

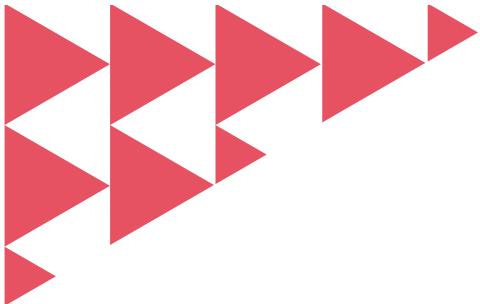
# Pathways

City of Melbourne  
Homelessness Strategy

**2011-13**



CITY OF  
MELBOURNE



## Pathways out of homelessness

Homelessness is a complex issue that remains a high priority for this Council. Our *Homelessness Strategy 2011-13* is a strong commitment to this challenging issue.

Council has introduced key initiatives, including contributing funding for the development of nearly 200 low-cost housing units. Building on existing programs and services, Council works closely with other partners, funding Frontyard Youth Services, providing community grants for employment training at Secondbite food collection organisation, and distributing information to help people access support services.

Together with our partners, we recognise that helping people find pathways out of homelessness can lead to long-term change.

Many people sleeping on our streets experience broader issues such as substance abuse and mental health challenges. To provide sustainable pathways out of a vulnerable way of life, the Council has proposed two major projects: a new health centre for the central city providing services tailored for the needs of homeless people; and contributing to funding for low-cost accommodation at the Salvation Army site in Bourke Street.

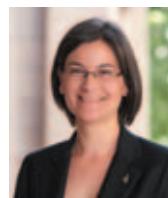
The *Homelessness Strategy 2011-13* was developed in consultation with service organisations, state government departments, community groups, philanthropic organisations and community members as well as people experiencing homelessness. Melbourne is a city for everyone. This strategy will direct our efforts to minimise homelessness, and give the most vulnerable in our community their best chance.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Doyle".

Robert Doyle

Lord Mayor



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Kanis".

Cr Jennifer Kanis

Chair Future Melbourne  
(People and Creative City)  
Committee

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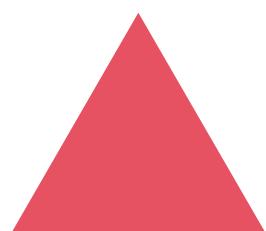
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## images

The City of Melbourne thanks Council to Homeless Persons peer educators, and Big Issue vendors for their contribution to this strategy.





▼ If you have a good meal and  
are made to feel welcome,  
things will get better. ▲

Participant – Café Meals Program 2010

## Council's vision

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The City of Melbourne aims to create pathways out of homelessness

We are committed to creating sustainable pathways out of homelessness by supporting individuals, developing robust partnerships and building strong and inclusive communities.

We will work with our partners in the homelessness sector, the health sector, Victorian and Australian Governments and local businesses to ensure people have the best chance of moving out of homelessness.

## Introduction

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Homelessness is a factor which affects people and communities worldwide and Melbourne is no exception.

It is an issue that is made more acute by Melbourne's attraction as a capital city.

As a council, we have made it a priority to address this issue.

The City of Melbourne aims to address this issue by focusing on these key themes:

- Know our city – continually refresh our knowledge of homelessness in Melbourne.
- Be inclusive – develop respectful ways of gaining the views and advice of people who are homeless.
- Develop skills – give people the opportunity to increase their skills in order to avoid long-term hardship.
- Create pathways – work to facilitate change and create pathways out of homelessness.

This document details the City of Melbourne's response under these themes and how it intends to make a difference to the lives of the people who are homeless over the coming years. Through this work we aim to achieve enduring outcomes for our city.

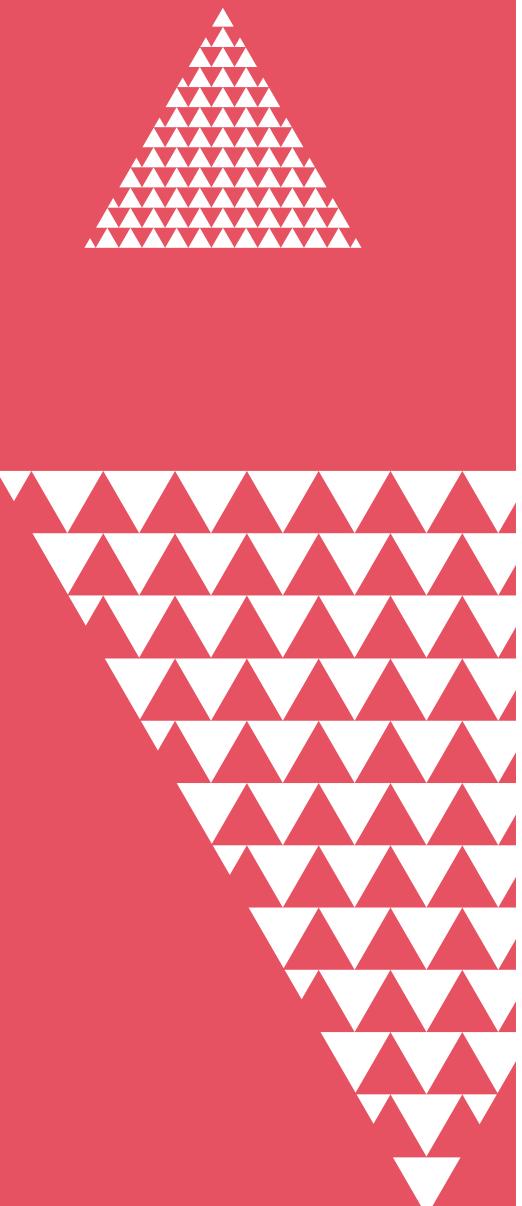
## In their words

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The analysis of consultation data, which includes people's stories, has informed the themes which underpin our strategy.

As such, we know that addressing homelessness is not just about providing accommodation. Our response will be holistic and we will endeavour to understand the issue in our city. We will do what we can to prevent homelessness and support people to develop skills to move out of homelessness.

Through various programs, City of Melbourne will make it a priority to provide people who are homeless with access to good quality nutritious food. We also have come to understand that we cannot address these issues alone, so we will work with many partners to create change.



## Who is homeless in Melbourne

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Homelessness affects people from all sections of the community.

Whether it lasts for a very short time, or for a number of months or even years, it is important to understand that being without safe, secure and affordable accommodation can have a devastating effect on a person's life.

The City of Melbourne recognises that the significant diversity of homeless people demands a range of responses to ensure the particular circumstances of each person are addressed.

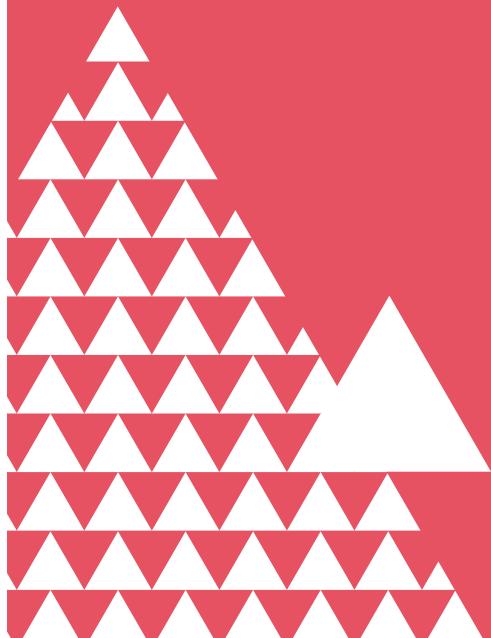
## Data summary

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Current data which provides a picture of homelessness in the City of Melbourne is derived from the available ABS 2006 Homelessness Census data and the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) usage data for 2008-09. In addition data has been drawn from research projects undertaken by the City of Melbourne including the 2007 Homelessness Research Project - Needs and Aspirations; StreetCount 2008, 2009, and 2010, and the Rooming House Residents Research Project 2009.

The following data provides a snapshot of homelessness in Melbourne.

Quantitative data is limited as some data sets are currently unavailable.



**ONE  
THOUSAND  
AND TWO**

people experiencing homelessness in the City of Melbourne.



**people on the street**

rough sleepers/improvised accommodation  
(StreetCount 2010 data)

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**101**

**people staying with family or friends**

(2001 ABS: 2006 census did not  
include this data)

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**118**

**people living in rooming or boarding houses**  
(registered rooming house beds in Melbourne  
(May 2010))

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**872**

**people in SAAP accommodation**  
(2001 SAAP)

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**211**



# STREETCOUNT 2011



Pathways out of homelessness

Tuesday 7 June

**StreetCount2011** is the fourth count of people 'sleeping rough' in the City of Melbourne. Volunteers will be in the central city conducting a short survey on Tuesday 7 June from 4.30am to 8.30am.

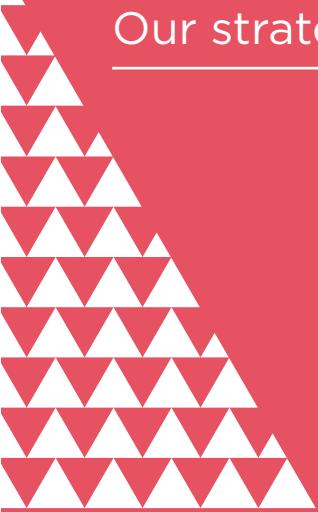
Personal information will be kept confidential and your privacy will be respected. Data collected from **StreetCount2011** will assist the City of Melbourne to find long-term solutions to homelessness.

For more information visit [www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/streetcount](http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/streetcount)



Count yourself in!





## Our strategy

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The City of Melbourne Homelessness Framework 2007-09 provided strong foundations for the *Homelessness Strategy 2011-2013*, including a broad range of research data and analysis, programs and initiatives. This information has led to the development of the key themes and actions for the years ahead.

In addition to the Homelessness Strategy we will develop and implement a more detailed action plan for the City of Melbourne which will include a coordinated approach with our partners.

## Principles

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The principles which form the basis of this strategy are covered under four key aspects of the City of Melbourne's role in responding to homelessness. Aspects of each or all of the principles are embedded in each of the themes, outcomes and actions.

### Leadership

The City of Melbourne will take a leadership and coordination role in responding to homelessness issues. It will collaborate across the organisation and with homelessness support services, homeless people, community organisations, other levels of government, the broader community and business.

### Capital city

As a capital city, the City of Melbourne must also address the needs of people who come from outside the municipality. Responses must address the fact that Melbourne is a 24-hour city with different rhythms every day of the week.

### Responding to diversity

The City of Melbourne recognises that people experiencing homelessness are diverse in terms of age, culture, religion, ability, gender, sexual preference and health status, and require a range of different responses to meet their particular needs. It responds to all categories of homelessness (primary, secondary and tertiary), including people at risk of homelessness in the municipality.

### Rights based approach

The City of Melbourne uses a human rights based approach when responding to people experiencing homelessness. This approach:

- is inclusive
- is respectful of people's rights and treats all people with dignity
- encourages participation
- is empowering and builds on people's strengths and knowledge of their own lives
- aims to reduce discrimination against people experiencing homelessness in the municipality.

## Our focus

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The City of Melbourne will focus its efforts on supporting people who are in the primary or tertiary categories of homelessness, which includes people sleeping rough and people living in boarding or rooming houses in the municipality, as this is the area in which it can make a difference.

Other levels of government provide a robust and sustainable response to people in secondary homelessness, such as those in temporary and crisis accommodation.

In taking this approach Council will minimise duplication with other levels of government and focus on the people with the most complex needs as well as those at risk of homelessness.

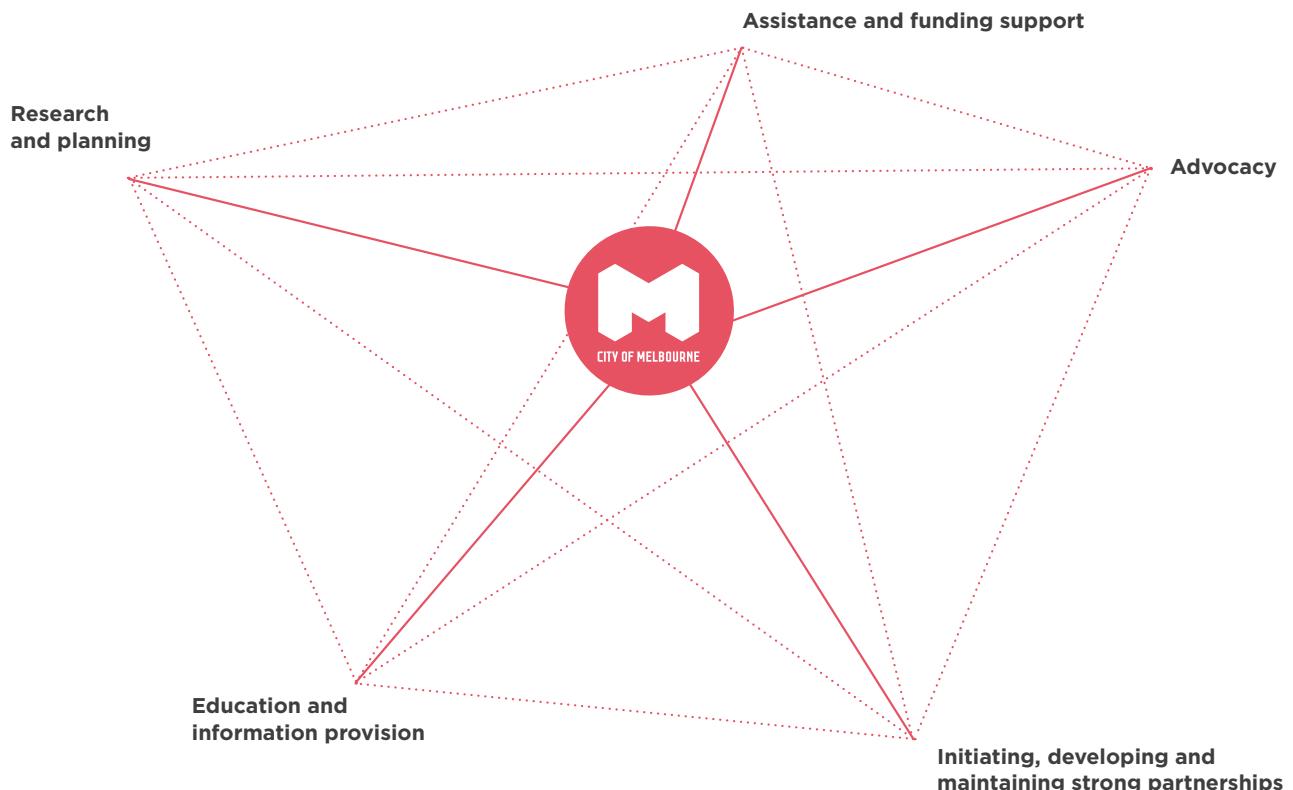
### Gender

Although our approach will focus on the categories of homelessness in which we believe we can make a difference, we will endeavour to understand the gender difference in the homelessness population.

Through our consultation, feedback has indicated women are far more likely to experience secondary homelessness. Staying with friends, sleeping in cars, and moving through a range of temporary settings characterises homelessness for women. We will work with our partners to further understand the gendered experience of homelessness in order to bring a balanced approach to our response.

## Five main roles for the City of Melbourne

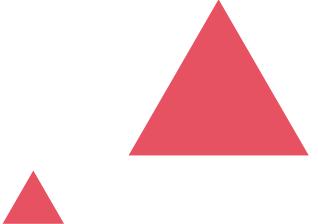
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▼ There definitely needs to be a lot of change because people who are homeless and in less fortunate situations have pride and honour and don't like to be spoken down to and mistreated and made to feel rejected. ▲

Previously homeless woman – Feedback to draft strategy



## Themes

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The City of Melbourne's response to homelessness will focus on the key themes: 'Know our city,' 'Be inclusive,' 'Develop skills,' and 'Create pathways.'

A detailed action plan will be developed for each theme.

### Know our city

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It is essential we continually refresh our knowledge of homelessness in Melbourne in order to respond and act effectively, either as a council or with our partners.

**The City of Melbourne will:**

- Continue with the Annual StreetCount Program to assess needs and continue to build a picture of homelessness in our city.
- Continue involvement in local service networks in order to understand service gaps for men and women.
- Undertake research to better understand the profile of rooming house residents.
- Establish a network of service providers working in rooming houses.
- Work closely with the crisis accommodation sector to ensure supply meets demand.
- Where possible, obtain and examine data sets for men and women and develop responses accordingly.
- Acknowledge our position as a capital city and host a homelessness summit. In doing so we will explore the issue of homelessness across greater Melbourne in partnership with other local governments, the Victorian and Australian Governments, the corporate sector and the homelessness sector to better understand the issue of homelessness.



Getting a job is the main thing. I don't care about income. I can get two dollars a day really and might survive off no money but getting a job is the most important thing. At least it gives me something to do all the time. 

Alex - Homeless Persons Research Project 2007



THE  
BIG  
ISSUE  
VENDOR

THE  
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## Be inclusive

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We will continue to gain the views and advice of people experiencing homelessness to ensure City of Melbourne activities and facilities are easy for homeless and vulnerable people to access and use.

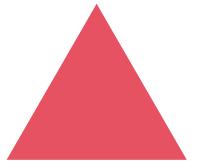
By leading the way through this approach, the City of Melbourne believes that businesses, community organisations and other levels of government will be encouraged to do the same.

### **The City of Melbourne will:**

- Support participation of homeless people in research and planning for improved services and sustainable solutions.
- Improve access by homeless people to City of Melbourne services and cultural and recreation programs.
- Improve access to community spaces and public facilities and draw on the skills of homeless people in planning community activities and events (such as, 'Where the heart is' community festival).
- Evaluate our resources such as the *Helping Out* booklet to ensure we are providing the right information in the right format.
- Continue with inclusive and participatory processes to ensure the City of Melbourne's decisions accurately reflect the needs of people experiencing homelessness.
- Establish an Advisory Committee for Homelessness.
- Work with the corporate sector to enlist their support in addressing homelessness in our city.
- Strengthen the City of Melbourne's advocacy role in identifying service gaps for people experiencing homelessness.

▼ Good clean accommodation with people who can counsel and help with troubles. ▲

Anonymous - Homeless Persons Research Project 2007



## Develop skills

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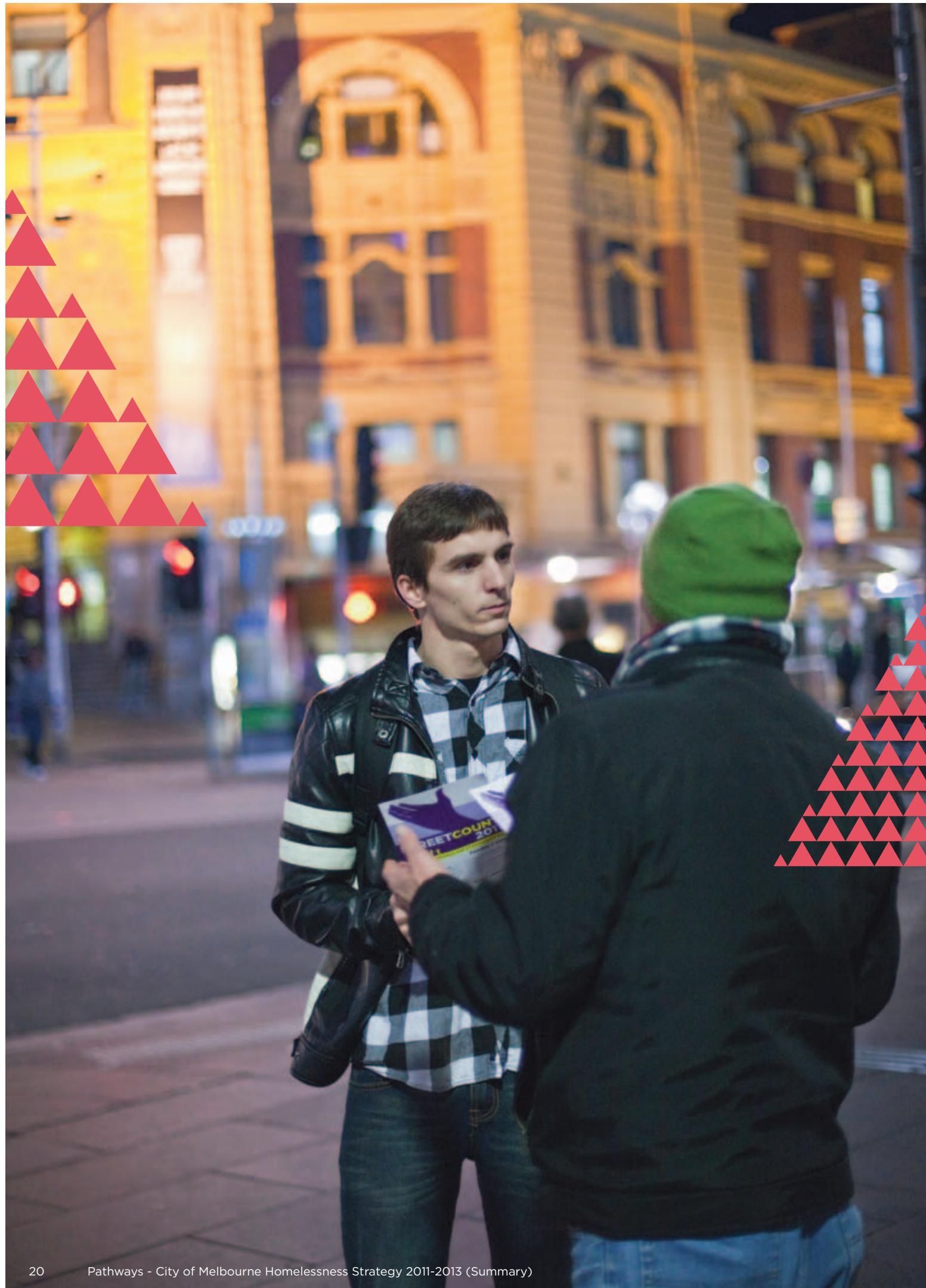
Building personal resilience and developing skills for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness will increase their potential to avoid long-term hardship.

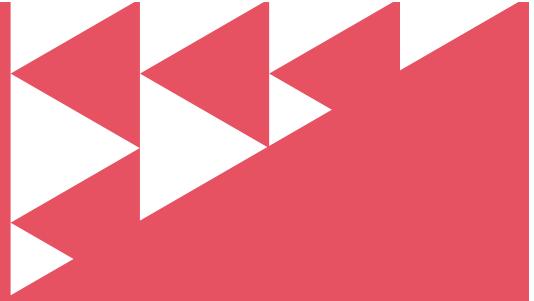
Income is a key factor in preventing or delaying homelessness. Understanding nutrition and having a good diet can also make a huge difference to people's lives.

**To assist people at risk to develop skills and access to nutritious food, the City of Melbourne will:**

- Promote the Social Enterprise and Micro Business Grants to businesses and people experiencing homelessness
- Expand the Café Meals Program which provides access for homeless people to a dietician and low-cost meals in cafés throughout Melbourne.
- Work with organisations providing training programs to people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, to build our knowledge of successful initiatives and training gaps. This will assist us to know where to focus programs such as our community grants and community services funding agreements in future years.







## Create pathways

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The City of Melbourne aims to prevent homelessness where possible and create pathways out of homelessness through the following actions:

- Continue partnerships and look for new opportunities with other organisations and levels of government for additional accommodation and services.
- Directly support additional housing options at the rear of 69 Bourke Street for supported housing.
- Ensure 20 per cent of residential development at Boyd High School is affordable housing.
- Develop and implement a Central City Health Service at Drill Hall.
- Encourage participation of community organisations, businesses, traders, churches and philanthropic groups to develop new initiatives.
- Focus on those at risk – continue our funding commitment to support services to ensure those at risk have every chance of avoiding homelessness.
- Provide a range of services and subsidies which keep people out of homelessness. Many City of Melbourne services help prevent homelessness by supporting people to be independent and healthy, and include aged care, children's services and recreational services. We will ensure these services are targeted to vulnerable groups.
- Further explore our role as a planning authority and the mechanisms available to us to make a difference to homelessness in our city.
- Explore the concept of a day shelter for people experiencing homelessness in the central city.

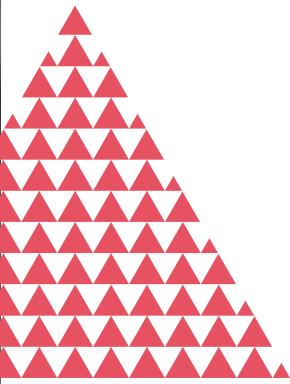
## Implementation, monitoring and review

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The City of Melbourne will develop an action plan and annual implementation plan for the Homelessness Strategy with clear timelines, targets and responsibilities.

Outcomes and achievements of the strategy will be reported to the Future Melbourne Committee.





## Definitions

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Three categories of homelessness were developed to assist in counting the number of people experiencing homelessness in Australia in the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census (Chamberlain and MacKenzie 1992, in Chamberlain 1999:1).

### **Primary homelessness**

People without conventional accommodation such as people living on the streets, sleeping in derelict buildings, or using cars for temporary shelter.

### **Secondary homelessness**

People who move frequently from one form of temporary shelter to another. This category covers people accommodated in homeless services, people residing temporarily with family and friends and those using rooming or boarding houses on an occasional basis.

### **Tertiary homelessness**

People who live in boarding houses on a medium to long-term basis. This type of accommodation typically does not have self-contained rooms and residents share bathroom and kitchen facilities. Rooming house residents do not have the security of tenure provided by a lease.

## **How to contact us**

**Online:** melbourne.vic.gov.au

**Telephone:** 03 9658 9568

7.30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday  
(public holidays excluded)

## **Translation services**

03 9280 0716	አማርኛ
03 9280 0717	廣東話
03 9280 0718	Ελληνικά
03 9280 0719	Bahasa Indonesia
03 9280 0720	Italiano
03 9280 0721	國語
03 9280 0722	Soomaali
03 9280 0723	Español
03 9280 0724	Türkçe
03 9280 0725	Việt Ngữ
03 9280 0726	All other languages

**National Relay Service:** If you are deaf, hearing impaired or speech-impaired, call us via the National Relay Service:  
Teletypewriter (TTY) users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 03 9658 9658

9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday  
(Public holidays excluded)

## **In person:**

Melbourne Town Hall - Administration Building  
120 Swanston Street, Melbourne

7.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday  
(Public holidays excluded)

## **In writing:**

City of Melbourne  
GPO Box 1603  
Melbourne VIC 3001  
Australia



**CITY OF MELBOURNE**

**Fax:** 03 9654 4854