



3. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

4. PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

Item 4.1 Petition – Port Phillip Council to Declare a ‘Social Amenity Crisis in St Kilda’

A Petition containing 628 signatures was received from residents of, and visitors to St Kilda. The Petition states the following:-

Amenity is known as the comfort/ enjoyment /what's great about, or the reason why we love where we live; when people talk about St Kilda, it is many different things to each of us, yet, ultimately the same thing.

Amenity impacts everyone in a community. St Kilda and in particular Fitzroy St, Carlisle St and Acland Street precincts are experiencing a severe decline in their amenity over the past few years. Our community is witnessing people dying, violent behaviours, drug activity, anti-social behaviours, criminal behaviours, rough sleepers and people suffering from mental illness on our streets; the community see these as the drivers of the amenity decline in St Kilda.

Our community members expect to go about their daily life, in a safe and peaceful environment, without the threat of physical harm, property loss or verbal abuse. The Port Phillip's Community Safety Plan: - Building a Safe Community Together, 2019-2023, states "Safety is a fundamental human right and is essential to the wellbeing of our residents. Port Phillip Council is committed to building a community where both residents and visitors feel safe to live, work and play."

CoPP Safety Priorities 2019-2023 are;

Priority 1: Creating Safe Spaces

The state government is responsible for law and order, we recognise St Kilda police are under resourced; in fact, South Metro has the smallest police resource of all metropolitan regions. CoPP could augment this fundamental human right, by supporting additional security measures, akin to the Jewish community extra measures in the City of Glen Eira. It is also noted that City of Port Phillip have provided extra security at St Kilda Town Hall to provide their employees with a safe workplace, this same accountability should be afforded to the St Kilda community.

Priority 2: Building Resilience

Whilst the service providers and housing associations are providing a valuable resource to care for those marginalised in society, once people leave a service providers premises', and certain Housing First and private accommodation properties, there is no accountability for the behaviours and loss of social amenity on the surrounding streets. All business', associations and service providers must take responsibility for minimising negative impacts of their operations and proactively acknowledge their responsibilities for maintaining and improving the amenity of St Kilda.



Priority 3: Living Healthy

Recently the death of a rough sleeper on Fitzroy St on 11th October 2019 at 8pm on a Friday night during the busiest trading period resulted in many families being confronted with a traumatic experience. This along with the many mentally unwell people congregating in large groups on St Kilda streets, we feel the social amenity of St Kilda has reached a crisis point. There needs to be council advocacy in supporting rough sleepers that refuse offers of housing or social service support.

We the following Petitioners hereby request that the City of Port Phillip, carry out the following;

- A. Due to the increase in anti-social behaviour and loss of amenity in the Fitzroy St, Acland St and Carlisle St, St Kilda precincts since 2016, ask that the City of Port Phillip Council declare a 'Social Amenity Crisis in St Kilda'.*
- B. Utilise existing funds parked in the 'Social Housing Reserve', to employ a minimum of two trained security guards to patrol these precincts of St Kilda 24/7 to immediately address the Social Amenity Crisis, this would increase security to the residents, visitors and the genuinely homeless living on the street; this could be adopted as a 6 month trial*
- C. Request the CEO to write to the Hon. Lisa Neville, Minister for Police and Emergency Services requesting resources for a full-time drug unit (DRU) based at St Kilda Police Station in Chapel St, St Kilda.*
- D. Request the CEO to write to Outreach Services and the Alfred Mental Health and develop a policy around supporting rough sleepers who consistently choose not to accept help with homelessness or refuse access to mental health services.*

OFFICER COMMENT

1. We welcome and appreciate the views of the City of Port Phillip residents who prepared the petition and their commitment to raising awareness of the challenges experienced by them.
2. Council is committed to ensuring a high level of amenity across the City and this is reflected in the Council plan and a range of programs and strategies.
3. Council undertakes the following activities that assist in improving amenity.
 - a. Street and Beach Cleaning
 - b. Rubbish removal
 - c. Enforcement of Local Laws
 - d. Planning
 - e. Shared responsibility for noise
 - f. Parking
 - g. Management of local roads
 - h. Homelessness Programs with partners
 - i. Building regulation
 - j. Shared responsibility for trader regulation
 - k. Permitting, including events
4. Current Council endorsed strategies and plans that aim to improve amenity include:
 - a. Don't Waste It
 - b. Community Safety Plan
 - c. In Our Back Yard

ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL 4 DECEMBER 2019



- d. Think and Act
 - e. Health and Well Being Implementation Strategy
 - f. Move, Connect, Live
 - g. Act and Adapt
5. Declaring a 'Social Amenity Crisis' will not require a change to our current endorsed Strategies or programs which already acknowledge the importance of ensuring high amenity in the City and includes actions, plans and investment to achieve this. These strategies and programs are within areas that Council has the authority to operate in. Council has no authority in areas of law enforcement, policing or forced health treatment.
 6. These Strategies and programs recognise the need to work with our community, local and Victorian Government partners, especially the police and hospitals, community health organisations, community support agencies, research organisations, traders and private industry to ensure high levels of amenity. A number of actions in these strategies also relate to advocacy for improved policy and investment by State and Commonwealth in areas which will improve amenity. Many actions will be delivered in conjunction with our partners

The petition lists five requests of Council which will be addressed in turn.

Request 1 : *Due to the increase in anti-social behaviour and loss of amenity in the Fitzroy St, Acland St and Carlisle St, St Kilda precincts since 2016, ask that the City of Port Phillip Council declare a 'Social Amenity Crisis in St Kilda'.*

7. Declaring a 'Social Amenity Crisis' will not require a change to our current endorsed Strategies or programs which already acknowledge the importance of ensuring high amenity in the City and includes actions, plans and investment to achieve this. These strategies and programs are within areas that Council has the authority and capacity to operate in.
8. Council has no authority to act in areas which are the responsibility of State and Commonwealth government, including law enforcement, medical and psychiatric treatment, policing, forced health treatment and income support.

Request 2 : *Utilise existing funds parked in the 'Social Housing Reserve', to employ a minimum of two trained security guards to patrol these precincts of St Kilda 24/7 to immediately address the Social Amenity Crisis, this would increase security to the residents, visitors and the genuinely homeless living on the street; this could be adopted as a 6-month trial.*

9. In Our Backyard is the Council's social housing strategy. Council allocates \$500,000 per annum to this Strategy. There is currently \$2 million in the social housing reserves (Port Phillip Community Housing Fund).
10. On 6 March 2019, Council resolved to make available up to \$1.5 million from the City of to be provided as grants to any Registered Housing Agency that is applying in the current round of Victorian Government funding to build and operate social housing within the municipality of Port Phillip.
11. That current round of Victorian Government funding (Social Housing Growth Fund) is still being determined which means that up to \$1.5 million of the Social Housing Reserve could still be required by registered housing Agencies.

ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL 4 DECEMBER 2019



12. Council does not have an operational role in law enforcement.
13. Based upon existing work orders Council officers estimate that the cost of the proposed two guard 24-hour security patrol to be approximately \$426K for a six-month period.
14. Security guards would not have the mandated powers of Victoria Police and would simply only be able to contact Police when intervention is required, in order to stay within the law themselves.
15. Only the Victoria Police and the Victorian Government can provide advice in relation to police numbers, response times and presence across the identified precincts.

Request 3 : *Request the CEO to write to the Hon. Lisa Neville, Minister for Police and Emergency Services requesting resources for a full-time drug unit (DRU) based at St Kilda Police Station in Chapel St, St Kilda.*

16. Decisions around location and funding of police resources rest with the Victorian Government.
17. Victoria Police have informed Council officers that there is no police station in the State that has a designated 'drug unit'. The Crime Command is the only area that has a drug unit.

Request 4 : *Request the CEO to write to Outreach Services and the Alfred Mental Health and develop a policy around supporting rough sleepers who consistently choose not to accept help with homelessness or refuse access to mental health services.*

18. Any intervention compelling a person to undertake treatment against their wishes is governed by the Victorian Mental Health Act of 2014. Alfred Health acts within this legislation as required.
19. Alfred Health Homeless Outreach Psychiatric Service (HOPS) team provide specialist psychiatric treatment, interventions, assertive outreach and intensive support for adult clients who are current clients of Alfred Mental Health Service, who are experiencing mental illness and are homelessness or are at risk of homelessness.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- Receives and notes the Petition.
- Acknowledges the views and genuine concerns of the signatories.
- Continues to implement strategies and initiatives to improve amenity in the City
- Continues to advocate to the Victorian and Australian Government to develop and deliver policies, services and programs that improve amenity in the City.
- Notes that expenditure of the social housing funds as proposed in Recommendation 2 would reduce funds available for social housing initiatives.
- Notes that the CEO is able to write to Minister Neville and the Alfred Hospital if requested

TRIM FILE NO: F19/1
ATTACHMENTS Nil