



## Background

Local residents and business owners have raised concerns with the Council about the adverse amenity impacts of large encampments, including concerns about drug paraphernalia, drug use, dealing, behavior and impacts to amenity. Residents reported feeling intimidated and unsafe, being unable to sleep and described adverse mental health and other impacts.

A Council motion on 11 December 2024 supported a Community Safety roundtable meeting to bring together people with a range of experience, expertise and capability to identify actions to increase public safety and perceptions of safety in Port Phillip.

A key resulting recommendation was the development of this Protocol.

## Purpose

This Protocol expresses the Council's and Victoria Police's (Victoria Police) desire to work together to improve the response to rough sleeping generally, and encampments in particular.

This Protocol outlines the:

- Expectations and obligations of the Parties.
- Response to encampments

## Expectations and obligations of the Parties

### Current Council Resources

The Council works to assist people sleeping rough through advocacy, funding services, outreach and support for housing options.

The City of Port Phillip's Zero program, operational since 2019, has been effective and has reported a marked decline in people sleeping rough.

The Council's daily patrols by local laws and rapid response cleaning crew include cardboard collection, rubbish removal and pressure washing and contribute to a cleaner environment. Where personal items are required to be moved Council works with the homeless sector to find appropriate storage solutions for people sleeping rough as well as providing short term storage at Council.



## **Joint Patrols**

Local laws officers patrol every day of the year across the City of Port Phillip with particular focus on activity centres including Fitzroy Street, Acland Street and Carlisle Street.

The local law officers work collaboratively with Victoria Police members to patrol together along key high streets.

The patrols are an opportunity to share information about issues on the streets, and for traders and residents to ask questions of Police and local laws officers. In addition, joint patrols help to deter and detect crime. We also hear from our community that the patrols improve perceptions of safety.

Under this Protocol, the provision of an enhanced welfare-focused program will be expanded.

Specifically, the Council and Victoria Police agree that the local law patrols will include:

- Subject to staff availability and resourcing Victoria Police will attend joint patrols with Council addressing behaviours and providing community reassurance. St Kilda and South Melbourne Police Station Commanders will coordinate and prioritise responses ensuring adherence with the Protocol.

## **Weekly Operational Meetings**

The Council and Victoria Police and other service providers meet weekly to ensure the appropriate and timely level of support is provided to the local community, rough sleepers and to address issues arising from encampments.

The meetings will consider the status of individual rough sleepers and encampments and will seek to reach agreement on how service delivery can be enhanced to support rough sleepers and encampments and which of the parties and other service providers should attend specific local law patrols. These arrangements can be altered to meet specific circumstances that arise outside the weekly meetings.

## **Victoria Police contacts for Local Laws Officers in the Field**

To enhance safety and response efficiency during patrols, Victoria Police will provide



local laws officers a dedicated contact for non-urgent circumstances. This contact will be briefed on the significance of such requests and will prioritise any safety concerns affecting staff or the community. In an emergency, or if immediate police response is required, 000 should still be used as the primary source of communication. Ideally, the dedicated Victoria Police contact will also participate in joint patrols, further strengthening collaboration and ensuring timely support when needed.

## **Quarterly briefings with Councillors and Victoria Police**

At quarterly briefing of Councillors, Victoria Police will provide an update on implementation of these protocols, crime statistic trends, emerging issues and any other relevant matters.

## **Encampments**

There are circumstances where encampments develop which are more challenging to address and require a dedicated response to ensure the safety and wellbeing for rough sleepers, neighbouring residents, business owners, passersby, Council staff and service providers.

These circumstances sit outside the 'business as usual' approach of Port Phillip Zero program and the daily local laws and patrols outlined above.

For the purpose of this Protocol, an encampment means any:

- mattress;
- tent;
- shelter, whether comprised of cardboard or otherwise; or
- other chattel whatsoever intended or obviously adapted to facilitate camping and sleeping.

## **Regulatory Framework**

City of Port Phillip local laws officers are authorised to issue warnings, Notices to Comply and infringement notices to people and organisations who breach the Local Law. They may impound items, goods, or equipment in relation to a breach.

The City of Port Phillip *Community Amenity Local Law 2023* has four clauses to assist with management of rough sleeping including clauses which cover behaviour, camping, furniture and other items on public land.



## Operational Processes where an encampment is present

Where the Council or Victoria Police is aware of an encampment that is having adverse impacts on amenity and community wellbeing, they may convene a meeting with relevant service providers to develop and implement a strategy (Strategy) to encourage the individuals in the encampment to disperse, by connecting individual members of the encampment to housing and other supports and by asking the individuals to move elsewhere.

The Strategy will consider:

- What is happening on the ground,
- What support service providers with service agreement with Council and other local services have provided and can provide to the individuals in the encampment,
- Where there is a risk to the safety of service providers, what support Victoria Police can provide, and
- Engagement with surrounding residents.

The parties will meet as frequently as required to discuss how well the Strategy is working and, if required, what changes need to be made to the Strategy to resolve adverse impacts on amenity and community wellbeing.

If an encampment Local Law is gazetted, Appendix 1 outlines the operational processes available in a circumstance where the above approach has not resolved adverse impacts on amenity and community wellbeing.

## Human Rights

In developing this Protocol, the Council and Victoria Police considered, and took advice on, the overarching human rights obligations that apply to the matters set out in this Protocol and commit to ensuring that those obligations are adhered to.

When taking action that may impact or limit these rights, council employees and Victoria Police officers will ensure that human rights are considered when determining what action to take. All action will be lawful, for a legitimate purpose, necessary to achieve the purpose of the action, and proportionate to that purpose. Prior to limiting person's human rights, the least restrictive alternative will be considered.



## Signing page

**Signed** for and on behalf of Victoria Police  
by Acting Superintendent Brett Coloe in the  
presence of:

*Nellie Montague*

Witness Signature

Nellie Montague

Witness Name (print)

*Brett Coloe*

Brett Coloe  
29 April 2026

Signature and Date of Acting  
Superintendent Brett Coloe.

**Signed** for and on behalf of the City of  
Port Phillip by its Chief Executive Officer,  
Chris Carroll in the presence of:

*Connie Ticinovic*

Witness Signature

Connie Ticinovic

Witness Name (print)

*Chris Carroll*

Chris Carroll (May 12, 2026 17:24:26 GMT+10)

May 12, 2026

Signature and Date of Chief Executive  
Officer.



## Appendix 1

### Local Law Encampment Amendment Consideration

Council is considering Local Law amendments that would allow authorised officers to take actions to remove encampment equipment as a last resort option to address community safety concerns. These include directing a person to remove encampment equipment, removing the equipment if that direction is not followed, and impounding the equipment where required.

The proposed Local Law amendment would enable authorised officers to respond where camps are having adverse impacts on amenity and community wellbeing, while continuing to prioritise a welfare-focused approach.

Although it would be a last resort option, this approach may help discourage encampments from developing in ways that create safety or amenity risks in our community.

Removing encampment equipment would be a last resort approach, used once all other options have been exhausted. A welfare-focused approach is taken that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of people experiencing homelessness. Before any consideration is given to removing items, authorised officers make every effort to engage with individuals and address concerns through support, working closely with local health, outreach and housing services. This includes connecting people with existing supports, offering assistance on site, and exploring non-punitive options wherever possible.

Victoria Police agree that they will support the safe removal of "encampment equipment" by Council officers by attending the encampment and ensuring that Council officers are not prevented from exercising the powers to remove "encampment equipment".

The details of how the Parties will apply the powers to remove "encampment equipment" will be considered on a case-by-case basis and prioritise the safety of Victoria Police members, Council officers and community members including participants of the encampment.









# VicPol Protocol - 27 April 2026 - for Council meeting 6 May 2026 (002) Signed by VicPol

Final Audit Report

2026-05-12

Created:	2026-05-12
By:	Elizabeth Turner (Elizabeth.Turner@portphillip.vic.gov.au)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAA7ez__Orl6Yho41MZVu3mE5cO4Id8DBN-

## "VicPol Protocol - 27 April 2026 - for Council meeting 6 May 2026 (002) Signed by VicPol" History

-  Document created by Elizabeth Turner (Elizabeth.Turner@portphillip.vic.gov.au)  
2026-05-12 - 6:04:19 AM GMT
-  Document emailed to Chris Carroll (chris.carroll@portphillip.vic.gov.au) for signature  
2026-05-12 - 6:05:24 AM GMT
-  Email viewed by Chris Carroll (chris.carroll@portphillip.vic.gov.au)  
2026-05-12 - 6:05:26 AM GMT
-  Document e-signed by Chris Carroll (chris.carroll@portphillip.vic.gov.au)  
Signature Date: 2026-05-12 - 7:24:26 AM GMT - Time Source: server - Signature Appearance Selected: DRAW
-  Document emailed to Connie Ticinovic (connie.ticinovic@portphillip.vic.gov.au) for signature  
2026-05-12 - 7:24:27 AM GMT
-  Email viewed by Connie Ticinovic (connie.ticinovic@portphillip.vic.gov.au)  
2026-05-12 - 7:24:29 AM GMT
-  Document e-signed by Connie Ticinovic (connie.ticinovic@portphillip.vic.gov.au)  
Signature Date: 2026-05-12 - 7:25:43 AM GMT - Time Source: server - Signature Appearance Selected: IMAGE
-  Agreement completed.  
2026-05-12 - 7:25:43 AM GMT