

Public Question Time

Question from Robbie Nyaguy

How many staff measured in FTE have sat in the Council Program area for In Our Backyard? What has the cost been for these staff? What has the cost of consultants been for the work related to In Our Backyard? How many briefings have been conducted with Councillors on In Our Backyard? What is the interest on the accumulated funds for the two million in the affordable housing reserve? How have these funds been spent?

Response

Thank you for your interest in Council's affordable housing program - In Our Backyard. Council remains committed to growing affordable housing in the municipality and is working hard to navigate the challenges of delivery in the absence to date of State capital funding for new projects. The IOBY Action Plan aims to ensure Council's investment leverages significant State and other funding to maximise the increase in affordable housing and benefits to the Port Phillip community. The significant work undertaken in the program to date does however provide the foundation for new projects to be delivered in the coming years.

In response to your specific questions taken on notice at the 4 September Council meeting, the following information is provided to assist you.

1. How many staff measured in FTE sit in the Council Program area for In Our Backyard?

There is 1.0 EFT allocated to manage the In Our Backyard program. Specialist staff from across the organisation also provide advice from time to time to progress the IOBY program e.g. Council's property team.

Council also has staff dedicated to initiatives aimed at reducing homelessness. The IOBY strategy and homelessness initiatives are increasingly being integrated, given Council's commitment to a 'Housing First' response to addressing homelessness.

2. What has the cost been for these staff?

The annual staff cost (salary and on-costs) for the IOBY officer position (in 2018/19) is in the order of \$150,000.

3. What has the cost of consultants been for the work related to In Our Backyard?

Consultant costs (including in-house contractor) associated with IOBY over the last three, from adoption of the strategy in May 2016 to present, has comprised:

- \$118,000 allocated to:
 - Complete a Review of IOBY (by SGS P/L) and develop an Action Plan to accelerate the delivery of affordable and social housing under the IOBY program.
 - Legal and expert advice on governance options.
 - Undertake a detailed Housing Needs Assessment (this will target Council's IOBY investment to respond best to local housing need and also to provide the strategic justification for future planning interventions).
- \$175,000 allocated to:

- Project manage delivery of 38 new affordable dwelling units - a 'pop-up' housing project established within a vacant building in South Melbourne for older women experiencing homelessness.
- Investigate site specific opportunities for the redevelop of existing social housing site that can deliver an increase the yield, diversity and quality of social housing (IOBY policy 3) .
- \$133,500 allocated to undertake various technical investigations of Council property assets, including Marlborough Street site. This work has provided front-end testing of the deliverability of potential future community housing projects.

4. How many briefings have been conducted with Councillors on In Our Backyard?

There have been four (4) Councillor briefings and four (4) workshops between 2016 and 2019 relating to the In Our Backyard strategy. These have led to informed decisions by Council on ways to progress the IOBY program with Council reports summarised in the following table:

Council Meeting	Decision
-----------------	----------

April 2016	Adoption of In Our Backyard strategy.
------------	---------------------------------------

September 2016	Decision to write to Port Phillip Housing Association, as Trustee of the Port Phillip Housing Trust, regarding improvements sought to governance arrangements of the Trust.
----------------	---

February 2017	Confidential report relating to an affordable housing project.
---------------	--

December 2017	Adoption of the In Our Backyard Action Plan (following the consultant review), which seeks to accelerate delivery of new housing under the program.
---------------	---

5. What is the interest on the accumulated funds for the two million in the affordable housing reserve? How have these funds been spent?

No interest income is allocated to any Reserve within the City of Port Phillip Budget, including the In Our Backyard Reserve. Consolidated interest from all Council Reserves is shown as an income line against the overall annual Council Income Statement.

The accumulated funds in the Reserve remain available to be allocated to projects that will deliver new housing, ideally with additional funding leveraged through this committed investment by Council.