary shelter to another. Secondary homelessness applies to people using emergency accommodation, youth refuges or women's refuges, people residing temporarily with relatives or with friends (because they have no accommodation of their own), and people using boarding houses on an occasional or intermittent basis (up to 12 weeks).

Tertiary homelessness – is used to describe people who live in premises where they don't have the security of a lease guaranteeing them accommodation, nor access to basic private facilities (such as a private bathroom, kitchen or living space). It can include people living in boarding houses on a medium to long term basis (more than 13 weeks) or in caravan parks.

Rough Sleepers

Rough sleepers are people who sleep or are bedded down in the open air. They may also be sleeping in buildings or other places not designed for habitation, such as sheds, carparks, derelict boats and so on.

From: Communities and Local Government, Guidance on evaluating the extent of rough sleeping 2007 Revision, Department for Communities and Local Government, London <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/157482.pdf>

Rental Stress

Those households in the lowest 40% of national equivalised incomes, who are paying more than 30% of their gross income on rent.

Mortgage Stress

Those households in the lowest 40% of national equivalised incomes, who are paying more than 30% of their gross income on mortgage payments.

Affordable Housing

Housing for very low income households, low income households or moderate income households. Affordable housing may be produced in the market or through the not for profit sector, and is usually subsidised in some way.

Housing First Model

'Housing First' describes a particular service model whereby homeless people are provided with secure and long term housing as a first step, and then supported by the coordinated provision of services tailored to meet their particular needs, including sustaining their housing. The Housing First model is radically different from homeless accommodation services delivered in Australia to date. The dominant model has been a 'Treatment First' model where a continuum of time limited accommodation is provided i.e crisis, medium term, long term and finally 'permanent'.

Common Ground

The Common Ground model, founded in the US, is underpinned by private, public and community sector partnership arrangements to provide supportive housing and other practices that end homelessness. Common Ground methodology is recognised internationally for its effectiveness in housing people who have been chronically homeless, including people who have been long-term rough sleepers.

Common Ground's strategy has three components:

- 1 Affordable Housing
 - 2 Outreach
 - 3 Prevention
-

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Executive Summary

-
- Parramatta City Council (PCC or Council) recognises that access to secure, appropriate and affordable housing is not only a basic requirement for all people, but also an essential component of an inclusive, dynamic and sustainable city.
 - The number of homeless people in the local government area (LGA) is growing. This is a concern not only for those individuals affected, but also for the wider community including residents, workers, services, visitors and businesses.
 - As Council prepares for and looks to create a future for Parramatta as a truly significant and great City, it is fully aware of the needs of its most vulnerable citizens and the importance of balancing the needs of its many varied stakeholders. It is committed to affecting change to improve the lives of homeless people themselves, and to also ensure the ongoing economic, environmental and social prosperity of the city and its various communities.
 - Council has a history of working to reduce the impact of homelessness for individuals and the community, including strong partnerships with local homelessness service providers. Council's commitment to now develop as policy and implementation plan to further support actions to reduce homelessness stems from a number of key drivers; increasing impact on local individuals and families, increasing impact on the wider community (including small business, residents, Council staff), and increasing commitment to act to solve homelessness from multiple stakeholders using collaborative approaches.

Why is Action Needed in Parramatta?

The Local Need

Parramatta LGA has:

- Growing numbers of homeless people
 - The largest number of homeless households of all Western Sydney LGA's
 - Consistent numbers of people sleeping rough in the City every night
 - Local residents becoming homeless
 - Homeless people of all age groups, including children and youth
 - Homeless people of all family types
-

The Key Challenges for Parramatta LGA

The community of Parramatta LGA will need to find solutions to the following challenges in order to improve the lives of individuals and families who are homeless and those who are at risk of homelessness, as well as for the benefit of the wider resident, visitor, business and worker population:

Challenge 1 – Stemming the increasing rates of homelessness

Challenge 2 – Balancing the diverse needs of the City's many stakeholders

Challenge 3 – Supporting service providers in transition

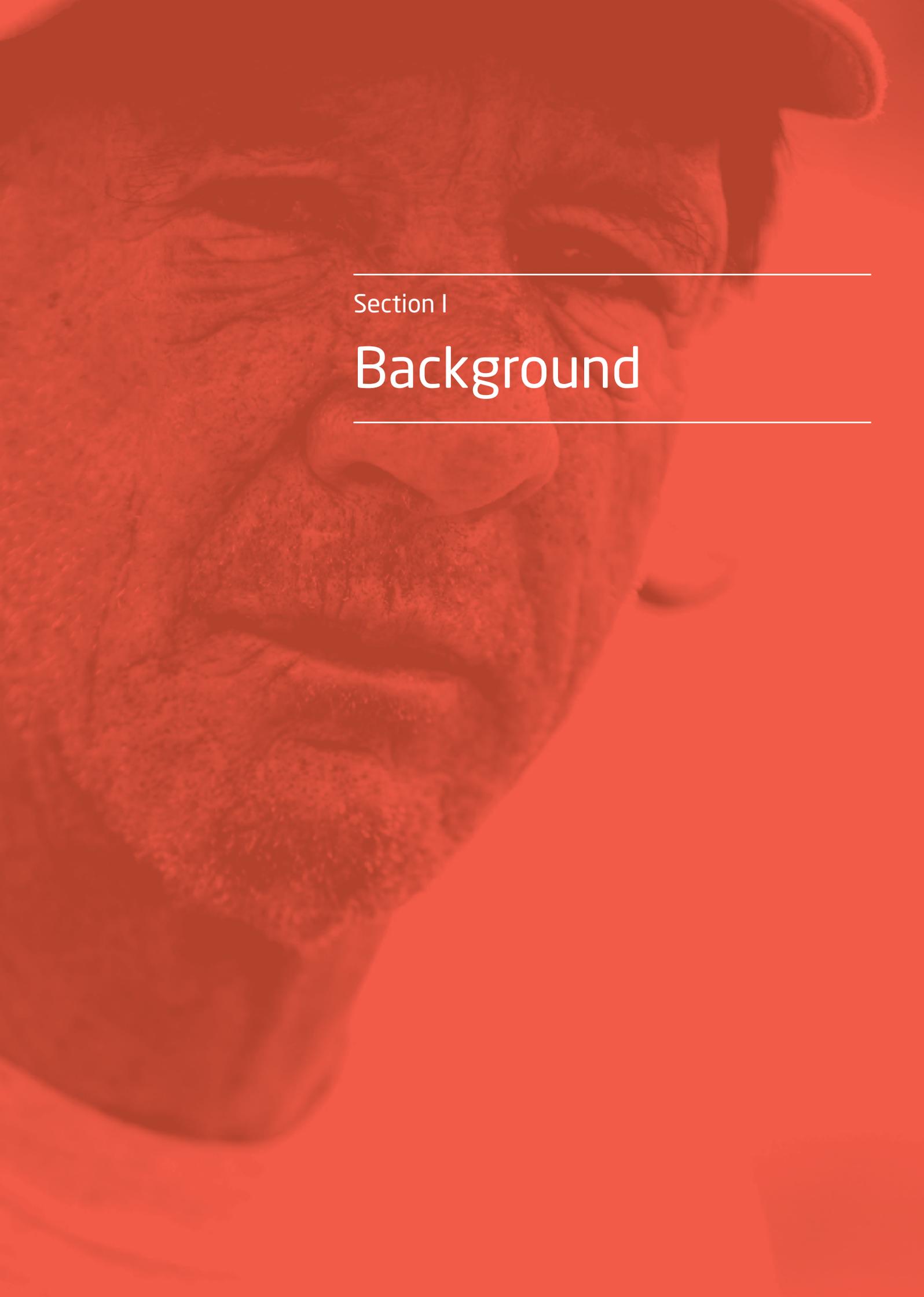
Challenge 4 – Actively engaging stakeholders from across sectors to work together on long term solutions

The Homelessness Policy

- The approach outlined in the Homelessness Policy is grounded in extensive research and consultation
- The **aim** of the Homelessness Policy November 2011 is to minimise homelessness in the Parramatta LGA, and in doing so:
 - Improve the wellbeing of those at risk and those who are homeless, and;
 - Support continued prosperity of the City for the benefit of the wider business and residential community
- The **objectives** of this policy focus on driving actions that together will:
 - Contribute to preventing homelessness – Prevent those at risk from tipping over into homelessness
 - Support and work with the local homelessness sector – Build the capacity locally to break the cycle for homeless people
 - Maintain and promote use of public spaces and assets for the whole community – including assisting people off the streets, and
 - Champion regional planning and partnerships – Encourage collaborative evidence based actions to combat homelessness by government, businesses and service providers
- The policy **targets** reflect targets set by the State and Federal government:
 - 7% reduction in overall homelessness by 2013
 - 25% reduction in overall numbers sleeping rough by 2013

The Way Forward

- A Homelessness Implementation Plan November 2011 has been developed to provide the mechanism to action the policy.
- The Implementation Plan covers a period of 5 years commencing November 2011, and has 5 objectives (and a total of 31 actions that stem from the objectives):
- As part of the implementation plan funding will be sought from a range of sources for project costs.



Section I

Background

1

Introduction

- Parramatta City Council (PCC) recognises that access to secure, appropriate and affordable housing is not only a basic requirement for all people, but also an essential component of an inclusive, dynamic and sustainable city.
- The number of homelessness people in the local government area (LGA) is growing. This is a concern not only for those individuals affected, but also for the wider community including residents, workers, services, visitors and businesses.
- Homelessness takes a range of forms. Some people may have become suddenly homeless requiring crisis accommodation, while others may be chronically homeless, sleeping rough in public places over a long period of time or 'couch surfing' between friends, family and acquaintances.
- Diverse, multi-disciplinary strategies from multiple stakeholders are required to address this growing and often complex issue.
- Council has a history of working to reduce the impact of homelessness for individuals and the community. It has strong partnerships with local homelessness service providers and provides significant support and resourcing to the Parramatta Region Homelessness Interagency. **Attachment 1** outlines PCC's achievements in the area of homelessness to date.
- Council's commitment to develop a policy and implementation plan to further support actions to reduce homelessness stems from a number of key drivers. There is:
 - ***Increasing impact on local individuals and families:***
 - Growing numbers of homeless people in Parramatta,
 - New emerging groups of homeless people not traditionally considered 'at risk', like young working families and working singles,
 - Growing numbers of local residents becoming homeless,
 - Significant numbers of homeless people in Parramatta that still do not have their needs met
 - ***Increasing impact on the wider local community:***
 - Increased number of concerns being raised by small business about the impacts of homelessness
 - Increased number of concerns being raised by residents and workers in the LGA about the welfare of homeless people and the impacts of homelessness
 - Increased number of concerns being raised by Council staff about managing and balancing the use of public space for all the community

.....

➤ **Increasing commitment to act to solve homelessness from multiple stakeholders using collaborative approaches:**

- Mounting action and commitment to solving homelessness from State and Federal Government – there is now a Greater Western Sydney Regional, Task Force and significant funding and work towards reorienting service delivery,
- Formulation of the Parramatta Region Homelessness Interagency demonstrating cross-sector collaboration
- Mobilisation of the local homelessness service provider sector to work strategically and collaboratively,
- Recent trends internationally have seen the development of regional long term plans to solve homelessness which involve all of a region’s key stakeholders pooling resources and committing to act collaboratively.
- This policy and implementation plan builds on Council’s experiences, history and commitment in the area of homelessness and affordable housing. The methodology used in policy development is outlined in **Attachment 2**. The policy utilises learnings from the following information inputs which clearly identify the need in this area:
 - Commissioned research by University of Western Sydney (UWS) into Homelessness in Parramatta:
 - Interviews with local homeless people (a sample of quotes has been used throughout this document)
 - Interviews with local business owners and workers
 - Two street counts of rough sleepers in Parramatta City Centre and surrounds
 - PCC staff consultations
 - Commissioned research by Judith Stubbs into local government involvement in homelessness both in Australia and overseas
 - Discussions with peak organisations concerned with homelessness
 - Discussions with State Government
 - Literature reviews on regional planning models to end homelessness and costs of homelessness
 - PCC Affordable Housing Policy and Implementation Plan 2009 – and associated research

“When I was married with my daughter, we had a house and everything and she (wife) passed away... When she passed away I kept up with the bills and everything and then you know putting her (daughter) through school. I lost my job and everything just went down, downhill. The banks don’t care they want their foreclosure and their money so I lost the house”

**Local homeless man,
UWS Research**

2

About homelessness

2.1 Homelessness Defined

- The most common definition of homelessness used is from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and developed by Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2001). This definition identifies three types of homelessness:

Primary homelessness - Primary homelessness applies when a person lives on the street, sleeps in parks, squats in derelict buildings, or uses cars or railway carriages for temporary shelter. (People in this situation are sometimes referred to as rough sleepers).

Secondary homelessness - Secondary homelessness is used to describe people who move frequently from one form of temporary shelter to another. Secondary homelessness applies to people using emergency accommodation, youth refuges or women's refuges, people residing temporarily with relatives or with friends (because they have no accommodation of their own), and people using boarding houses on an occasional or intermittent basis (up to 12 weeks).

Tertiary homelessness - Tertiary homelessness is used to describe people who live in premises where they don't have the security of a lease guaranteeing them accommodation, nor access to basic private facilities (such as a private bathroom, kitchen or living space). It can include people living in boarding houses on a medium to long term basis (more than 13 weeks) or in caravan parks.

- These definitions provide a basic understanding of the forms of homelessness. We also know that homelessness is often experienced over a long period of time and people move between different forms of accommodation. People may experience homelessness once in their lives at a point of significant crisis and may require short term or minimal assistance in order to resolve this. Others may move in and out of homelessness without the support they require to break this cycle.
- It is for this reason that responding to homelessness requires a broad approach, focusing on preventing people who are at risk from ever becoming homeless, on resolving homelessness where it does occur as quickly as possible, and on supporting people who have been homeless to prevent them becoming homeless again.

"In one ad I think I saw one woman and she looked like a hobo. She looked like, you know, the typical stereotype of the homeless lady with the shopping trolley, that's not what homeless is today...just in my family off the top of my head three women, four women including me have been homeless. There's my mum, two aunts and me you know and that's because of our family situation, our cultures, our family background, things like that."

**Local homeless woman,
UWS Research**

2.2 Why is homelessness a concern?

For Individuals

- Housing is the backbone of quality of life, wellbeing and independence. Without appropriate housing, many other basic human needs will be compromised. These include family life, privacy, freedom of movement and safety, healthcare, growth and development and the ability to gather and associate with others.

For the Community

- Achieving successful housing outcomes is as important to **community wellbeing** as the availability of employment, and access to services and facilities. There is a high cost to individuals when they experience difficulty accessing and maintaining appropriate and affordable housing, but this is also reflected across the entire community.
- Homelessness issues lead to **wider social impacts** – social polarisation results in concentrations of advantaged and disadvantaged communities; dislocation of people from their local support networks places a greater burden on formal support services; resident's perception of personal safety can decrease, family stress can lead to family breakdown, and there can be ongoing generational losses/ poverty
- Homelessness can also have **economic costs** – perceptions of safety and amenity losses can lead to difficulty attracting investment and promoting growth, as well as difficulty attracting and retaining labour and visitors

"She'll (daughter) be going to school next year but I don't know if I could put her in because I don't know where I'm going to be living... so that's another thing. Yeah she's supposed to be starting kindergarten next year. But if I don't have a roof over our heads well she can't go to kindergarten."

Local homeless woman
UWS Research

Why homelessness is a concern



"I'm a registered nurse by trade... I've got bipolar disorder and they won't re-register me"

Local homeless woman
UWS Research

“Rent in Sydney is just so high and particularly in Parramatta... even the medium rents are \$250 to \$300 a week... even if I was to share with someone else I couldn’t simply afford that. And the waiting list in the Department of Housing in Sydney is that long we’re talking in some cases four to five years. Like I’m on a disability support pension; I can’t afford \$200 a week”

*Local homeless man
UWS Research*

2.3 Causes of homelessness

- There are many drivers, causes and triggers of homelessness and they are often complex and multi-faceted. These may also combine with broader factors such as a global financial crisis, significant increases in housing costs, a shift in the labour market or a loss of support networks.
- A specific crisis can trigger an entry into homelessness. This may be from losing a job, domestic violence or relationship breakdown, being evicted from stable housing or a period of extreme financial difficulty.
- In addition, many people who have entered homelessness have struggled with high levels of disadvantage throughout the course of their lives. This may include a cycle of family poverty, long term unemployment, poor education, violence, mental health problems, disability and substance abuse. For these people the risk of, and entry into, homelessness can be a long progression over a number of years.
- At times, government policies or procedures that respond to these factors may inadvertently increase the risk of homelessness, such as people leaving institutional care, child protection and correctional facilities.

Common factors that in many cases combine to increase the risk or maintaining of homelessness

<i>Housing stress, as a result of rising costs, eviction, mortgagee sales, or unavailable, unaffordable and inadequate housing</i>	<i>Any significant event that contributes to further social and economic marginalisation</i>
<i>Mental illness</i>	<i>Being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander</i>
<i>Addictions - drug and alcohol abuse, problem gambling</i>	<i>Unemployment, underemployment or insecure employment</i>
<i>Being a disadvantaged young person</i>	<i>Limited life skills and poor financial literacy</i>
<i>Domestic and family violence</i>	<i>A history of physical or sexual abuse</i>
<i>Relationship breakdown, family conflict or change in family structure</i>	<i>Legal and financial difficulties</i>

3 Why action is needed

3.1 The face of homelessness in Parramatta

- Historically it was mainly men who were visibly homeless, sleeping rough as a result of addictions, mental illness, and family breakdown.
- Today the face of homelessness is very different. Homelessness in Parramatta touches a cross section of our society, from women, children and youth through to men of all ages. People enter homelessness not just as a result of mental illness or addictions, but from other circumstances including financial stress, family violence, physical illness, and housing stress.
- The stories outlined below are based on real people and real life situations. They tell of the experiences of local people who now are, or have recently been, homeless.

Geoffrey. Lost his wife, job and house in rapid succession.



56 year old Geoffrey is not your typical homeless person. After marrying late in life and becoming parents for the first time, he and his wife were busy playing catch up on the great Australian dream – paying off their family home.

Just when it seemed that their life was finally on track, his wife succumbed quite suddenly to cancer. Shari's death not only left Geoffrey as the sole breadwinner. He now had to run the household, raise their daughter and get her through high school. At first he kept up with the bills, but when he lost his job, everything started to go downhill. No longer able to keep up the mortgage payments, he suffered the humiliation of the banks foreclosing on his loan. Demoralised by the loss of his house, he started to drink heavily, and when his daughter moved out, he started to sleep rough.

After a year on the streets, Geoffrey determined to rebuild his relationship with his daughter. He started to attend treatment for his alcoholism. In the short term his aim is to secure long term affordable housing – a living space that he can call home.

Cathy & David.
Unable to find replacement for condemned rental property.



Cathy, 44, and her partner David, 37, joined the ranks of the homeless after the property they were leasing was condemned. Despite viewing six possible places, they were unable to secure somewhere to rent. Forced to live on the streets for a month, they have at last been able to access

temporary accommodation. But it's only for two weeks and to compound their predicament, they are both unemployed. That's partly because David is caring for Cathy who not only has bipolar disorder but is also on the waiting list for cancer treatment at Westmead hospital.

The couple have been relying on local services that provide food, advice and short-term accommodation. At the same time they battle low self esteem and what they regard as reverse discrimination because of their 'Aussie' background and older age bracket.

For this couple, helping Cathy get well is high on their agenda. The key to a brighter future is being able to access long term stable affordable housing close to medical facilities and social services.

Anna.
Young woman the victim of family breakdown.



18 year old Anna, an Australian of Mediterranean background, is single, unemployed and homeless. The victim of family breakdown and abuse, she was forced to move out and fend for herself.

Not having the luxury of staying in the family home into her 20s and 30s as many young adults do, it doesn't help her life chances that she didn't finish high school, finds it difficult to get work and relies on Centrelink benefits.

Anna is lucky to have secured a bed in a youth refuge and relies on outreach

services to help her get by. The key things stopping her achieving her goals, apart from unaffordable housing, are her lack of income and having to deal with her emotional issues.

In the longer term, the one thing that will help Anna get on with a young life interrupted is to have her own place in a safe area. For her, being able to access affordable long term housing is a small investment in her long term future.

Girma.
Blacklisted for inability
to pay off debt.



42 year old Ethiopian born Girma is married with children. After spending four years in stable private accommodation in Auburn, he now relies on crisis accommodation to provide a roof over his family's head.

Homesick for their loved ones, Girma and his wife Ayana

sought to bring one of their two older children from Ethiopia to Australia. To their dismay, the costs involved consumed the money they usually paid in rent and put them into debt. They quickly found themselves not only evicted but blacklisted. While Girma is studying, the couple's plans to make a better life for their dispersed family have been anything but a dream run. Neither of them are working and their poor understanding of written and spoken English is a handicap, as is the complexity of navigating the complex support systems on offer.

Winona.
Single mother without
an income.



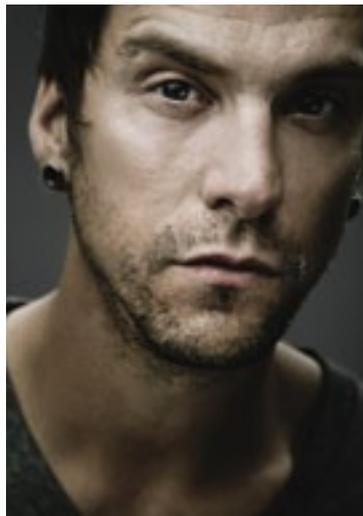
26 year old Australian born Winona grew up in rural Australia and after completing her studies, found a job and a partner. When her relationship broke down and her immediate family were unable to help her with accommodation, she struggled to support herself as a single mother and ended up being blacklisted for private rental.

With a heart condition, a three year old daughter, and no support from the father's child, she's been desperately seeking permanent accommodation. This needs to be

close to friends who can help with child minding, as well as to hospital specialists.

Homeless and moving between refuges until recently, she now counts herself lucky to have secured community housing. Community housing offers affordable, secure and long-term housing to eligible members of the community and is managed by non-profit, community based organisations.

Farid.
Looking for work but
can't get a break.



An Australian born young man of Lebanese extraction, 21 year old Farid grew up in the Merrylands area but now finds himself sleeping rough in the streets of Parramatta.

Having worked in a variety of roles, he is keen to get a job and attends all his job network provider appointments. But getting a job is proving difficult for a young man who can't reapply for his drivers licence before 2037. He's been in and out of corrective service since he was 12 years old, and as an 18 year old called Goulburn Gaol's super max facility home for a period.

Determined to steer clear of four older brothers who've served time, he has been off the drugs for the last 18 months and is seriously looking for long term accommodation. Only then can he give up couch surfing, live independently and make up for lost time.

3.2 Statistical data on the homelessness need in Parramatta

- Counting the homeless population is a difficult undertaking and only limited data is available at the local level. The following information is based on best available data at the time of writing. Several sources are used. It is highly likely that the actual need is greater than that reflected in the statistical data available.

How many people are homeless in Parramatta?

Source	Data on the number of homeless people
2006 ABS Census	Western Sydney had 12% of the NSW homeless population
Housing NSW (based on 2006 ABS Census)	There were 599 homeless households in the Parramatta LGA, the highest number of homeless households of all Western Sydney LGAs (see Figure 2 below).
2010 PCC Street Count*	There were 332 people homeless on the night of the count. This includes people sleeping rough and those in crisis or temporary accommodation services.
2011 PCC Street Count*	There were 354 people homeless on the night of the count. This includes people sleeping rough and those in crisis or temporary accommodation services.

* Parramatta City Council conducted their own street count of homeless people in and around the City centre in February 2010 and 2011. The methodology used differs substantially from the ABS 2006 Census methodology. It is conducted in summer on one night, while the Census is in winter.

Number of homeless households by LGA Western Sydney

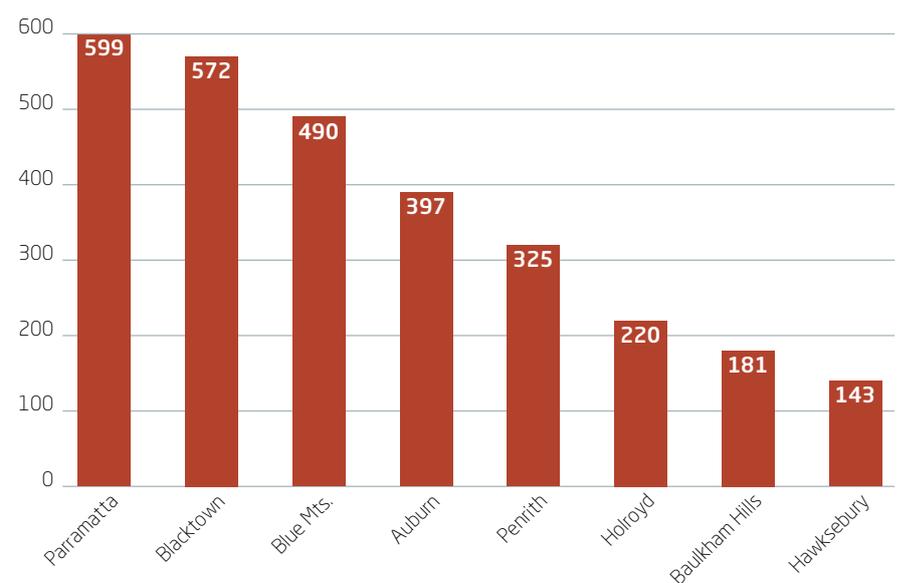


Figure 2: Number of homeless households by LGA Western Sydney

Source: Housing NSW estimate of homeless households by LGA based on 2006 census

How many people are sleeping rough in Parramatta?

Source	Number sleeping rough
2006 ABS Census	78 people
2010 PCC Street Count*	81 people
2011 PCC Street Count*	70 people

* Parramatta City Council conducted their own street count of homeless people in February 2010 and 2011. The methodology used differs substantially from the ABS 2006 Census methodology. It is conducted in summer on one night, while the Census is in winter.

Who is homeless?

Demographic	Source	Data for Parramatta
Age	2008 SAAP data for Western Sydney - representing 19% of estimated homeless population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The majority of homeless people (45%) are aged 25 - 44 > The next largest group (17%) is aged 45 - 64
Household Composition / Gender	2008 SAAP data for Western Sydney - representing 19% of estimated homeless population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The majority of homeless people are female: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Female alone (34% compared to 33% for NSW) - Female with children (30% compared to 19% for NSW) > Alone males make up the next major group at 26%

Note about the data:

1. The SAAP data used above is only reflective of 19% of the homeless population. The data does not include information about homeless people who are not accessing accommodation services including those sleeping rough or living with friends or in other temporary accommodation.

2. Interpretation needs to take this into consideration as these other groups of homeless people are likely to have differing demographic profiles.

Number of homeless households by LGA Western Sydney

Source	Data on where people are last living at a permanent address
2010 Homeless Persons Information Line Data, City of Sydney	<p>Of the top 5 'last permanent suburbs' identified by callers in Parramatta to the homeless persons information line seeking housing support, 4 are in the Parramatta LGA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Merrylands > Auburn > Parramatta > Guildford > Granville (see Figure 3)

Source: 2010 Homeless Persons Information Line Data, City of Sydney

Where are Parramatta's homeless people from?

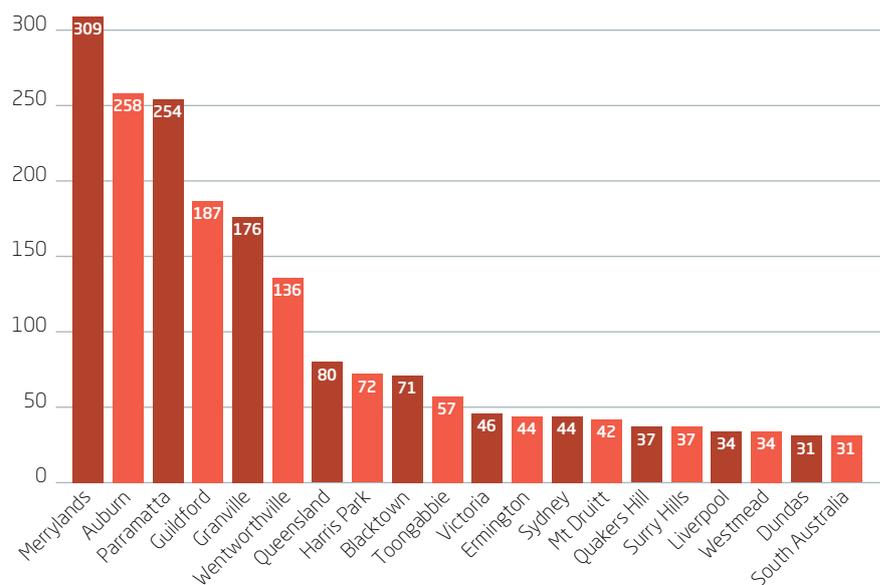


Figure 3: Where are Parramatta's homeless people from?

Source: Housing NSW estimate of homeless households by LGA based on 2006 census

What makes local residents become homeless?

Source	Data on primary reason for entering homelessness
2010 Homeless Persons Information Line Data, City of Sydney	<p>The top primary reasons for homelessness identified by callers in Parramatta to the homeless persons information line are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Housing Stress > Family breakdown > Interpersonal conflict > Itinerant / long term homeless

3.3 Key Messages For Parramatta summarised

Parramatta LGA has:

-  Growing numbers of homeless people
-  The largest number of homeless households of all Western Sydney LGAs
-  Consistent numbers of people sleeping rough in the City every night
-  Local residents becoming homeless – mostly from Merrylands, Parramatta, Granville and Guildford
-  Homeless people of all age groups, including children and youth, but mainly young to middle aged adults
-  Homeless people of all family types
-  Most people entering homelessness as a result of housing stress
-  Low-cost accommodation is not available in comparison to other CBDs

4

The Key Homelessness Challenges for Parramatta LGA

Challenge 1 Stemming the increasing rates of homelessness

- Prevention is always better than a cure.
- People of Parramatta LGA enter homelessness as a result of financial and housing stress, mental illness, and from other circumstances including addictions, family violence, physical illness, and unsupported institutional release. Often a combination of factors is involved.
- Most people who are homeless in Parramatta report housing stress as the primary cause. Housing stress is significant in the LGA. 14% of households are in housing stress, which is higher than the Western Sydney Region of Councils' average. The number of dwellings affordable for purchase to households of moderate income is rapidly reducing (from 9.4% in 2001 to 1.6 % in 2007). The percentage of private rental market that is theoretically affordable to moderate income households has dropped from 68% in 2005 to 40% in 2007. Working to establish more appropriate and affordable housing, and minimising the number of people losing tenancies and homes, is critical.
- Working on other factors that contribute to homelessness in the LGA is equally critical. The top 2 presenting characteristics of people who are homeless are mental and physical health problems. Ensuring adequate and timely access to physical and mental health care is therefore an essential component.
- Because of the complex nature of factors that often lead to homelessness for an individual, advocating to strengthen the links and cooperation between government agencies and human services areas will benefit those in need from issues such as family breakdown, domestic violence and prison release. Orienting systems and actions to focus on ways to stop unnecessary entries into homelessness is clearly needed.

Challenge 2

Balancing the diverse needs of the City's many stakeholders

- The demographic profile of homeless people within the LGA is diverse – a one size fits all solution is not possible.
- The city's public spaces and resources are used and shared by many people – workers, residents (including homeless people), visitors, business owners – all who bring their own, sometimes competing, perspectives on homelessness and how to support those who are homeless.
- Small business owners are particularly concerned with ensuring the prosperity of the city and growing and maintaining the city's image as a place to live, work, play and visit.
- Feeling safe is also high on the agenda of business owners, employees and residents.
- Solutions to homelessness in Parramatta need to consider these stakeholders' needs and perspectives, and at the same time create opportunities to break down stereotypes and promote understanding and acceptance of differences.
- Framing homelessness as a whole of community responsibility is required to ensure a diverse and broad range of participation in solution finding.

"Some of them (businesses) turn their nose up at you and look at you if you're a piece of filth don't they... they look sideways... you can feel almost if they're burning through your soul... but see I think too like without being all negative there is a lot of businesses that donate money to this place and to other places right. The unsung hero and when we talk about the negatives they'd be dragged into that and be labelled and they shouldn't be they should be smiled at, thank you for the little bit of help that you've given"

Local homeless person
UWS Research

Challenge 3

Supporting service providers in transition

- Homelessness service providers are continually challenged by the enormous and often complex need, and the lack of resources to meet the need
- Government funding models often create competition between service providers which can in turn affect ability and willingness of service providers to work together transparently
- For the first time in many years the Federal and State Government have focused attention and efforts on the issue and this has brought with it new opportunities, and also challenges.
- Future government funding will require service providers to reorientate the way they deliver services and the way they work with other services providers to meet the needs of homeless people. Supporting the growth of 'Housing First' approaches as opposed to 'treatment first' approaches is now also necessary
- Sourcing non-traditional funding and skills, for example from corporate and philanthropic sectors, could enable the development of innovative approaches and new models of support eg social impact bonds

Challenge 4

Actively engaging stakeholders from across sectors to work together on long term solutions

- The homelessness challenge is significant and will require concerted efforts and a focusing of resources by many to make a serious impact.
- There are at least 15 stakeholder groups involved or connected in some way to the issue of homelessness in Parramatta.
- Many of these groups have their own plans to combat homelessness. However, there is no overarching, high level, appropriately resourced plan in place for the Parramatta LGA that engages a diverse range of stakeholders with commitment at the executive level to work together to fund and drive consistent, collaborative actions.
- The 3 sectors – government (local, state and federal), not for profit, and the business community – have a real opportunity to work collaboratively and innovatively to maximise efforts.
- To enable the success of long term regional planning, the following considerations will need to be included:
 - Actively involving homeless people themselves
 - Having local homelessness service provider’s ‘buy in’
 - Having accurate data on which to make decisions – current data collection is unsatisfactory and will not support accurate monitoring over time
 - Ensuring high level involvement from business leaders who are motivated to affect change by bringing the very best that the corporate world has to offer and applying it to this social need
 - Having active support from State Government.

5

The Role of Local Government

-
- Primarily homelessness is a result of ineffective macro economic, housing and social policies that are the responsibility of State and Commonwealth governments. These structural factors lead or contribute to the loss of affordable, accessible and appropriate housing options, family breakdown, poverty, unemployment, health problems, substance abuse and domestic violence.
 - Strategies to solve homelessness must involve the adequate provision of effective services, and a range of housing options. These are primarily a State/ Commonwealth Government responsibility.
-

“Local councils, particularly those in urban areas, are the primary custodians of the space in which many people who are homeless currently live... Most councils do not provide dedicated services for people who are homeless and do not have the resources to do so. But all of them do provide services to the communities in which people at risk of homelessness live, and into which people who are exiting homelessness will enter. This makes them, or should make them, major and not incidental players in any plan to prevent and end homelessness.”

(Giles 2009)

“I’ve lived in Parramatta in Northmead most of my life so I know the area... I don’t want to live anywhere else in Sydney. I mean, even with my circumstances, why should I have to up and move somewhere else that I don’t know?”

*Homeless man
UWS Research*

-
- However, it is critical that local Councils are involved in the pursuit to end homelessness in local communities as well.
 - It is appropriate that Council, as a custodian of the local community, undertake actions to assist and complement the work of other levels of government, the private sector, community based support services and neighbouring councils, as the effects of homelessness are felt most at a local level. These actions should encompass strategies seeking appropriate solutions for homeless people, as well as pursuing structural changes that aim to prevent and minimize levels of homelessness.

- For PCC, its policy and implementation response has been developed with consideration to the following parameters:
 - Council's business priorities
 - Council's ability to affect change
 - The City's key stakeholders, and the need for Council to balance many and varied views and uses
 - Parramatta LGA's role in the context of the Western Sydney region
 - State and Federal Government responsibilities
- The tools and levers available to PCC to influence and affect change in relation to homelessness in Parramatta include:



6 Planning and Statutory Context

Throughout policy development due consideration has been given to the following policy and planning context. Further detail is provided in *Attachment 3*.

6.1 International Context

- › Universal Declaration on Human Rights – Article 25 (1948)
- › World Health Organisation’s Social Determinants of Health: the Solid Facts (2003)

6.2 Commonwealth Context

Homelessness

- › The Road Home: The Australian Government White Paper on Homelessness
- › Council of Australian Governments (COAG)

Affordable Housing

- › National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA)
- › National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH)
- › National Partnership on Social Housing (NPSH)
- › National Rental Affordability Scheme

6.3 State Context

- › NSW State Plan
- › Sydney Metropolitan Strategy

Homelessness

- › NSW State Government Protocol for Homeless People in Public Space
- › NSW Homelessness Action Plan 2009–2014 – A Way Home: Reducing Homelessness in NSW
- › The NSW Premier’s Council on Homelessness

Affordable Housing

- › State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009

6.4 Local Context

- › Greater Western Sydney Regional Homelessness Action Plan
- › Parramatta Twenty25
- › Parramatta Region Homelessness Interagency Plan 2010–2014
- › Parramatta Men’s Homelessness Coalition
- › PCC Affordable Housing Policy, May 2009
- › Other Local Policies and Plans



Section II

Homelessness Policy

7

Policy Principles

This policy and associated actions in the implementation plan reflect the following principles:

Right to Housing

Council recognises that access to affordable, secure, appropriate and accessible housing is a basic requirement for all people and an essential ingredient of a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable community. Council is committed to formulating policy to address homelessness, housing needs and the provision of diverse housing options.

Support for Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Groups

Council recognises that people who are homeless are some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in our community. Council further acknowledges that the population who are homeless have higher rates of trauma, mental and physical illnesses, substance dependence, gambling addictions, intellectual disabilities and are likely to be victims of violence. Council has a statutory and moral obligation to address and advocate for the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged people within the community.

Use of Public Spaces

Council recognises the NSW State Government Protocol for Homeless People in Public Spaces. Council acknowledges the rights of all members of the community to use public spaces, whilst also recognising their responsibility towards other members of the community who have the right to live in a safe and peaceful environment.

Right to Participate

Council recognises and encourages all members of the community to participate in cultural and community activities and events. Council also realises that some vulnerable and socially excluded people within its population may need special assistance to enable them to participate and experience greater social inclusion.

Supporting City Prosperity

Council acknowledges that the presence of visibly homeless people has the potential to impact on current and prospective resident, business, and visitor perceptions of the city. Council is committed to affecting change to improve the lives of homeless people themselves, and to also ensure the ongoing economic, environmental and social prosperity of the city and its various communities. Council further acknowledges that 'managing or servicing' homelessness is very costly to local communities, and that planning to solve people's homelessness, through permanent supportive housing, is a significantly more cost effective strategy long term.

Taking a Regional Approach

Council recognises that Parramatta City is a large employment, shopping and services centre, and as a result is a significant drawcard location for the people of Western Sydney. Parramatta City Council is committed to working with a Western Sydney perspective and seeks regional partners to ensure homeless people are supported appropriately within their local communities. Further, Council seeks consistency and continuity between the policies and actions being taken regionally.

Advocacy

Council recognises its responsibility to advocate on behalf of all members of its community. Specifically it recognises the need to advocate to other levels of government to reduce the incidence of homelessness within the community through the provision of appropriate State and Federal Government provided or funded services and effective policies.

Partnerships and Service Coordination

Council understands that the provision of services and empowerment of the homeless and socially disadvantaged is best provided when people who are homeless, workers and agencies act cooperatively. Through stronger partnerships, and consultation with service consumers to encourage co-ordination of services and activities, Council seeks seamless services and effective exits from homelessness for people in the local government area. Importantly, Council acknowledges local private businesses and commercial enterprises as key partners in the fight against homelessness, and believes they have much to contribute and gain in creating local solutions to local homelessness.

Key Roles for other levels of Government

Council recognises the key roles of other levels of Government in addressing the needs of people who are homeless through:

- Social Housing
- Affordable Housing and Housing Relief Services
- Emergency, short and medium term accommodation
- Income support
- Employment and training assistance
- Health (including mental health) services
- Services for people with a substance or gambling dependency
- Services for people with a disability
- Children's, youth and other community services
- Justice system (including police, courts, corrective services)

8

Policy Aim and Objectives

Policy Aim

- > *The **aim** of this policy is to minimise homelessness in the Parramatta LGA, and in doing so:*
 - Improve the wellbeing of those at risk and those who are homeless, and
 - Support continued prosperity of the City for the benefit of the wide business and residential community.

Policy Objectives

- > *The **policy objectives** focus on driving actions that will:*
 - **Contribute to the prevention of homelessness** – Prevent those at risk from tipping over into homelessness
 - **Support and work with the local homelessness sector** – Build the capacity locally to break the cycle for homeless people
 - **Maintain and promote the use of public space and assets for the whole community** – Including assisting people off the streets, and
 - **Champion regional planning and partnerships** – Encourage collaborative evidence based actions to combat homelessness by government, businesses and service providers
- > *The policy and implementation plan is targeted to improve homelessness for those most in need and for those at risk in the Parramatta LGA:*
 - Those who are homeless now:**
 - Young people
 - Single females and females with children who are homeless, particularly those escaping domestic violence
 - People exiting institutions, in particular, prisons, mental health facilities and hospitals
 - Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
 - Those at risk of homelessness:**
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
 - Young people
 - Those whose tenancy has been terminated, including through financial difficulty
 - Tenants with complex needs, including drug and alcohol and mental health issues
 - Individuals in serious family conflict
 - People at risk of homelessness through termination of tenancy
- > The target groups include those who are, and at risk of, homelessness and are reflective of at risk groups identified through the State Government's Western Sydney Action Plan 2010

9 Policy Targets

Targets: Federal and State

- Figure 4 outlines the current targets set by Federal and State Governments to reduce homelessness nationally and in NSW.

National	NSW	Western Sydney
7% reduction in overall homelessness	7% reduction in overall homelessness	7% reduction in overall homelessness
25% reduction in overall sleeping rough	25% reduction in overall sleeping rough	25% reduction in overall sleeping rough
33% reduction in Aboriginal homelessness	33% reduction in Aboriginal homelessness	33% reduction in Aboriginal homelessness
By when: 2013	By when: 2013	By when: 2013
Source: <i>The Road Home: Homelessness White Paper</i>	Source: <i>NSW Homelessness Action Plan 2009 - 2014</i>	Source: <i>Greater Western Sydney Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2010 - 2014</i>

Figure 4: Current Targets for Homelessness set by Federal and State Government

Targets: Parramatta LGA

- This policy sets the following aspirational targets for reducing homelessness in the Parramatta LGA by 2015/16:

Parramatta Targets	Current Number	Target Number	Number to be housed by 2014
7% reduction in overall homelessness	599*	557 people	42 people
25% reduction in overall numbers sleeping rough	81**	60 people	21 people
Total number to be housed			63 people

* Greater Western Sydney Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2010 - 2014 data

** PCC 2011 Street Count data

-
- The policy perspective underpinning this aspirational target is one of reducing homelessness in line with State and Federal Government targets. The targets for Parramatta focus on those sections of homelessness where Council can have reasonable influence and work with others to affect change over time.
 - The Census data 2006 is used as a basis for developing targets as it is the only consistent data available. HPIC, SAAP and other data cannot be used, despite its more recent collection, due to the inconsistency across and within services.
 - Given the current lack of data and the government focus on increasing research/data in this area, the targets will need to be reviewed to ensure they are based on reliable figures as they come to hand through Census data 2011, and as the regional plan for Western Sydney provides up to date statistics.
 - Reaching targets will require a commitment from Council to decrease homelessness and increase the amount of affordable rental housing in the Parramatta LGA. It will depend to a significant extent on the capacities of Council's partnerships with the not for profit service provider sector (both homelessness and community housing service providers), and on the State Government's willingness to use local planning instruments and provide adequate service provider funding to promote affordable housing and local service provision that supports Housing First approaches and the necessary wrap around supports.

10 The Way Forward

-
- The approach outlined in this Homelessness Policy is grounded in extensive research and consultation.
 - Current data clearly defines the need
 - This policy, together with the Homelessness Policy Implementation Plan November 2011 (see Section III), presents a way forward to ensure that to the extent of its capacities, Council will work on projects itself, and with external partners, to achieve homelessness targets as outlined in this document.

11 Administration

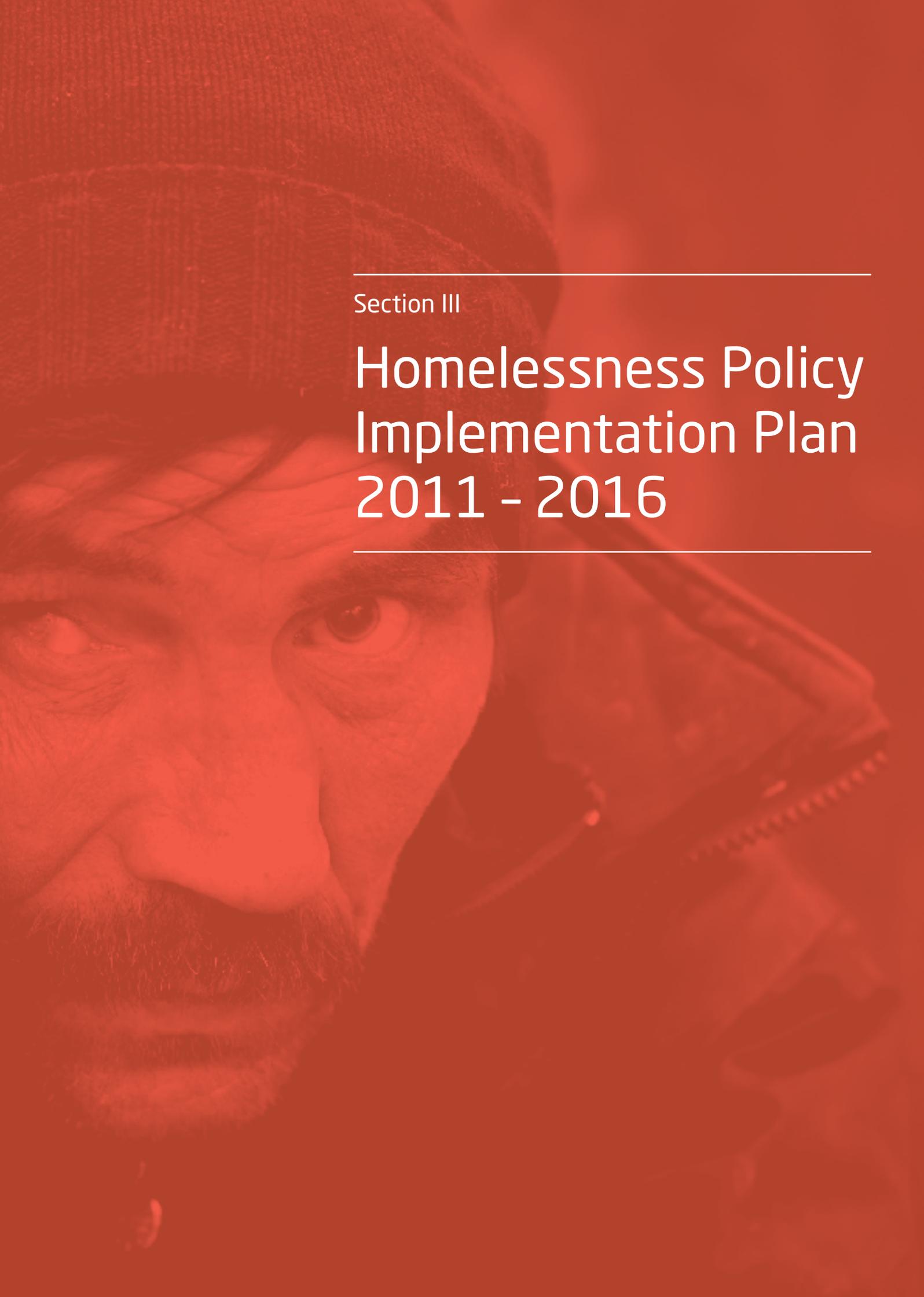
Version: 1
Owner : Outcomes and Development Unit
Policy Number: 324
Review Date: November 2014
Authorisation: Adopted by Council on 28th November 2011
MINUTE Number: 12818

12 Bibliography

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<http://www.coag.gov.au>
- › *Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs*
<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au>
- › *Regional Homelessness Action Plans 2010-2014: Planning Framework, Department of Human Services, December 2009*
- › *National Partnership on Social Housing (COAG)*
- › *Parramatta Regional Homelessness Interagency - 2010 Planning Day Draft Sept 10*
- › *Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2010 - 2014, Greater Western Sydney*
- › *HPIC Data*
- › *Homeless in Parramatta, A research partnership between Parramatta City Council and the University of Western Sydney, UWS & PCC, April 2010*
- › *The Road Home, The Australian Government's White Paper on Homelessness*
- › *Parramatta Twenty25*
- › *ABS Census data*
- › *PCC Affordable Housing Policy*
- › *Common Ground Website*
www.commonground.org
- › *www.legislation.nsw.gov.au*
(Affordable Rental Housing SEPP 2009)
- › *Local Government Involvement in Homelessness in Australia and Overseas, Judith Stubbs 2009*

Section III

Homelessness Policy Implementation Plan 2011 - 2016



Homelessness Policy Implementation Plan

Background

This document should be read in conjunction with the Homelessness Policy November 2011.

Policy Aim

Minimise homelessness in the LGA and by doing so:

- > Improve wellbeing of those at risk and who are homeless
- > Support continued prosperity of the City for the wider business and residential community

Policy Objectives

Objective 1 Contribute to the prevention of homelessness

Objective 2 Support and work with the local homelessness sector

Objective 3 Maintain and promote use of public space and assets for the whole of community

Objective 4 Champion regional planning and partnerships

Objective 5 Implement, monitor and evaluate the homelessness policy and implementation plan

Summary of the Homelessness Policy Implementation Plan 2011 – 2016

Aim	Minimise homelessness in the LGA and by doing so: <i>(a) Improve wellbeing of those at risk and who are homeless</i> <i>(b) Support continued prosperity of the City for the wider business and residential community</i>			
Objectives	Contribute to the prevention of homelessness	Support and work with local homelessness sector	Maintain and promote use of public space and assets for the whole community	Champion regional planning and partnerships
Key Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > <i>Affordable Housing Policy and Implementation Plan</i> > <i>Tenancies Advocacy</i> > <i>Mental Health Services</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > <i>Parramatta Region Homeless Interagency Support and Development</i> > <i>Food Provision Project</i> > <i>Support Sector Reorientation to Housing First Model</i> > <i>Funding for Local Services Advocacy</i> > <i>Collective CSR Project</i> > <i>Homeless Connect Event</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > <i>Chronically Homeless Men's Outreach Project</i> > <i>Developing PCC Protocols for public spaces/Council Assets</i> > <i>Personal Care Facilities Project</i> > <i>Health Care Provision Project</i> > <i>Education Project</i> > <i>Meaningful Activities Project</i> > <i>Civic Place Development Planning</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > <i>Date Collection Advocacy</i> > <i>Communication Toolkit Project</i> > <i>State Government Regional Planning Participation</i> > <i>Regional Multi-Sector Planning Advocacy</i>

Objective 1

Contribute to the prevention of homelessness

Outcomes

- > Increase in affordable housing as per targets in Council's Affordable Housing Policy 2009

	Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe	External Partners
1	<i>Continue to implement actions in the PCC Affordable Housing Policy Implementation Plan 2009 to grow more affordable rental housing, thereby minimising housing stress for residents in the LGA.</i>	<i>SO Team</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Housing NSW Private Developers</i>
2	<i>Monitor support needs of tenants at risk of homelessness in community and public housing. Utilise Council's strategic partnership with Housing NSW and Parramatta Region Homelessness Interagency to remain informed of tenancy related issues, and as a avenue to advocate on these matters as appropriate.</i>	<i>SO Team CCB Team</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Housing NSW Parramatta Region Homelessness Interagency Community Housing Providers</i>
3	<i>Continue to advocate for improved access to mental health services for residents of Parramatta LGA, especially youth, emerging communities with traumatic backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</i>	<i>CCB Team SO Team</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>NSW Health</i>

Objective 2

Support and work with the local homelessness sector

Outcomes

- > Homelessness service providers are able to offer homeless people permanent housing solutions in a time appropriate way
- > The region's homelessness services, from crisis to permanent housing and including support services, are linked and a homeless person can navigate easily between them
- > There are adequate homelessness services to meet the growing need
- > Positive perception of the City by visitors, workers and residents

	Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe	External Partners
4	<p><i>Continue to contribute to and support the implementation of the Parramatta Region Homelessness Interagency and their 5 year Strategic Plan, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > <i>Funding</i> > <i>Developing community awareness and understanding</i> > <i>Advocacy</i> 	<i>CCB Team</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Parramatta Region Homelessness Interagency</i>
5	<p><i>Continue to contribute to and support other homelessness networks and events including the Parramatta Homelessness Coalition and Homeless Persons Week</i></p>	<i>CCB Team</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Parramatta Homelessness Coalition Homeless Persons Week Committee</i>
6	<p><i>Feed new/emerging issues for the community of Parramatta and homelessness more generally into planning processes of local service providers and other key stakeholders for consideration - e.g. issues around services for women, improving supports for victims of domestic violence, developing family resilience, mechanisms for raising families out of cycles of poverty etc</i></p>	<i>SO Team</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Local Service Providers Parramatta Region Homelessness Interagency</i>

Objective 2 (continued)

Support and work with the local homelessness sector

	Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe	External Partners
7	Support and resource sector reorientation to engage best practice models for housing and support for homeless people, such as Housing First approaches. Consider provision of training, research and sourcing funding to support this work.	CCB Team SO Team	Ongoing	Parramatta Region Homelessness Interagency
8	Develop and implement an advocacy plan to grow more local funding and resources for local homelessness service providers to meet specific service gaps in the LGA	SO Team	Short term	Local Service Providers Parramatta Region Homeless Interagency
9	Support the sector to develop and implement a local event to link homeless people to support services and existing resources - e.g. a Homeless Connect event Note: Homeless Connect is an event where local homeless people have the opportunity to have basic personal care needs met and at the same time be linked with appropriate local services and supports.	SO Team CCB Team	Short term	Local Service Providers Parramatta Region Homelessness Interagency Businesses
10	Support relevant stakeholders in their efforts to develop innovative approaches to homeless people's access to food, including > Options for homeless people to make meals for themselves > Options to enable collection and distribution of catering excess from local food businesses to homeless people	CCB Team SO Team	Short term	Local Service Providers Parramatta Region Homelessness Interagency Businesses
11	Scope the opportunity to develop processes to recognise and promote the work of individuals and not for profit organisations working in the homelessness sector in Parramatta.	CCB Team SO Team Lord Mayor's Office	Medium term	
12	Scope the concept for a 'collective corporate social responsibility program' focussed on actions to minimise homelessness in the LGA and test the concept with relevant stakeholders including local business, researchers, charities and service providers. Consider a program that will link the needs of local homelessness service providers in the LGA with local businesses without engaging a competitive process between service providers.	SO team	Medium term	Homeless people Universities Service Providers Businesses

Objective 3

Maintain and promote use of public space and assets for the whole of community

Outcomes

- > Decrease in the number of rough sleepers in the City (A 7% reduction in rough sleepers in the City as identified in the street count in 2010, by 2013)
- > Increased capacity of Council staff to effectively and empathetically support rough sleepers, especially in public spaces
- > Positive perception of the City by visitors, workers and residents

	Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe	External Partners
13	<p>Implement Chronically Homelessness Men's Project including the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Direct service delivery to increase men's access to existing services/resources particularly secure, long term housing > Build internal capacity of Council staff to more effectively manage/respond to issues relating to men who are chronically homeless > Increase community awareness and understanding of complex needs of homeless men 	CCB Team	Short term	Community Service Provider
14	<p>Investigate opportunities to use Council and other stakeholder's resources to improve access to basic personal care facilities for homeless people in the City - include toilet and shower facilities, storage, phone charging outlets etc.</p>	SO Team	Short to medium term	Businesses Service Providers
15	<p>Advocate for and support the implementation of best practice models for provision of basic health care to rough sleepers in the LGA. Consider ways to improve access to GP, psychiatry, dentistry, podiatry and optometry services.</p>	SO Team CCB Team	Ongoing	NSW Health Universities
16	<p>Develop and implement a general protocol for working with homeless people for use by Council staff (and the general public as necessary). Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Steps for provision of assistance to a homeless person in specific situations of need - e.g. homeless person in danger, or homeless person in need of medical attention etc. > Work with Council staff to develop and implement a specific protocol for managing homeless people, and supporting homeless people seeking shelter and/or sleeping on Council assets > Work with Council staff to develop and implement a specific protocol for managing and supporting people seeking shelter and/or sleeping in the City's libraries 	HR CCB Team	Short term	

Objective 3 (continued)

Maintain and promote use of public space and assets for the whole of community

	Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe	External Partners
17	Develop and implement a brief, practical training program for identified Council staff who come into contact with homeless people as part of their work (especially library, cleansing, rangers etc), to increase awareness of the issues and develop skills in communicating and managing specific situations	HR / CCB Team	Short term	Parramatta Mission
18	Work with relevant homelessness service providers to develop resources that increase awareness of the community of Parramatta (residents, workers and business owners) of the issues facing homeless people especially rough sleepers, and assist them to develop skills in communicating and managing specific situations	CCB Team SO Team Marketing & Communications Economic Development	Short to medium term	Service Providers Businesses
19	Research the options for rough sleepers and other homeless people to participate in meaningful activities during the day and take action to implement options as appropriate: > Review options for access to current Council-run programs / facilities > Review options for access to current community service provider and businesses programs / services / facilities	SO Team	Medium to long term	Universities Community Recreation Organisations Not for Profits
20	Scope the options for developing and implementing a work experience program at Council for homeless people, to assist them to grow work skills and work readiness. Consider as part of this work ways to enlist the support of local businesses to participate in a similar program.	SO Team / HR	Medium to long term	Community Service Providers Universities Pre-employment Services
21	Liaise with key stakeholders to secure funding to ensure that rough sleeper counts continue in the City at least biannually.	SO Team	Short term	

Objective 4

Champion regional planning and partnerships

There is specific strategic regional action plan established for Parramatta LGA to guide consistent and collaborative actions from all stakeholders to minimise homelessness

- > All 3 sectors (businesses, not for profits and government) are actively involved in actions to minimise homelessness
- > Homeless people themselves are actively involved and have a voice in planning and new program development

	Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe	External Partners
22	<i>Advocate to Housing NSW to commence work in the Parramatta LGA as a matter of priority on actions outlined in their regional plan to grow more consistent, detailed and timely homelessness data collection processes across all relevant stakeholders in the LGA. Provide support as relevant to Housing NSW to speed up the delivery of improved data collection processes that will assist in tracking needs in the LGA over time.</i>	<i>SO Team</i>	<i>Short term</i>	<i>Service Providers Businesses</i>
23	<i>Develop and distribute a series of communication tools and resources (e.g. fact sheets etc) that can be used to increase awareness and articulate the current need in Parramatta consistently with a range of audiences including government, media, staff, businesses, funders, service providers etc. This should include information on current local homelessness trends, impacts, costs, local case studies etc.</i>	<i>SO Team</i>	<i>Short term</i>	<i>Universities Community Recreation Organisations</i>
24	<i>Continue to actively contribute to the State Government's Homelessness Western Sydney Regional Planning Committee plans, strategies and meetings, advocating for the needs of people locally and funding for Parramatta.</i>	<i>SO team / HR</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Community Service Providers Universities Pre-employment Services</i>
25	<i>Engage with key stakeholders on the benefits of 10 year regional planning models and processes involving the 3 sectors (business, government, service providers and other preexisting forums and networks).</i>	<i>SO Team</i>	<i>Short to medium term</i>	
26	<i>Provide support to the Parramatta Region Homelessness Interagency in their current work to engage and involve government and businesses in solutions to homelessness in the LGA.</i>	<i>CCB Team</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	

Objective 5

Implement, monitor and evaluate the homelessness policy and implementation plan

Outcomes

- > Ongoing commitment across Council to take action to minimise homelessness
- > Consistent understanding by key stakeholders of progress, and the future inputs and supports required to achieve objectives

	Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe	External Partners
27	Establish a 'Homelessness Policy Internal Working Group' to champion a whole of Council approach and commitment to the implementation and monitoring of this policy and plan	SO Team Communications Economic Development	Short term	
28	Establish a Communication Plan to provide feedback on progress to key stakeholders within and external to Council	SO Team	Short term	
29	Identify and apply for funding opportunities to support the implementation plan	SO Team	Short term	
30	Undertake an annual review of the progress of the implementation plan and report this to Council	SO Team	Ongoing	
31	Complete a review of the policy and its effectiveness and currency 3 years after adoptions	SO Team CCB Team	Medium term	

A photograph of two young women looking at a notebook. The woman in the foreground is wearing a light-colored button-down shirt and a dark cardigan, and is holding a pen over the notebook. The woman in the background is looking on. The entire image has a blue color overlay.

Section IV

Attachments

Section IV

Attachments

Attachment 1

Parramatta City Council achievements in the area of homelessness to date

Attachment 2

Homelessness Policy and Implementation Plan Development Methodology

Attachment 3

Planning and Statutory Context

Parramatta City Council achievements in the area of homelessness to date

Assessing needs and identifying gaps

- › In 2010 Council instigated and managed Parramatta's first street count to provide a snapshot of people sleeping rough and in secondary accommodation. The street count was held again in 2011.

Research

- › Council has undertaken, or commissioned, the following research in order to better understand the specific needs of the community regarding housing and homelessness, so that solutions are well informed and appropriate for the local context:
 - Homelessness and Support in Parramatta, 2007, prepared by Environmetrics (commissioned in Partnership with Housing NSW)
 - Models of A Sustainable and Affordable Housing for Local Government 2008, prepared by Urban Research Centre, UWS
 - Parramatta City Council: Analysis of Housing Stress , 2009, prepared by .id (informed decisions)
 - Affordable Housing in Parramatta LGA: A Discussion paper , 2009, prepared by PCC
 - Responding to Homelessness: Australian and International Case Studies, 2009, prepared by J Stubbs
 - Homeless in Parramatta, 2010, prepared by UWS (direct research with local homeless people, service providers, workers and businesses)
 - Research on PCC staff perspectives on local homelessness issues and how homelessness in the city affects their work, 2010, prepared by PCC

Direct support and information for Homeless People and their Families

- › Council works in partnership to project manage the annual Homeless Person's Week program of events
- › Council staff respond to direct enquires from homeless people for assistance, and are able to use its networks and relationships with local service providers to make appropriate referrals for individual support.
- › Council staff also respond to calls from concerned residents, workers and businesses regarding the support needs of specific homeless individuals in the City, and work to link people to local service providers and support agencies as appropriate.

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- › In 2010 Council provided \$60,000 toward a Chronically Homeless Men in the CBD project. This funding has been provided to a local service provider to help between 6 – 10 chronically homeless men in our CBD to be housed and provided with appropriate supports to develop a community education resource. This work continues in 2011.
 - › Council allocates approximately \$5,000 annually to support the needs of homeless people. In the last 7 years this funding has been used to purchase blankets, print resource cards explaining local services / resources for homeless people, and in 2010 provide swags for homeless people through local Not for Profits.

Partnerships

Council has had a formal strategic partnership with Housing NSW since 2006, the aim of which is to facilitate collaborative information sharing to better support improved housing and community well being for housing needs groups and their neighbourhoods. Information on homelessness, affordable housing, social housing and redevelopment programs are the focus of discussions.

Council works in partnership with local service providers to improve outcomes for the community – see next section

Local Homelessness Service Provider Sector Support and Capacity Building

In the last five years Council has funded local service providers to the value of \$67,870:

- › **Anglicare Youth Services (Outreach and Residential)** – \$27,810.40 between 2008-2011, mainly for homeless youth brokerage programs
- › **Milk Crate Theatre** – \$10,000 in 2011. Using theatre as a way to work with homeless people in Parramatta
- › **Parramatta Mission** – \$19,560 in 2008-2009 for an art program with young people in crisis accommodation
- › **The Twenty10 Association** – \$10,000 in 2007 – training homeless services to work with GLBT young people
- › **Western Housing for Youth** – \$500 in 2009

Council instigated 2 Homelessness Issues Forums in November 2008 and April 2009, which were delivered by a working group consisting of government and Not for Profits. Each Forum was attended by 70 representatives. The Forums led to establishment of Parramatta Region Homelessness Interagency

Council provides secretariat support and facilitation of the Parramatta Region Homelessness Interagency (since June 2009). This is an action based network of government and NFP services working to address homelessness in the area.

Council has some residential properties which for the past 20 years it has rented out at below market rent to local service providers to assist in the provision of local housing services. Organisations such as Western Housing for Youth have been supported. Western Housing for Youth provides a medium to long term housing service for youth aged 16-21 who are homeless or at risk of being homeless.

Advocacy and Lobbying

- Council made a submission to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Homelessness and Low Cost Rental Accommodation in 2009
- Council made a submission to the NSW Department of Planning review of the Affordable Housing SEPP 2009 in August 2011
- Council is a member of the NSW Department of Planning's Affordable Housing Task Force which was established in 2011 to explore mechanisms to strengthen responses to grow affordable housing and particularly to review the Affordable Housing SEPP 2009.

Growing Affordable Housing

Council adopted an Affordable Housing Policy and Implementation Plan in May 2009, and since then has progressed actions to grow the number of affordable housing dwellings in the LGA and protect existing affordable housing dwellings. Work has included:

- **Secondary Dwellings Project** – to help residents understand the benefits of this form of dwelling and how to go about building one
- **Affordable Housing Bank Project** – (continuing) scoping the mechanisms Council could instigate to develop a 'bank' of affordable rental dwellings
- **Boarding Housing Project** – (continuing) identifying current boarding houses and tenant rights
- Proactively reviewing potential development sites for their suitability for affordable housing development
- Council allocated resources for a full time staff member for 6 months in 2011 to focus efforts on this work

In June 2011 Council adopted that all development applications under the Affordable Housing SEPP 2009 would be required to submit a social impact assessment for consideration with the development application.

Homelessness Policy and Implementation Plan Development Methodology

Background

- The homelessness policy development has been based on methodology developed by John Bryson for use by not for profits and governments who are undertaking strategic planning and change management processes.
 - The considerations that underpins the way we have gone about developing the policy and implementation plan include –
 - Acknowledging a whole of city context
 - Acknowledging a specific local context, especially Parramatta’s place in the region and as a CBD
 - Supporting the voice of homeless people
 - Supporting the voice of local business and workers
 - Encouraging ownership for solutions by 3 sectors – government, business and not for profit sector
 - Learning from others here and overseas
 - Being mindful of Council’s role and capacity to act
 - Aligning with state and federal government approaches, actions and targets wherever possible
 - Steps have been taken to gather comprehensive data and importantly to then critically analyse the data to determine the important issues we should work on to affect change.
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The Methodology

Steps	Actions
A. Gain agreement about process for policy and implementation plan development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Internal policy development team (PDT) established › Developed agreed approach › Homelessness Policy Reference Group with key external stakeholders (24 members) established to provide input, test and challenge work as required.
B. Gather Information Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Reviewed Mandates: informal and formal (requirements and expectations for the organisation around homelessness) › Completed Stakeholder Mapping: identify key stakeholders and their expectations › Reviewed PCC Mission, Future Pathways, Vision and Values › Reviewed Council's current policy and activities as they relate to homelessness and housing issues: city services, economic development, social outcomes, open space, city centre place mgt, CCB etc. › Developed / sourced a service provider map for the LGA: what is provided, by whom, where are the gaps. › Reviewed Homelessness Data for the LGA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Homelessness statistics: (inc City of Sydney, local NFP data etc) - Qualitative data: who is homeless here, why, what do people consider would be helpful in changing their situations etc › Reviewed other local government's approaches to homelessness - nationally and internally › Review key issues from the external environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic Development: Parramatta City future growth / development issues, business issues/perceptions - Political Context: Fed and State policies/priorities - Social Environment / Climate: impact of GFC, housing issues etc - NSW Homelessness NFP / peak body directions - Regional Perspectives - trends in other West Syd LGAs, links/ flows with Parramatta City etc › Completed a SWOT analysis
C. Analyse data for key strategic issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Analysis of the above information inputs to determine: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The key strategic homelessness issues
D. Formulate Policy and Implementation Plan - inc targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Drafted policy / implementation plan
E. Test and then revise the draft Policy/ Plan with experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Tested documents with key stakeholders - internal and external › Made revisions as required
F. Send policy and plan to Council for adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Send report to Council for consideration

Consultations Undertaken

Consultation with a range of individuals and organisations has been critical to the development and revision of the policy and implementation plan. The key individuals and groups who have been involved in informing and supporting this work include:

- Local people experiencing homelessness / at risk of homelessness/ or recently homeless
- Local business owners and workers
- Local homelessness service providers
- Key peak groups and government departments
- PCC staff and Councillors

New Research Undertaken

During the policy development process it became evident that there were gaps in our data and knowledge in some areas, particularly in understanding of local needs from the perspective of homelessness people and from other stakeholders including PCC staff, local businesses and workers. We also needed further information on what was considered best practice approaches being used by other Cities and local Councils. The following new research was undertaken:

- Two street counts of people sleeping rough and in crisis / temporary accommodation – the first count undertaken in partnership with UWS and the second completed by PCC
- Local business and worker focus groups – prepared in partnership with UWS
- Interviews with local homeless people – prepared in partnership with UWS
- Local government approaches to homelessness nationally and internationally – prepared by Judith Stubbs Consultant
- PCC staff interviews – prepared by PCC
- \$50,000 allocated towards Chronically Homeless Mens Project

Planning & Statutory Context

1. International Context

Universal Declaration on Human Rights - Article 25 (1948)

The declaration on human rights recognises that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of their self and their family, including access to housing.

World Health Organisation's Social Determinants of Health: the Solid Facts (2003)

The Solid Facts recognises that, as social beings, we need more than good material conditions, we need healthier societies. This cannot be achieved without access to adequate and affordable housing.

2. Commonwealth Context

The Road Home - The Australian Government White Paper on Homelessness

The White Paper Strategy tailors the national response to the needs of particular groups within the homeless population, including children, older people, young people and Indigenous Australians.

The Australian Government, with the agreement of state and territory governments has set two headline goals to guide the country's long term response to homelessness:

- Half overall homelessness by 2020
- Offer supported accommodation to all rough sleepers who need it by 2020

Council of Australian Governments (COAG)

COAG is the peak intergovernmental forum in Australia, comprising the Prime Minister, State Premiers, Territory Chief Ministers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA). In 2009 COAG identified homelessness as a specific project requiring nationally significant reform and endorsed a number of intergovernmental agreements to improve the quality and effectiveness of government services. In relation to homelessness, these agreements include:

National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA)

The NAHA provides \$6.1 billion over five years from 2009-2014 on measures including social housing, assistance to people in the private rental market, support and accommodation for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and assistance with home purchasing.

Outcomes of the NAHA are:

- People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness achieve sustainable housing and social inclusion
- People are able to rent housing that meets their needs
- People can purchase affordable housing
- People have access to housing through an efficient and responsive housing market
- Indigenous people have the same housing opportunities as other Australians
- Indigenous people have improved housing amenity and reduced overcrowding, particularly in remote areas and discrete communities

National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH)

The National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness was also developed within the COAG broader Reform Agenda.

The NPAH will contribute to the NAHA through the delivery of services to prevent and reduce homelessness to the value of \$800 million across Australia. \$104.4 million has been allocated to NSW, with matched funding from the NSW Government. The key NAHA outcome under the NPAH is to ensure that people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness achieve sustainable housing and social inclusion.

National Partnership on Social Housing (NPSH)

The National Partnership on Social Housing facilitates the Social Housing Growth Fund. The will increase the supply of affordable and supported housing for people who would otherwise be homeless through \$400 million worth of funding.

The partnership contributes to achieving outcomes such as:

- People being able to rent housing that meets their needs
- People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness achieving sustainable housing and social inclusion
- Indigenous people having improved housing amenity and reduced overcrowding

National Rental Affordability Scheme

The National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) is an Australian Government initiative to stimulate the supply of new affordable rental dwellings by up to 50,000 by June 2012.

Under NRAS, the Australian Government is providing Incentives to:

- increase the supply of affordable rental dwellings;
- reduce rental costs for low to moderate income households; and
- encourage large scale investment and innovative delivery of affordable housing.

3. State Context

NSW State Plan

The NSW State Plan (NSWSP) was developed by the NSW government in 2006 and sets out goals for the NSW government to work towards achieving over a ten year period. It also identifies priorities for government action that will assist in achieving each of the goals over the life of the plan.

Housing Affordability is Priority E6 of the State Plan and focuses on improving housing affordability for vulnerable households noting that strong economic growth over the past 10 years has seen home values rise across many parts of NSW.

The state government makes a commitment to support a strong social housing sector and over the 10 year period of the state plan, they have allocated \$3.3 billion to:

- Construct and upgrade social housing;
- Continue to explore innovative ways to redevelop and renew public housing;
- Renew the role of community housing.

Sydney Metropolitan Strategy

The Sydney Metropolitan Strategy (Metro Strategy) is the State Government's long-term plan to manage Sydney's continuing economic growth while balancing social and environmental impacts.

Specific actions within the Metro Strategy related to the provision of affordable housing include:

C4.1 Improve the affordability of housing;

C4.2 Redevelop and regenerate Housing NSW stock; and,

C4.3 Use planning mechanisms to provide affordable housing.

With projections of a 1.1 million population increase in the Sydney metropolitan region in the next 25 years, the Metro Strategy identifies the need for 21,000 dwellings in the Parramatta LGA (9,000 in the City Centre, 12,000 in the remainder of the LGA).

NSW Homelessness Action Plan 2009-2014 - A Way Home: Reducing Homelessness in NSW

The NSW Homelessness Action Plan sets the direction for state wide reform of the homelessness service system to achieve better outcomes for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Through the NSW Homelessness Action

Plan the NSW Government will realign existing efforts, increasing the focus on the service system on prevention and long term accommodation and support, rather than crisis intervention.

The Action Plan has three strategic directions:

Preventing homelessness: to ensure that people never become homeless

Responding effectively to homelessness: to ensure that people who are homeless receive effective responses so that they do not become entrenched in the system

Breaking the cycle: to ensure that people who have been homeless do not become homeless again

The Action Plan targets a reduction of:

- 7% in the overall level of homelessness in NSW by 2013
- 25% in the number of people sleeping rough in NSW by 2013
- 1/3 in the number of Aboriginal people who are homeless in NSW by 2013

The NSW Premier's Council on Homelessness

The NSW Homelessness Action Plan includes a commitment to establish an appropriate governance mechanism to oversee the implementation of the Plan that promotes partnerships between all levels of government, the non-government sector, consumer groups and the broader community, including the business sector. The Council is the peak advisory body to Government in relation to homelessness in NSW.

State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009

The aims of the Affordable Rental Housing SEPP are:

- (a) to provide a consistent planning regime for the provision of affordable rental housing,
- (b) to facilitate the effective delivery of new affordable rental housing by providing incentives by way of expanded zoning permissibility, floor space ratio bonuses and non-discretionary development standards,
- (c) to facilitate the retention and mitigate the loss of existing affordable rental housing,
- (d) to employ a balanced approach between obligations for retaining and mitigating the loss of existing affordable rental housing, and incentives for the development of new affordable rental housing
- (e) to facilitate an expanded role for not-for-profit-providers of affordable rental housing,
- (f) to support local business centres by providing affordable rental housing for workers close to places of work,
- (g) to facilitate the development of housing for the homeless and other disadvantaged people who may require support services, including group homes and supportive accommodation

4. Local Context

Greater Western Sydney Regional Homelessness Action Plan

Regional Homelessness Action Plans (RHAP) are the local implementation mechanism for the NSW Homelessness Action Plan. The key aim of the Regional Homelessness Action Plans is to translate the state reform directions into action at the regional level.

Regional Homelessness Action Plans aim to:

- Identify actions for implementation at the regional level that reflect the principles and reform directions of the NSW Homelessness Action Plan
- Ensure that identified actions reflect the particular characteristics of homelessness in the region and build on successful local strategies and partnerships
- Identify regional projects for potential funding under the National Partnership on Homelessness for 2010-2013

The four priorities for the Greater Western Sydney region under the RHAP are:

- access to long term affordable housing
- young people
- permanent supported housing for people existing institutions
- sustaining tenancies with a focus on Aboriginal tenants

Parramatta Twenty25

Parramatta Twenty25 is Council's 20 Year Strategic Plan. It has been developed around the concept of sustainability which forms the 7 Destinations underpinning the future vision for Parramatta

Parramatta Twenty25 responds to the Metro Strategy and State Plan by identifying how Parramatta will manage the expected growth to 2025

Parramatta Twenty25 identifies the following priorities:

- Ensuring appropriate human services and activities are located in Parramatta
- Delivering appropriate affordable housing to accommodate low to moderate income households
- Delivering crisis housing options
- Delivering medium and long term pathways out of homelessness
- Regenerating social housing
- Improving perceived and actual safety by increasing community involvement in safe, protective and responsible behaviour
- Promoting the participation of, and the values and practices of people from sub groups within the community to develop understanding and reduce perceived threats of difference

Parramatta Region Homelessness Interagency

The Parramatta Regional Homelessness Interagency works to end homelessness in the Parramatta region by facilitating partnerships between stakeholders including the homeless; lobbying and providing representation; and, resourcing members of the community.

Parramatta Men's Homelessness Coalition

The Parramatta Men's Homelessness Coalition was formed in December 2002 to address men's homelessness issues in the Parramatta LGA. The Coalition was initially part of the Western Sydney Strategic Plan for Homelessness (WSSPH) and implemented a number of projects within the plan.

The Coalition seeks to address the issue of homelessness through developing cooperative, sustainable and innovative whole of government and community service responses and models to meet identified need.

PCC Affordable Housing Policy, May 2009

The focus of the Affordable Housing Policy is on driving actions that together will maintain share (maintain the percentage of affordable housing), expand choice (dwelling type and price range), and champion investment (by private, not for profit and government sectors).

The aim of the Affordable Housing Policy is to protect existing affordable housing and to facilitate new affordable housing in Parramatta LGA to provide for social, cultural, environmental and economic sustainability.

The policy is targeted to improve the housing outcomes of those known to be most in need in the Parramatta LGA: low to moderate income earners who are renting, mainly couple households with young children (under 15), older one person households (65+) and middle aged one person households (45 – 64yrs).

Other Local Policies and Plans

There are a number of local planning instruments and research documents relevant to the Affordable Housing Policy. These include the:

- Parramatta Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2001;
- Parramatta Development Control Plan (DCP) 2001;
- Parramatta City Centre Local Environment Plan (PCCLEP) 2007;
- Parramatta City Centre Development Control Plan (PCCDCP) 2007; and,
- Draft Parramatta Residential Development Strategy (PRDS) 2007.

PCC is currently undertaking a review of its planning controls including the:

- Draft Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2008; and,
- Draft Parramatta Development Control Plan 2008.

The Parramatta LEP 2001; Parramatta DCP 2001; PCCLEP 2007, and PCCDCP 2007 all sit under the EP&A Act 1979.

The PRDS informs the current draft Parramatta LEP and DCP 2008.

For more information

This Policy has been prepared by Parramatta Council's Social Outcomes Team, contactable on 02 9806 5000

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