



**THE CITY OF PORT PHILLIP'S
HOMELESSNESS ACTION STRATEGY
2008-2013**



Contents

Why a Homelessness Strategy?.....	3
What is homelessness?	4
What factors lead to homelessness?.....	5
What is Council's commitment?.....	6
What have we been doing so far?.....	7
How big is the homelessness challenge in Port Phillip?.....	8
What are our current protocols and processes regarding Homelessness in public places?.....	9
How has the strategy been developed?.....	10
What are our most pressing challenges?.....	14
What are the key issues that have come from our research and consultation?.....	15
How will we respond to factors contributing to homelessness ?.....	16
Action Plan.....	19

Why a Homelessness Strategy?

The City of Port Phillip has a proud and well established history of embracing diversity and harmoniously accommodating people from different backgrounds. This has been possible because people have been able to secure, safe, accessible and affordable housing.

This is a critical time for Council to be developing a Homelessness Action Strategy as we are facing an increasing population, changing demographics and increasing house prices which together with scarce and expensive rental properties are forcing individuals, couples, and families receiving low incomes, out of our area into unaffordable and frequently substandard private dwellings.

The difficulty of finding affordable and available accommodation is growing. There is continuing unmet demand for crisis accommodation evident in the high daily turn away from existing services, the dramatic loss of local affordable private rental stock including private rooming houses, the under supply of transitional housing and the lengthy wait, for some indefinite, for social housing (includes public and community housing).

The prevalence and risk of homelessness in our community and in the communities that surround our city is growing and Council has a role to play.

The City of Port Phillip Homelessness Action Strategy aims to enhance community understanding of homelessness, prevent the incidence of homelessness, facilitate the integration and provision of housing and support services and coordinate responses to the needs of those experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

At Parliament House in Canberra, on 27 January, 2008, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said there were more than 100,000 homeless people in Australia and it was clear the Federal Government needed to do more to stop the growing trend.

"It's something which you can either push to one side and sweep under the carpet or you can say, 'Actually this is just dead wrong, we need to do something about it'," Mr. Rudd said. "We don't believe it is something which a country as wealthy as ours in the 21st century can just ignore."

*"We have lived in St Kilda for over 20 years, I am 75 and my husband is 77, he relies on oxygen throughout the day, but especially at night. I have had 5 operations on my back. We are both on a lot of medication and have many outpatient visits to specialists at The Alfred. We have to leave here we have rented for 15 years because it is being sold but we cannot find anything to rent, even within a ring of 10 kilometres from this area and everything we have tried has then had an extra \$50 added to the weekly advertised rent by the time we have inspected or applied for it-we are about to be thrown out on the street " George and Mary*¹*

¹ *Names have been changed

What is homelessness?

Homelessness is a term used to describe the experience or situation of not being able to access safe, secure or affordable housing.

People experiencing homelessness are at risk of suffering further harm from a range of factors related to lack of secure and safe environment, diet, general health, mental health, substance abuse and violence. Some people may need support to obtain suitable housing locally so they can continue their connections in the community, while others need ongoing assistance to help them to stay housed and become connected to their neighbourhood.

People experiencing homelessness often endure social isolation and exclusion from the mainstream, discrimination, unemployment, often have little or no family support or support networks, and financial hardship. Council recognises that many people are excluded from obtaining affordable and suitable housing. This exclusion impacts not only on the individual and families experiencing homelessness but right across the broader community.

The social model of health is based on the premise that people's social and economic circumstances strongly affect their health throughout their life. Council recognises that homelessness and being in prolonged housing stress at imminent risk of homelessness is a critical health and well being issue.

City of Port Phillip believes that a safe and secure home is essential to facilitating sustainable social connections and building a fully inclusive community.

Council recognises that

- housing is a basic human right
- anyone can experience homelessness
- we need a range of support services and housing to prevent someone becoming homeless
- we need to work together to help people move out of homelessness, sustain housing outcomes and increase neighbourhood connectiveness

"A home is more than a physical structure. The attributes of home can be seen to be security of tenure, security against threats, physical characteristics which do not undermine health or create further disadvantage, affordability, living with people of one's choice, privacy and autonomy and control".²

Homelessness, inadequate housing and forced evictions represent violations of international human rights. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), recognises the right of everyone to adequate housing which is regarded as more than the idea of shelter.

'the right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity,' and sets out seven indicia of adequacy, including security of tenure and affordability. Adequate housing enables other basic rights to be enacted including the right to education and work, to vote, to participate in the community, physical and mental wellbeing and a decent standard of living'.

² Neil, Cecily and Fopp, Rodney, (1994), Homelessness in Australia: Causes and Consequences, 2nd edn, AHURI, Melbourne, pp.iii-vii, 1-233

What are the factors leading to homelessness?

Lack of affordable housing is one of the most significant structural causes of homelessness. The growing difficulties experienced in accessing affordable housing are placing mounting pressure on communities across Melbourne, and its outer regions as well as other cities, rural and regional areas across Australia.

Australian governments at all levels have attempted to respond to homelessness in different ways for a number of years not always from within an integrated framework. It is acknowledged that the factors contributing to homelessness are diverse, complex and often interdependent. The involvement of all three levels of government and targets at reducing homelessness should be underpinning policies³.

The pathways into homelessness are varied and can be experienced by anyone: losing your job, getting sick, relationship breakdown, domestic violence, a house fire, financial strain and emotional crisis can all lead to homelessness. Some of these health and social crises are made worse by the added difficulties faced by many low income households in accessing rental accommodation or maintaining a mortgage.

The housing stress of paying over 30% of their incomes for those receiving incomes in the lowest 40% and indefinite housing waiting lists are leaving young people, families and older people facing uncertain crisis accommodation and homelessness. Currently the wait for urgent public housing in the local Inner South Metro. region (Port Phillip and Stonington) varies from between 12 months to several years depending on type of property required and household size.

In 2005-2006, within the broader Southern Metro. Region which includes Port Phillip, over 31 000 people presented for urgent housing assistance-nearly 40% were women, many accompanied by children.⁴ Children who experience homelessness have a higher risk of experiencing homelessness in later adulthood.

A common public perception of who is experiencing homelessness has been that of older men with alcohol problems, yet the fastest growing sub-groups in Australia, the UK, Canada and the U.S are those of women with dependent children and youth.⁵ 38% people using Homeless services are aged 15-24 years⁶; they have few housing options, private landlords are loath to offer leases, young people under 18 years are unable to access public housing; young people less than 15 years are unable to access crisis housing. Young homeless men are at more risk of physical abuse than their peers⁷

The factors contributing to homelessness are complex:

-structural such as unemployment, poverty, inadequate income support, and lack of affordable housing,

-government fiscal and social policy such as welfare expenditure health services and housing assistance;

-personal such as mental illness, family breakdown, domestic violence, alcohol and drug use, gambling, conflict with friends and family and sexual abuse.

³ Limbrick, D. (2006) *Exploring the needs of Homeless People: Accommodation and/ or Support*, FACslA, ACT, Australia.

⁴ SAAP 2007

⁵ *National Evaluation of the Supported Accommodation Program (SAAP V)* Canberra 2007

⁶ *ibid*

⁷ "Living Rough –preventing crime and victimisation among homeless young people" *National Crime Prevention report* Attorney General's Department Canberra 1999

What is Council's Commitment?

City of Port Phillip Community Plan- Vision Statement 2007-2017

"The goals of social equity, economic viability, environmental responsibility and cultural vitality remain central to our desire to foster a sustainable and harmonious future.

We acknowledge there is a shared responsibility to ensure that everyone, regardless of age or cultural or socio-economic background, can access services that meet their needs and can participate in community life.

We want our Council to demonstrate leadership in community participation, strategic planning and advocacy to other levels of government and accountability to the community"

Council is committed to ensuring people can access services that meet their needs including residents imminently at risk of becoming homeless or living in unsafe accommodation or sleeping rough.

City of Port Phillip's visions and initiatives are underpinned by four pillars; social equity, economic viability, environmental responsibility, and cultural vitality. With consideration to all four pillars, Council recognises that

- housing is a basic human right and that anyone can experience homelessness;
- some people need a range of supports to prevent them becoming homeless and to sustain housing outcomes in moving out of homelessness; and
- Council needs a co-ordinated response that addresses the needs of people experiencing homelessness.



The Local Government Act 1989 (LGA) clearly defines a Council's role, objectives, function and commitment to ensuring safety, community cohesion, social, economic and environmental viability and sustainability of the municipal district, and quality of life for all members of the community.

What have we been doing so far?

Council has established links with a range of local homelessness services, health organisations and housing services within the Port Phillip region; some state-wide, others region specific which are dedicated to responding to people experiencing homelessness and housing distress.

There is also established social housing -some state owned and managed, some community owned and/or managed. Council has worked consistently to maintain access to affordable housing within the City of Port Phillip, directly support older people at risk of becoming homeless into housing and respond creatively to housing needs. As well Council's youth consultations have all shown young people have a commitment to develop their own awareness programs.

Council is also an active partner through our different networks with local community and mainstream services covering all ages, family structures and disabilities.

Port Phillip Council's role is varied but includes:

- **Advocacy and leadership** - Participation in Ministerial Housing Council, Housing Justice Roundtable, Inner Urban Rooming house working group, Inner city regional affairs network, submissions to State and Federal Government eg. Submission to Consumer Affairs Victoria Residential Issues Stakeholder Consultation 2007 and Federal Housing Affordability Inquiry 2008
- **Planning and Facilitation** - Community Housing Program, Community Grants Program, Neighbourhoods Program position, Information card developed for Commonwealth Games, Place Management and strategic planning eg. Fitzroy St Precinct Taskforce; Youth services network bi-monthly meetings and annual planning session.
- **Research and evaluation:** Homelessness Protocol Evaluation 2006.
- **Coordination and partnerships:** Collaborative service agreements eg. Employment and training for those aged 15-24, Arts Programs, Sudden Rooming House Closures Protocol; Housing Information and support service.
- **Service provision:** Social Meals Program-Rooming Houses, Park Re-design Workshops, Family Support Programs, Housing Information and support service.
- **Statutory Regulation:** Building and Environmental Health Inspections of Rooming Houses, Local Laws and Parking enforcement, Homeless Protocol.

*There was a man who was homeless for 10 years, but he actually owned a property in St Kilda. Due to his mental illness he had so much cluttered in his flat he could no longer enter it. He was issued a notice to leave as he also hadn't paid his rates. CoPP Housing Information and Support Worker referred his case to us and we liaised with other people in the Council regarding this matter and got the Council to set up a payment plan while we worked on moving items out and now this person is living back in his flat" Mental Health Outreach Worker
Source: Homelessness Protocol Evaluation 2006*

How big is the homelessness challenge in Port Phillip?

Our work shows us that a lot of homelessness is hidden-

- **Older people:** over a 12 month period (April 2007-08) more than 150 older long term Port Phillip residents presented to Council's Housing Information & Support service- 60 % were facing extreme financial stress due to escalating rents and half were being evicted (within 60 days) due to a sale of the property.
- Over that period, the Housing Info & Support service assisted 52 older residents from the private rental market into local public housing- many had been waiting more than 5 years for local public or community housing.
- June 2008-There are over 100 people on the waiting list for a self-contained room at the community managed Rooming House Plus, Queens Rd.Melb.
- In 2007, 90% of adults seeking crisis accommodation each day were turned away from crisis accommodation services.⁸
- **Children and their families** -Over one quarter of clients accessing homelessness assistance services in Victoria were single women with children;⁹
- **Youth:** Nearly half of the recorded homeless population in both Victoria and Australia were under the age of 24;¹⁰

From the 2001 Census data we learned that:

In Port Phillip on Census night 2001- 29 people were sleeping in crisis accommodation, 59 people were in improvised homes, tents or sleeping outdoors.

About 80 percent of the recorded population living in private rooming houses are located in Inner and Middle Melbourne;

In July 2006, Port Phillip had 67 rooming houses with 1,209 beds, comprising 23 private rooming houses (417 rooms) and 44 public/community rooming houses (792 rooms). A majority of these rooming houses (36) are located in St Kilda, with 12 located in South Melbourne, three located in Port Melbourne, one in Melbourne and three in Elwood.

Note: The relevant 2006 Census Data will become available Sep. 2008 and will be incorporated into the final report.

"It is who you live with that is the most important thing that makes it a home and a good place to live" Rooming House Focus Group Participant¹¹

⁸ Hanover comments in CoPP; CEO workshop Oct 2007

⁹ ABS Census 2001

¹⁰ ABS Census 2001

¹¹ Community Managed Rooming House Accommodation Review-report on discussions with Community Rooming House Providers and Tenants, DHS 2007

What are our current protocols and processes regarding homelessness in public places?

Since 2001, City of Port Phillip has established within the *Council Community Amenity: Local Law No. 3 2005* and the *Procedure and Protocol Manual* a range of processes council officers need to consider when regarding a person who is camping or may be sleeping rough. This has prompted contact to be initiated with a range of community outreach services.

In addition, leading up to the 2006 Commonwealth Games, the *Victorian Protocol for People who are Homeless in Public Places* was devised by the State Government with input from a number of local Councils including City of Port Phillip, Victorian Police, Department of Justice, Commonwealth Games and Department of Human Services.

There is currently a great deal of discussion exploring the association between excessive alcohol, use of substances and violent behaviour that is exhibited by different sections of the community and how we should respond in Australia. In Port Phillip there has been ongoing debate and divergent views regarding homelessness and social housing being associated with anti-social behaviour in public spaces.

In 2007, Victoria became the first state in Australia to install a Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. From January 2008 all public authorities such as councils need to ensure their decision making –policies and procedures comply with various rights outlined in the charter. Some that are particularly relevant to homelessness:

- freedom of association and movement;
- freedom from discrimination;
- protection of privacy and reputation.

Council must demonstrate transparent decision making, be clear when the execution of statutory roles such as public health, local laws or safety measures have led to any incompatibility with these rights being enacted and ensure Council could not have reasonably acted differently.

If you encounter a person who is, or appears to be, homeless, you should only respond if:

- They request assistance;
- They appear distressed or in need of assistance;
- They are sheltering in circumstances that threaten the health and safety of themselves and/or others (eg in derelict buildings);
- They are unaccompanied children who appear to be under the age of 15;
- Their behaviour threatens their safety and security of people around them;
- Their behaviour is likely to result in damage to property or to the environment;
- Their safety is threatened by others.

Extract from the *Victorian Protocol for People who are Homeless in Public Places 2006*.

How has the strategy been developed?

The City of Port Phillip Homelessness Action Strategy has been developed with reference to

- Research findings and program evaluations locally, across Victoria, nationally and internationally;
- Council, State and National Housing and Homelessness Strategies;
- Legislation: State, National and International ;
- Demographic trends and statistical data; and
- Feedback from a wide range of stakeholders including people who have experienced homelessness.

Council Initiatives and Plans that have informed the Strategy include:

- **Community Plan 2007-2017** developed in wide consultation with the community, identified ten top priorities (strategic objectives 2.1,2.3,2.4) including “ *to support those who are disadvantaged, disabled and low income to remain in the city and support affordable housing, even as the city grows more affluent,*”
- **Council Plan 2007-08** (strategic objective 4.1.8) “*continuing partnerships that promote opportunities for more affordable housing*”.
- **Health & Wellbeing Plan 2007-2011** :“*developing a strategy on homelessness that integrates initiatives addressing social isolation and health inequities amongst residents living in rooming houses, sleeping rough or temporarily in crisis accommodation*”
- **Housing Strategy 2007-2018** which recommended development of “*a strategy to coordinate responses to the needs of people experiencing homelessness. (Recommendation”(7.1)*
- **Drugs Strategy 2006:**“*There is an urgent need to expand public housing programs so that crisis accommodation as well as longer-term housing is available.*”
- **Ageing Well Strategy 2006 -2016:** ‘Build a better city that offers an age-friendly living environment – Facilitate access to a diverse range of housing choices to assist ageing in place’

Homelessness Action Strategy 2008-2013

- **Social & Cultural Policy & Planning Framework 2003-2006** Aims to: add value to established non-profit community or non-government organisations that provide activities/programs predominantly for the benefit of Port Phillip residents; encourage community initiative by providing the opportunity to pilot new models/programs; and strengthen the community fabric by fostering equitable access to resources through the development and encouragement of skills, knowledge, independence and participation.
- **Youth Development Framework 2004** : *identified there are often difficulties, challenges and pressures for young people exacerbated through disengagement from education, increasing shortage of secure and affordable accommodation, access to stable employment opportunities, social disconnection and transience or short-term residency. Port Phillip aims to be a “community that supports the health, wellbeing and positive development of young people”*
- **Creating A Child Friendly Port Phillip 2005-2009:** recognised “*Children feel secure in adequate housing and have access to quality food and water*” and “*a child’s right to grow in healthy and supportive community environments*”
- **Fitzroy Street Precinct Action Strategy 2007-**“*reduce street sleeping*” and “*improve and support the management of affordable housing within the precinct.*”

*“When I became sick with cancer, being a single woman left me no means of support except a sickness benefit. I lost my job, and couldn’t continue my studies and my low income had to cover rent, food, electricity, transport and medication. Pretty soon the only accommodation I could afford was a rooming house and this presented a new list of problems that hindered my long term health needswhen seeking help from agencies, even the chemist that was dispensing my special medication ,people were aware of the house where I lived and judged me accordingly-that because I lived there I must have a drug problem or a mental illness when in fact it was the only form of accommodation I could afford..... It showed me that without one’s health; even a small issue like housing becomes one of the most important issues in your life. Without appropriate housing, my rights to proper health care were taken from me. Without housing, my rights to be treated fairly within society were taken from me.” Lisa 34yrs ^{*12}*

¹² *Names have been changed

***From our discussions about homelessness
what did people tell us?***

Port Phillip residents involved with an evaluation of the Homelessness Protocol valued processes and communication between Council and themselves that worked in an integrated manner.

They commented:

'They advised me what they were going to do... They actually rang me back after they had contacted the person involved'.

'Kept us informed through the whole process. We saw the intervention by the police so we knew something was happening. It was an issue and it took sometime to resolve it'.

'We discussed these issues over the phone, but I think more of a personal approach would have been good. If they had come and explained the situation to us, we would have understood more about how it was being handled. But because we couldn't see anything happening we were unsure about what was being done'.

The 2006 Inner South Rooming House Project, interviewed service users who identified the following gaps:

- Lack of stable, appropriate, safe and affordable housing both emergency and long term, particularly for families and people with complex needs;
- Lack of flexibility in service provision and complexity of the service system;
- Poverty;
- Discrimination;
- Increase in multiple diagnoses and complexity of needs;
- De-institutionalisation and the lack of affordable supported housing options for people with a mental illness;
- Lack of sufficient funding to provide people with the service they need eg. People using up their quota of food vouchers.
- Lack of funding to provide support staff in rooming houses for those who need it.
- (Gordon, R. (2006) Resolve Community Consulting)

Consultations with service providers and Council staff during the evaluation of Council's Homelessness Protocol, during preliminary scoping of this strategy and review of Council's Housing Strategy identified critical issues as:

- Lack of affordable and emergency housing options;
- Lack of material aid and financial assistance;
- Lack of support services (during and after hours);
- Lack of intervention programs;
- Explore ways of making community rooming houses safer;
- Federal and State policies that need reviewing and integrating;
- Advocate for greater focus on prevention /early intervention
- Unmet need for specialised complex needs services;
- Individual client frustration at the very poor quality of housing;
- Need to improve models for homeless persons
- Impact of homelessness on a person's mental state;
- More support for existing services particularly family support; and
- Having to continually fight for funding.
- Time limited services: lack of long term and continuous support
- Ensure strong connection between housing and homelessness strategies

Homelessness Action Strategy 2008-2013



'We're in a homeless situation, so we don't know where we're going, we don't know what direction. I know a direction that I want. I know I want to get a home and make it into a nice home and it will be our home ...'
One sole father's reflections¹³



¹³ Neill & Fopp *Dad, where are we going to live now?...A report on sole father families who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness* Canberra Fathers and Children Services Inc & Dept FaCS July 2004

What are the most pressing challenges?

Changing requirements in State legislation-

- *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006*- from Jan. 2008 -need to ensure Council's decision making –policies and procedures comply with various rights outlined in the charter
- *Victorian State Building regulations 709 & 710* which require that by June 2009 fire safety standards such as installing sprinklers will be mandatory. There are approximately 100 beds in private rooming houses still to comply regards sprinkler instalment.
- There is proposed alignment of the definition of rooming houses within the *Residential Tenancies Act* and *Health (Prescribed Accommodation) Act* that are expected to bring more of these houses under the Health legislation requiring registration with Council.

Current demand on services: our research and consultations so far have highlighted the continuing and extreme lack of crisis accommodation and suitable housing for many groups in our community who are unable to secure affordable and safe accommodation at pivotal points of need and as a result the escalation of demand for this assistance:

- women (especially those who are sole parents with accompanying children escaping family violence),
- youth-18-25 including students,
- young people under 18 (particularly those escaping abusive homes),
- single adults(particularly those with a disability)
- older single adults and couples
- men who are sole parents with their children,
- families (particularly large families)

Separate Worker networks: networks loosely exist within different service systems but there needs to be more opportunity to communicate across sectors, particularly linking mainstream services to housing providers and homelessness services.

In summary: we need better access to local data of what is happening; more integrated communication, outreach and coordination between homelessness and crisis support, health providers, family support, income support, youth support, aged services and housing providers. Basically we need to connect the services that you may need if facing housing stress and/or experiencing homelessness.

What are the key issues that have come from our research and consultation?

Key Issues that have come from our work in developing this strategy are the

- 1 Need for enhancing community awareness and understanding of homelessness,
- 2 Need for accommodation, particularly crisis and transitional accommodation, but also continued replenishing of long term affordable housing due to the significant loss of private rental over the past decade,
- 3 Need for more integrated services to assist people to sustain housing once secure accommodation has been found and to have greater opportunities to participate in their community,
- 4 Need for research and implementation of prevention and early intervention programs, particularly within mainstream services to alert when individuals and families are in housing stress at risk of losing their housing and becoming homeless,
- 5 Need for greater connection between mainstream services and a range of homeless services and housing providers,
- 6 Need to prevent further trauma and illness after research has found that 66% of people experiencing homelessness had developed a substance use problem and 53% had developed a mental illness *after they became homeless*.¹⁴



¹⁴ Chamberlain, C., Johnson, G, and Theobold, J., *Homelessness in Melbourne: Confronting the Challenge*, Centre for Applied Social Research, RMIT University, 2007

How do we want to move forward together?

The Port Phillip Homelessness Action Strategy helps to set out an integrated framework and a clear direction in going forward together by:

- Identifying potential opportunities for Council services in responding to the factors contributing to homelessness in partnership with individuals, community organisations, businesses and other levels of government,
- Being clear how we can better support people currently experiencing homelessness and those at risk of becoming homeless to more fully participate with services and their community.
- It is not expected that all of the actions in the draft strategy will require new resources as many will be achievable from more effective communication and co-ordination across Council and existing networks in the community. Some of the larger projects will require sourcing funds from emerging National and State Policy initiatives.

The City of Port Phillip endorses a broad definition of homelessness informed by the different understandings from policy, legislation and research –see page 30, recognising homelessness as an experience or situation of being unable to access safe, secure, affordable and suitable accommodation. People sleeping rough or in temporary shelters are referred to as experiencing primary homelessness. People staying in crisis accommodation or ‘couch surfing’ staying with friends or families experiencing secondary homelessness. People living in rooming houses, private hotels and transitional accommodation are classified by the ABS as tertiary level homelessness due to having insecure tenure, shared kitchen and bathrooms. In July 2006, Port Phillip had 67 rooming houses and private hotels with 1,209 beds, comprising 23 private rooming houses/hotels (417 rooms) and 44 public/community rooming houses (792 rooms). A majority of rooming houses (36) were located in St Kilda, with 12 located in South Melbourne, three located in Port Melbourne, one in Melbourne and three in Elwood. At February 2008 there were approximately 60 transitional housing properties many of which may be shared by 2 tenants, with a total of 108 rooms available on any given night.

Council will aim to take a lead role in enhancing community awareness; facilitating early intervention and prevention, and coordinating local responses through 5 key objectives and a range of actions over the next 5 years.

These are outlined in the following framework and action plan which has been informed throughout the development of the strategy from a review of the research, local demographic data and trends and feedback from a range of services and members of the community.

Homelessness Action Strategy 2008-2013

Implementation

The Action Plan identifies key internal Council partners to facilitate the identified strategies and initiatives. This is a first stage, with the next steps over the coming 12 months being the engagement of relevant external stakeholders to support and in some cases, lead some of the strategies.

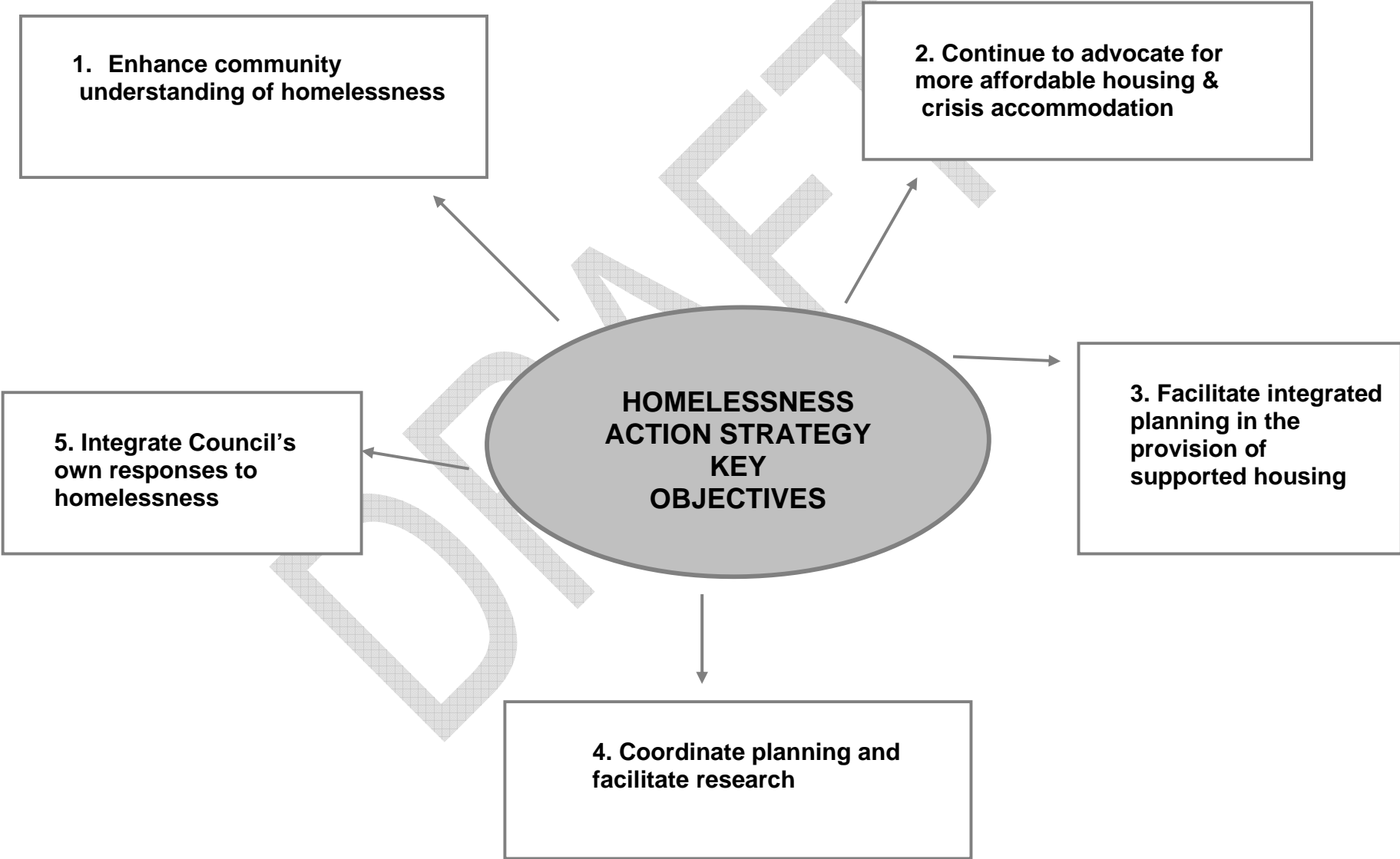
Monitoring of progress: A report card will be presented to the Council in December 2009.

"I had given myself another 6 months of managing in this place, either I would have to move or end it. Now for the first time in 10 years I can actually wash my own hair, whenever I feel like it, for the first time in 10 years I am me again..."

**Barbara 62 yrs long term resident, recently moved to fully accessible local social housing¹⁵*

¹⁵ *Names changed

How will we respond to factors contributing to homelessness?



Action Plan (Short-term 1 year; Medium-term 3 years; Long-term 5 years)

1. Enhance community understanding of homelessness						
	Strategy		Action	Measure of success	Priority	Relevant internal Council partners
1.1	Developing communication projects to raise awareness of homelessness	1.1.1	Explore funding opportunities for communication activities.	Community awareness program developed.	1-3 year	Community & Health Development Community Development Policy & Planning Housing Info & Support
		1.1.2	Facilitate a response to National Homelessness Inquiry Green Paper.	Submission sent	June 2008	Housing Info & Support Housing Development
		1.1.3	Explore opportunities for facilitating inclusive art and performance, street parties, sport.	A range of creative events and activities developed and facilitated	1-3 years	Community & Health Development ISEPICH Housing Info & Support Social Support & Recreation Culture & Recreation
		1.1.4	Develop an information booklet and material-posters, web page, fact sheets	Material developed with input from homeless advisers and services	1 year	Housing Info & Support Community & Health Development ISEPICH
		1.1.5	Promote community & business philanthropy around the use of <i>Port Phillip Gives</i> Website	Expanded awareness and links within Council's volunteer and fundraising initiatives	3 years	Community Development Policy & Planning Community Development Policy & Planning
		1.1.6	Explore potential of a			

Homelessness Action Strategy 2008-2013

			community trust fund			
	Strategy		Action	Measure of success	Priority	Relevant internal Council partners
1.2	Promote and facilitate inclusive community events.	1.2.1	Establish interest in a 2008 Homeless World Cup.	Local event held during Dec.	Dec 1-7 2008	Community & Health Development Housing Info & Support Culture & Recreation
		1.2.2	Mayor's Community lunch - welcome to new St Kilda Town Hall space	Lunch held	July 2008	Community Development Social Support & Recreation.
		1.2.3	Input to Annual Homelessness Memorial.	Support planning and event	Annual	Housing Info & Support
1.3	Facilitate awareness of <i>Equal Service guidelines - responsible approaches to consumers experiencing homelessness 2007</i>	1.3.1	Hold forums to inform a range of businesses of the Consumer Affairs Victoria resource material	2 forums held	1 year	Economic Development Community Development, Policy & Planning Housing Info & Support
1.4	Facilitate opportunities for increased participation in community for people who have been homeless and are experiencing homelessness	1.4.1	Explore partnering opportunities-mentor programs	Mentor Program established	3 years	Community & Health Development ISIEPICH Housing Info & Support Youth Services
		1.4.2	Support links between homelessness services, housing providers & community and faith groups to support	Partnership opportunities identified and pilot implemented	3 years	Community Development , Policy Planning Housing Info & Support

Homelessness Action Strategy 2008-2013

		1.4.3	inclusion activities Explore housing for low income workers and for people who have been homeless, particularly youth-tie in with YP4 ,HEAT	Networking project developed to link services with homeless services and housing providers	3 years	Community & Health Development Housing Development Youth Services Housing Info & Support
		1.4.4	Integrate housing opportunities with participation and inclusion programs			Housing Development Community & Health Development Economic development Housing Info & Support
1.5	Develop a local Memorandum of Understanding regards responding to homelessness in public places incorporating Victorian Protocol from Commonwealth Games 2006	1.5.1	Establish local Homelessness round table to develop MOU with Police, local community & health services, traders and residents	MOU developed	1-3 years	Local Laws Housing Info & Support Community & Health Development Parks & Gardens Youth Services

Homelessness Action Strategy 2008-2013

2. Continue to advocate for more affordable housing and crisis accommodation						
	Strategy		Action	Measure of success	Priority	Relevant Council partners
2.1	Develop integrated access to Crisis Accommodation	2.1.1	Evaluate partnership opportunities linking people experiencing homelessness to material relief, financial assistance and crisis accommodation	Pilot project better integrating all forms of crisis assistance and accommodation.	1-3 years	Housing Info & Support Family & Children Services Community Development , Policy Planning
		2.1.2	Identify resources responding to young people at risk of homelessness, particularly same sex attracted young people	Specific initiatives considered linking homeless services, youth support and health.	1-3 years	Youth Services Family & Children Services Housing Info & Support ISEPICH Community & Health Development
		2.1.3	Develop a local information protocol for responding to individuals made homeless following a house fire or drought related building damage	Council sudden homelessness protocol developed	1 year	Housing Info & Support Building Solutions
2.2	Improve data of crisis and transitional housing stock	2.2.1	Develop ways of communicating vacancies and evaluating lack of availability	Facilitate an annual count of turn away from crisis accommodation and turnover of transitional properties	1-3 years	Housing Info & Support
2.3	Review strategies to address loss of	2.3.1	Monitor Rooming House Numbers	Rooming house numbers are	Annually	Housing Info & Support Housing Development

Homelessness Action Strategy 2008-2013

	rooming house stock and capacity to respond to closures	2.3.2	Review Rooming House Closure Coordination Protocol	reviewed		Environmental Health Building Solutions Housing Info & Support
3. Facilitate integrated planning in the provision of supported housing						
	Strategy		Action	Measure of success	Priority	Relevant Council partners
3.1	Advocate for - on-site services to be established for people with support needs to enable them to maintain their housing	3.1.1	Review current supported housing- Rooming House Plus ,Supported Residential Services, Psychiatric Disability, Residential Care	Review completed	1 year	Housing Info & Support Ageing, Diversity ,Policy & Partnerships ISEPICH
		3.1.2	Explore feasibility of developing new and emerging supported housing models	Feasibility project considered	1 -3 years	Community Development , Policy Planning Social Planning Ageing ,Diversity, Policy & Partnerships Housing Development Housing Info & Support
		3.1.3	Explore opportunities to increase support in the management of private rooming houses	Review of support partnerships considered	1-3 years	
3.2	Coordinate planning housing/support models	3.2.1	Council to facilitate CEO bi-annual forums	Bi-annual forums held	1-3 years	Social Planning
		3.2.2	Explore establishing a working group with IMAP partners	Working group established	1 year	Community Development Housing Development

Homelessness Action Strategy 2008-2013

		3.2.3	opportunities to establish new supported housing Review current networks across the homelessness services and housing provider sectors	Review of Port Phillip & Stonington Housing Information Network	1 year	Housing Info & Support Community Development , Policy Planning Housing Info & Support
4. Coordinate planning and facilitate research						
	Strategy		Action	Measure of success	Priority	Relevant Council partners
4.1	Monitor and gather data to maintain accurate information on homelessness and services in the area	4.1.1	Follow up Census 2006 figures	Collection and dissemination of data	1 year	Social Planning Housing Info & Support
		4.1.2	Investigate research funding possibilities for (National H'lessness Strategy)	Funding opportunities identified and submissions	1 year	Community Development
		4.1.3	Developing regular counts of people experiencing homelessness between Census 2006 and 2011	A local count of people who are homeless carried out between Census-2009	2 years	Community Development

Homelessness Action Strategy 2008-2013

4.2	Enhanced early intervention and integrated responses regarding individuals and families experiencing homelessness	4.2.1	Explore feasibility of services coordinating Individual Cases & Persons @ Risk Register-particularly youth, families , people with mental illness who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless	Partners identified and Feasibility study carried out	3 years	ISEPICH Housing Info & Support Youth Services Family Children Services Community Care
		4.2.2	Collaborate re: local implementation of State initiatives: ➤ Family Violence Framework Reform, ➤ Local Homelessness Common Access and Assessment framework, ➤ Mental Health Alliance Pathways program	Local partnerships and cross sector projects established	1-3 years	ISEPICH Housing Info & Support Youth Services Family Children Services
4.4	Advocacy and coordination regarding private rooming house issues	4.4.1	Continue involvement with Inner Urban Rooming House group	4 meetings attended annually	Ongoing	Housing Info & Support
		4.4.2	Explore opportunities to input into reviews of Rooming house legislation-operation, regulation, standards	Follow on submission made to CAV consultation 2007	Ongoing	Housing Development Building Solutions Environmental Health Housing Info & Support
		4.4.3	Facilitate initiatives to address health	Continuing to support-social	ongoing	Community Care Ageing, Diversity, Policy & Partnerships

Homelessness Action Strategy 2008-2013

			inequities amongst residents living in rooming houses,	meals program; neighbourhood development, community building		
		4.4.3	Advocate for broader legislative response to poor housing standards	Improved standards	3-5 years	Housing Development Strategic Planning Building Solutions
		4.4.4	Explore incentives to acknowledge better practice	Promote information regards RAAV code of conduct and professional standards to local registered private rooming	1-3 years	Economic Development Housing Information & Support
		4.4.5	Identify and respond to unsafe and unregistered accommodation	Strategy developed to locate unregistered operators houses	1-3 years	Building Solutions Environmental Health Housing Development Housing Info & Support
		4.4.6	Expand communication with Police and Rooming House providers similar to an Accord model	Rooming House Accord developed	1-3 years	Local Laws Planning Enforcement Community and Health Development Housing Info & Support

Homelessness Action Strategy 2008-2013

		4.4.7	Develop fact sheets: location of local rooming houses, details of management, what areas are Council responsibilities and what areas are State responsibilities.	Fact sheets developed	2 years	Building Solutions Environmental Health Housing Development Housing Info & Support
4.5	Research current models of HOME: Advice Program early intervention and prevention approach assisting families who face difficulty in maintaining tenancies or home ownership due to personal or financial circumstances.	4.5.1	Develop a research project –Council Family & Children’s programs; Hanover Family & Centrelink based on HOME framework	Project implemented	1-3 years	Family & Children’s services Housing Info & Support
		4.5.2	Explore research possibilities to consider child’s voice in experience of homelessness	Pilot scoped	1 year	Family & Children’s Services
4.6	Improve social inclusion in the St Kilda / East St Kilda area	4.6.1	Participate in a State govt and community partnership project addressing community participation issues for people in transient and unstable accommodation in the area	Project to commence July 2008	1-3 years	Community & Health Development

Homelessness Action Strategy 2008-2013

5. Integrate Council's own responses to homelessness						
	Strategy		Action	Measure of success	Priority	Relevant Council partners
5.1	Council responding consistently across all services	5.1.1	Development of training and education modules regarding homelessness and complex needs of people.	Training implemented	1 year	Housing Info & Support
		5.1.2	Review Pathway system to avoid duplication	Pathway updated	1 year	Communications & Stakeholder Relations
5.2	Identifying homelessness 'hot spots' within the municipality and making it easier for people in crisis to find out about assistance	5.2.1	Erecting signage –info: crisis services, accommodation, meals and material aid. Also signage of the beach sweeper's routine as the risk to people experiencing homelessness sleeping on Port Phillip beaches is of concern, particularly during summer months.	Signage considered	1-3 years	Local Laws Parks & Open Spaces Building & Green Spaces Beach & Street Cleaning Housing Info & Support
5.3	Ensure responses to homelessness across CoPP services are	5.3.1	Review of Homeless Protocol, Policy and Procedures manual is compatible with	Review carried out	1 year	Local Laws Housing Info & Support

Homelessness Action Strategy 2008-2013

	<p>compliant with Vic Charter of Human Rights and Equal Opportunity requirements as a Public Authority</p>	<p>5.3.2</p>	<p><i>Victorian Charter of Human Rights & Responsibilities into procedures and policies 2007</i> in response to Council responding to public place management.</p> <p>Develop material outlining rights of someone who is homeless including details of Human Rights Legal Resource Centre & Human Rights & Equal Opportunities Commission</p>	<p>Information material developed.</p>	<p>1-3 years</p>	<p>Housing Info & Support</p>
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Different definitions and views of homelessness:

- “When a person is left without a conventional home and lacks the economic and social supports that a home normally affords. He/she is often cut off from the support of relatives and friends, and has few independent resources. Often the person has no immediate means and in some cases, little prospect of independence¹⁶
- Primary homelessness: includes those sleeping rough, secondary homelessness: includes those people who move frequently from one form of temporary shelter to another, tertiary homelessness: which includes those in who live in boarding or rooming houses on a medium to long-term basis.
- The Burdekin Inquiry, in response to the changes to the homelessness sector due to de-institutionalisation defined homelessness as “a lifestyle which includes insecurity and transience of shelter. It is not confined to a total lack of shelter. For many children and young people it signifies a state of detachment from family and vulnerability to dangers, including exploitation and abuse broadly defined, from which the family normally protects a child. However the Inquiry also found that there is a growing number of children who are ‘homeless’ because the whole family cannot obtain adequate shelter.”¹⁷
- *Supported Accommodation Assistance Act (1994)*: A person is homeless if, he or she has inadequate access to safe and secure housing. A person is taken to have inadequate access to safe and secure housing if the only housing to which the person has access:
 - (a) damages, or is likely to damage, the person’s health; or
 - (b) threatens the person’s safety; or
 - (c) marginalises the person through failing to provide access to:
 - (i) adequate personal amenities; or
 - (ii) the economic and social support that a home normally affords; or
 - (d) places the person in circumstances which threaten or adversely affect the adequacy, safety, security and affordability of that housing¹⁸.
- “The idea is that some people become entrenched in the homeless population, while others only have a short experience of homelessness: the central premise is that the longer people are homeless the more likely they are to adapt to, and identify with, a homeless way of life”.¹⁹

¹⁶ Office of Housing, (2007) *Understanding Homelessness*, Department of Human Services

¹⁷ Ryan, A. & Sarikoudis, R. (2003) *The Social Model of Health: Bridging The Gap between the Health and Homelessness Sectors*,

¹⁸ Chamberlain, C (1996) *Counting the Homeless, Implications for Policy Development*

¹⁹ Chamberlain, C., Johnson, G, and Theobald, J., *Homelessness in Melbourne: Confronting the Challenge*, Centre for Applied Social Research, RMIT University, 2007

Homelessness Action Strategy 2008-2013

Appendix 1: Agencies attendance over four consultations

Port Phillip & Stonington Housing Information Network-PPASHIN 21/09/07

Jewish care
Hanover Women's
Home ground
Office of Housing

Service Providers Work shop 1 .26/09/07

ISEPICH
St Kilda Youth Services
Inner South community Health Services
Port Phillip Community Group
St Kilda Community Housing
City of Port Phillip
Centrelink
Southport Community Housing
Sacred Heart Mission
Home Ground

CEO Consultation 11/10/07

Hanover services
Open Family
Sacred Heart Mission
Salvation Army
Inner South Community Health Service
Port Phillip Housing Association

Service Providers Work Shop 2. 12/10/07

Homeless Outreach Psychiatric Service (Alfred Hospital)
Victorian Police
Catholic Parish of Port Melbourne/Middle Park
Inner South Community Health Services

Homeless Adviser Interviews at the Gatwick 'Health times' 7/11/2007

Matey
Chrystal
Cheryl

One separate interview not at Gatwick with Kirra