

**Parliamentary Inquiry Homelessness in Victoria**

City of Melbourne submission

28 February 2020

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# Summary

The City of Melbourne is pleased to be making this submission to the Legal and Social Issues Committee Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria. Affecting positive change in this space will require sustained effort and a long-term commitment from all levels of government.

Australia is in the depths of housing and homelessness crisis and Melbourne is no exception. Homelessness rates in Melbourne have soared over the past ten years, with a significant upward trend since 2014. This negative shift is evidence that we are falling short in our responsibility to provide safe and appropriate housing to our most vulnerable residents.

Addressing homelessness is complex and challenging because of compounding social, economic and policy factors. People experiencing homelessness are not a homogenous group. Homelessness can occur at any stage of life and to people from diverse backgrounds. Population growth, rising living costs, increasing rental costs, income support failing to meet the cost of rent and a lack of social and affordable housing are causing housing stress and homelessness.

Rough sleeping is the most visible expression of homelessness. People who sleep rough have to live on the streets, sleep in parks, or squat in derelict buildings or other improvised shelters.

Reducing homelessness and rough sleeping is a key priority for the City of Melbourne. We lead a multifaceted approach that addresses the complex drivers of homelessness, while providing services and support for people in need. Our long-term goal is that safe and sustainable housing is provided for every person who is experiencing homelessness in Melbourne.

City of Melbourne supports the Housing First approach which focuses on safe and permanent housing as the first priority for people experiencing homelessness. We are currently partnering with health and homelessness services, the Victorian Government and the corporate and philanthropic sectors to create pathways out of homelessness into secure housing. However, despite all our work over the past ten years, the lack of affordable housing in the city debilitates our efforts to get people into long-term, safe and secure housing.

The Victorian Government has established short term housing and homelessness strategies. However the impact of these plans is severely limited by the significant shortfall in funding allocated and the lack of a comprehensive Australian Government housing and homelessness strategy. Long-term Australian and Victorian housing strategies are urgently required, with dedicated resources that address the shortage of social and affordable housing for people who have experienced long-term homelessness or are on low and very low incomes.

When someone is homeless, sleeping rough and just trying to survive each day, it is almost impossible for them to navigate their way through the complex administrative processes of the housing, welfare and health systems to get help. Many people at risk of homelessness also fall through the gaps in the service system; do not receive the help they need and end up on the streets.

An integrated service system is needed across local, Victorian and Australian Government departments. The departments of housing, health, human services, education, justice and Centrelink services need to work collaboratively to improve housing outcomes for individuals interacting with various aspects of the system.

Early intervention and access to sustainable housing is also crucially important to prevent exit into homelessness from out of home care and the justice, health and mental health systems.

Without urgent action to create more social and affordable housing and improve government coordination across the service system, responding to the complex needs of the city’s most vulnerable residents will remain a key unsolved issue.

# The changing nature and scale of homelessness in the municipality of Melbourne

The City of Melbourne monitors homelessness in the municipality through the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census, the biennial StreetCount and through funding housing and homelessness programs.

Homelessness is changing in the following ways:

1. **Homelessness is increasing in our city**

In the 2016 Australian Census, a total of 1725 people were recorded as homeless in our municipality. This number nearly doubled in just five years, up from 926 in the 2011 census. This includes people sleeping rough on the streets, in derelict buildings, cars, 'couch surfing', staying in crisis accommodation or living in boarding or rooming houses. The scale of rough sleeping in our city has been steadily increasing and is symptomatic of issues in the broader system.

Homelessness is more visible in our city than ever before. Over the last two years, city users have observed greater numbers of people sleeping rough on our streets with notifications to the Council increasing each month. The number of general enquiries about homelessness has also increased significantly.

1. **More people are sleeping rough in the city**

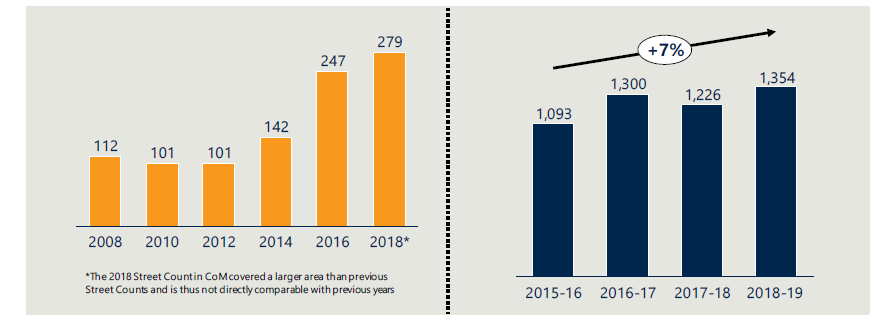
Every two years since 2008, the City of Melbourne has undertaken the StreetCount ‘point in time’ survey to collect information about people sleeping rough within the city’s parks, on streets and in other locations. This information allows us to measure how many people are sleeping rough in our municipality and to work with the Victorian Government and partners to ensure appropriate support is offered.

Up until 2016, StreetCount covered 20 per cent of the municipality. In 2018, StreetCount was expanded to include the whole municipality. In 2008 the StreetCount recorded 112 people sleeping rough. This increased to 279 in 2018 (see Figure 1 below).

Many people sleeping rough in the city have been homeless for a long time. The 2018 StreetCount found that nearly one fifth of people sleeping rough had stayed in their current location for more than one year.

StreetCount data suggests that there is an opportunity to intervene earlier to prevent rough sleeping. This includes offering appropriate housing, integrating system responses and providing a better safety net for people at risk of becoming homeless.

*Figure 1: StreetCount data (left) and people presenting to a homelessness agency in the municipality of Melbourne*



1. **Homelessness is also increasing in other capital cities**

Almost two thirds of people experiencing homelessness in Australia are in capital cities and the numbers are rapidly increasing. In the five years between 2011 and 2016, homelessness increased by 88 per cent in Brisbane; 86 per cent in Melbourne and 68 per cent in Sydney (Council of Capital City Lord Mayors and ABS census data).

Research suggests that people sleeping rough and unable to resolve their homelessness gravitate to central Melbourne over time from suburban and non-metropolitan locations. Data from the City of Melbourne-funded Night Time Safe Space Program supports this research. People attending the program have identified as coming from mostly inner and outer suburbs of Melbourne and also some regional areas.

1. **The lack of both appropriate long-term housing and an integrated government service system hampers efforts to help people experiencing homelessness**
   * The Service Coordination Project funded by the City of Melbourne and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)has been established to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable and disengaged people sleeping rough in Melbourne’s CBD. Fourteen cross sector agencies are involved in planning and implementing integrated services and undertaking systems-level advocacy to improve housing and health outcomes for people sleeping rough.

* While the project has enabled consistent, collaborative service coordination, policy and practice gaps have limited the outcomes that can be achieved. The project has identified a lack of coordination between departments of justice, health and sector partners leading to ‘losing people within the system’. For example 81 per cent of referrals to service coordination contained concerns regarding mental health presentation. Many referrals were for people with complex behavioral or personality-based disorders, problematic alcohol or other drug (AOD) use, brain injuries, other psychosocial disabilities or a combination of these things. Despite this figure, a large number of these people did not meet criteria for psychiatric service intervention.
* The exit points for health services, hospitals, justice service centres and the child protection system are all stages at which people become homeless. These discharge points must include dedicated housing and service coordination programs to ensure that people are assisted to access housing and supports as part of their return to the community.
* The lack of appropriate housing in relation to type and location are also key barriers to achieving long term outcomes. Considerable international and Australian research demonstrates that even highly vulnerable people with extended periods of sleeping rough can sustain exits from homelessness if they have appropriate housing and wrap-around services, this model being Housing First.
* Frontyard Youth Servicesprovides integrated services in Melbourne’s CBD to address the physical, social, emotional and housing needs of young people aged between 12 and 25 years who are at risk of or are experiencing homelessness. The trends that bring young people to Frontyard continue to remain consistent. Family breakdown and violence continues to be a strong theme for young people presenting to Frontyard. More than half (63.8 per cent) of young women and 40.27 per cent of young men presenting to Frontyard reported experiencing family violence.
* Many young people accessing Frontyard have also fallen through the cracks of the other systems designed to help them or have exhausted supports with other housing services. Frontyard continues to receive referrals from hospitals, Centrelink, Victoria Police, schools, mental health inpatient units, hospitals, other youth services.

# Social, economic and policy factors

Homelessness can affect anyone at any point in their lives. It can occur when people experience a sudden crisis such as job loss, bereavement, or family violence, or to those who may have struggled with disadvantage all of their lives.

## Social impacts

**Family violence** is the major reason that women and children seek assistance from homelessness services in Australia. Of the 102 women who participated in the City of Melbourne’s Women’s Homelessness Prevention Project, 90 per cent had experienced family violence in the past ten years and 84 per cent reported a mental illness, with anxiety and depression being the most common.

**Mental ill health** is one of the most common factors for people engaged in homelessness services supported by the City of Melbourne. The Daily Support Team program is a partnership between the City of Melbourne and Launch Housing and has been in operation for almost three years. The team works every day with people sleeping rough in the city and helps them find permanent pathways out of homelessness. Initially, the team engaged a specialist youth worker; however in 2018 this role was replaced with a mental health specialist. This was because people with mental ill health were far more prevalent in the population of people sleeping rough in the CBD than young people.

According to the National Mental Health Commission, housing, homelessness and mental health are all connected. In 2018, the Commission collaborated with the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) to release a report that demonstrated that having a secure home allows people with mental illness to focus on treatment and rehabilitation.

**People’s exposure to and experience of trauma** is increasingly recognised as a contributing factor to homelessness. Due to the impact and complexity of trauma, services often do not have the resources, knowledge or skills to respond appropriately to individuals who have experienced trauma. Trauma is also often experienced during homelessness by events where a person is often a victim or witness. Unfortunately, services can re-traumatise a person when not appropriately equipped to support that individual. More training is needed for specialist services staff so they can better respond to people with complex needs and trauma.

**The need for tailored housing solutions is highlighted by the number of people who continue to cycle from housing back onto the street**. People who have been sleeping rough for a long time usually have multiple and complex needs and require specialist housing stock. They identify a narrow range of areas and types of housing in which they would like to live, based on safety, experience of trauma, connections to community, mental health and history of bad experiences.

Some people in this cohort do not want to live with other people who share the same issues. Being in an environment where conflict is common puts people in a heightened state and compromises their mental well being. This group often needs scattered site housing, with a relatively low intensity of other vulnerable tenants, and with outreach support. Other people who have experienced long-term homelessness prefer self-contained units in a single site. This option includes permanent onsite support services and can provide a sense of community. This aspect of housing allocation needs to be better understood at both the Victorian and Australian Government level.

Research shows that **use of alcohol and other drugs contributes to homelessness, with the reverse also true** –the longer a person is homeless, the more likely they are to use drugs or consume alcohol at risky levels (*Journeys Home: A Longitudinal Study of Factors Affecting Housing Stability* report by the Melbourne Institute)**.**

## Economic impacts

In 2018 the Australian Council of Social Services *Social Poverty in Australia Report* indicated that a number of social security payments fell significantly below the poverty line. **Poverty** is closely linked to homelessness as people try to prioritise essential living costs such as shelter, food and medication.

There has been a significant increase in the number of people receiving the Newstart Allowance over the last decade. This is partly due to tightened eligibility for the Disability Support Pension.

The Daily Support Team report suggests the majority of people they see are receiving the Newstart Allowance or the Disability Support Pension. A small percentage of men and women identified as having no income.

The Productivity Commission’s most recent report identified that in 2015–16 more than fifty percent of **low-income rental households in Melbourne were reported to be in rental stress.** This increased from 37.3 per cent in 2007–08.

The latest Anglicare Australian Rental Affordability Snapshot: *“…found no properties in any capital city were affordable for a single person on Newstart or a Youth Allowance. In fact, there were only two properties across the entire country that were affordable for people on these payments”* (2019, p.4).

The City of Melbourne commissioned SGS Economics and Planning to undertake a Housing Needs Analysis in 2019. This analysed current and future demand for affordable rental housing in the municipality of Melbourne, inner Melbourne and metropolitan Melbourne. There is currently demand for at least 9450 affordable housing units in the municipality of Melbourne. Accounting for the current supply of approximately 3950 social and affordable housing units, **there is a shortfall of at least 5500 housing units.**

If there is no addition to the municipality’s social and affordable housing stock, it is estimated that this shortfall will increase to 23,200 social and affordable units by 2036.

The lack of affordable housing and the stressed rental market has led to an increase in registered rooming houses as well as inappropriate and exploitative – often unregistered – rooming houses. Individuals in rooming houses have limited and insecure tenure, limited access to social space, shared kitchens and bathrooms and often experience discriminatory tenancy practices and high rents.

The lack of crisis accommodation has also driven the increase in private accommodation such as rooming houses. In Victoria there are only 423 government funded crisis beds with demand far exceeding supply (Turton, P. 2019). This often forces homelessness services to refer people sleeping rough to private rooming houses and low-end hotels which can be of poor quality and unsafe.

## Policy impacts

In 2017, the Victorian Government released *Homes for Victorians* which included the Social Housing Growth Fund. This is expected to generate new housing, some of which could be provided in the municipality of Melbourne.

The municipality of Melbourne is anticipated to account for 9 per cent of projected population growth in Victoria to 2036. If the city attracted a proportional share of the funding enabled by the Social Housing Growth Fund, this would provide just 250 dwellings over a 20-year period. This is way below the 5500 units that are required right now.

The Victorian Government’s Public Housing Renewal Program is promising to deliver additional social and affordable dwellings as well as the renewal of existing social housing stock. The government is currently redeveloping the North Melbourne public housing estate with MAB Corporation and community housing provider Housing First. The existing 112 public housing dwellings will be replaced with a mix of social, private and affordable housing with an increase of 10 per cent public housing dwellings on the site. It is not known when this will be completed.

The Victorian Government’s Towards Home properties provided some relief, however there are 82,000 people currently on the Victorian Housing register. The Victorian and Australian Governments have a responsibility to invest in social and affordable housing for individuals and families on the lowest income level to address this housing shortage. This requires a detailed, joint action plan outlining how and when these housing units will be funded and delivered over the next ten to twenty years.

# Policies and practices from all levels of government

To effectively address the housing and homelessness crisis, all levels of government, the corporate, private and philanthropic sectors and community housing providers need to work in partnership. This will ensure that policy, funding, programs, services and governance have the capacity to deliver the housing needed.

A suite of measures at all levels of government are required to address the housing crisis. This should include direct investment, financial incentives such as tax concessions and subsidies and governance arrangements that are holistic across the housing spectrum.

*This section identifies the policies and practices from all levels of government that have a bearing on delivering services to people experiencing homelessness.*

## Australian Government

* A National Housing and Homelessness Strategy is urgently needed that encompasses social and affordable housing with permanent support services. In 2008 the Australian Government launched an ambitious plan to halve homelessness by 2020; however this plan has been abandoned by successive governments. As a result, the country’s homelessness figures are increasing and housing is becoming less affordable. Capital city governments like the City of Melbourne are left to deal with the crisis without adequate support mechanisms.
* A National Housing First approach is essential. Housing First is a strategic response to homelessness that prioritises permanent and stable housing for people experiencing homelessness. Once housing is secured, a team of support workers can address complex needs through services like drug and alcohol counselling or mental health treatment. An individual’s engagement with these support services is not conditional on them maintaining accommodation. This is different to other models of support that can require people to abstain from alcohol or drugs or comply with mental health programs to qualify for housing. Housing First began in the United States in the 1990s, and [its success](https://www.ahuri.edu.au/policy/ahuri-briefs/what-is-the-housing-first-model) has led to it being taken up in the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, Ireland, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Canada, and New Zealand.
* Changes are required to our current welfare system to better support individuals and families on the lowest income levels. Changes of eligibility and access to Centrelink payments over the past five years, coupled with inadequate indexation of welfare payments, is pushing our lowest income earners into poverty and amplifying the challenges of maintaining housing. There is evidence that these factors and the impact of the RoboDebt scheme have resulted in an increase in people becoming homeless.
* Further Australian Government investment is urgently required to develop comprehensive policy and funding that prioritises preventative and early intervention. This must be done in partnership with state and local governments and include an integrated service response across government departments.
* The Victorian and Australian departments of housing, health, human services, education and justice and Centrelink services need to collaborate to stop people at risk of homelessness from falling through the gaps in the service system. This is especially crucial for individuals who require institutional care and support and people who are exiting from hospitals and correctional facilities.

## Victorian Government

* The City of Melbourne has formed strong partnerships with the Victorian Government’s Department of Housing and Department of Health and Human Services in building pathways out of homelessness. We commend the government’s recent investment in initiatives such as the Green Light project which provides support to people transitioning from homelessness to housing.
* However the lack of appropriate and affordable housing is a significant impediment to the success of many projects. The City of Melbourne calls on the Victorian Government to significantly increase the supply of social (public) housing linked with housing support programs. There are 82,000 people on the Victorian Housing register. Without a strong and effective commitment to provision of housing, support programs will have very little impact. A key part of this will be to build different types of housing, including affordable rental housing.
* Providing a variety of housing options under a Housing First approach is critical to meeting the needs of different cohorts and ensuring they remain in housing long term. People who sleep rough for a short time due to a sudden crisis in their housing situation or income have vastly different housing needs than people who are entrenched in rough sleeping. People who have been sleeping rough for an extended time and have experienced deep trauma and violence often need scattered site housing, with a relatively low intensity of other vulnerable tenants, and with outreach support. Other people who have experienced long-term homelessness prefer self-contained units in a single site. This option includes permanent onsite support services and can provide a sense of community.
* The City of Melbourne recommends mandatory inclusionary zoning requirements be applied across Victoria with an option to provide cash in lieu of contribution where direct provision of affordable housing is not appropriate.
* It is important that modelling is used to determine appropriate percentages to be applied in different locations. Inclusionary zoning is an important part of the solution however it cannot solve affordable housing problems independent of other government interventions.
* Local governments should be given the ability to approve developments at higher levels than the state-wide minimum in strategic locations. This would enable significant uplift in affordable housing in appropriate areas. If these development sites are carefully managed with developer contributions and inclusionary zoning requirements, a consistent supply of affordable housing could be generated. In addition, we recommend that modelling of the potential for inclusionary zoning is also applied to commercial development. This would enable additional financial contributions for affordable housing.

## Local government

All levels of government have a responsibility to work together in responding to the homelessness crisis. The City of Melbourne has been working to address homelessness for the past twenty years. In 2019–20, we are spending over $1.8 million to build on our response to homelessness. This amount has been increasing annually to match the significant jump in the number of people sleeping rough. See Appendix one for the range of initiatives we are implementing to resource pathways out of homelessness. Unless social and affordable housing becomes available the number of people sleeping rough will continue to increase.

# Recommendations

## Housing First

* 1. Fast track the creation of new and additional public (social) housing on unused or underutilised public land under the *Homes for Victorians Strategy* and link housing with support programs.
  2. Provide a variety of housing options to meet the differing needs of individuals experiencing homelessness. This includes creating specialist, long-term housing stock with onsite support services for people sleeping rough who have multiple and complex needs. Tailored housing will ensure that people successfully remain off the streets and in safe accommodation.
  3. Partner with local government to repurpose vacant buildings to provide appropriate transitional accommodation and essential support services for people experiencing homelessness and sleeping rough.
  4. Implement mandatory inclusionary zoning requirements across Victoria, and apply to multiple land use types including residential, commercial and industrial land. Allow funding in lieu of contribution where direct provision of affordable housing is not appropriate.

## Support services

* 1. Increase cross-government coordination to improve support service and housing outcomes to prevent people from falling through gaps in the system.
     1. Create a shared database where funded services and departments can share information on individuals to support best outcomes – commonly known as a By Name list.
  2. Introduce a co-funded, needs-based service by municipality, specifically focussed on working with people sleeping rough who have multiple complex needs (City of Melbourne Service Coordination project is an effective and collaborative response to dealing with individuals with extreme complexities.)
  3. Increase comprehensive funding to support:
     1. An increase in services for people of Aboriginal background who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness.
     2. Early intervention and preventative programs specifically targeted to mental health, drug and alcohol use and family violence.
     3. Services for people with ongoing and recurrent mental health conditions and acquired brain injury, who have experienced or are at risk of homelessness.
     4. Transition plans for people exiting institutions including hospitals and correctional facilities. This should include structured exit plans for individuals to be provided housing with tailored support services.
     5. Professional development and training for community sector workers. This will equip specialist services staff with increased knowledge and skills to respond to multiple and complex needs and trauma.
  4. Undertake a review into the DHHS housing eviction processes.
  5. Design an outcomes framework to measure the impact of the government’s work to reduce homelessness.

## Advocacy

Advocate to the Australian Government for:

* 1. A long-term (20-50 year) National Housing and Homelessness Strategy that encompasses social and affordable housing with permanent support services and increased service funding that prioritises prevention and early intervention.
  2. Welfare system reforms including:
  + A review of the Commonwealth Rent Assistance Scheme to ensure it doesn’t contribute to housing stress and homelessness.
  + Reform of Centrelink practices and adequate indexation of welfare payments to better support individuals and families on the lowest income levels.
  + Provision of relevant and timely support to for people experiencing homelessness to help them apply for the NDIS.

# Appendix – City of Melbourne response to homelessness

**Notification of Rough Sleeping**

* Reports of specific individuals who are homeless or begging
* Reports of specific addresses/location of homelessness or begging
* Businesses with homelessness issues
* Homeless persons seeking assistance
* Reports of accumulated belongings

The City of Melbourne has invested in a range of initiatives to support individuals experiencing homelessness in our city and to resource pathways out of homelessness.

| City of Melbourne initiatives |
| --- |
| Daily Support Team  The team works every day with people sleeping rough in the city, and helps them find permanent pathways out of homelessness. The team refers people to support services including providing coordinated housing, support services and health intervention for Melbourne’s most vulnerable rough sleepers  We are the first council in Victoria to have an in-house assertive outreach team to help rough sleepers. The team includes four full-time expert staff and works every day with people sleeping rough in the city, helping them find permanent pathways out of homelessness. This program is a partnership between Launch Housing and the City of Melbourne. |
| Extreme weather program  Notification out to services when extreme weather events are forecast. During extreme heat the City of Melbourne provides swim passes, movie passes and drink bottles to service providers for people experiencing homelessness in the municipality. |
| Frontyard Youth Services  Frontyard provides integrated services in Melbourne’s CBD to address the physical, social, emotional and housing needs of young people aged between 12 and 25 years who are at risk of or are experiencing homelessness. It is funded by the City of Melbourne. |
| Helping Out booklet  We update and distribute the Helping Out booklet each year. It provides a comprehensive list of free and low-cost services available from organisations in the central city and surrounding suburbs. The booklet and map include information about food, accommodation, health services, drug and alcohol services, services for women and legal advice from more than 70 organisations throughout the city. |
| Homelessness Advisory Committee  A 10-person Homelessness Advisory Committee helps Council to develop, implement and evaluate its initiatives. Half of the Committee’s members have a lived experience of homelessness. The Committee contributed to the recommendations in this Parliamentary Submission. |
| Housing  Over the last decade the City of Melbourne has worked with organisations such as Launch Housing to establish [Elizabeth Street Common Ground](https://www.launchhousing.org.au/service/elizabeth-street-common-ground/). Common Ground provides permanent, affordable, high-quality housing to 65 people with complex needs who have been chronically homeless, many for more than 10 years. An additional 66 apartments exist for low income workers and students. In 2001 we transferred our ownership of the Drill Hall building in Victoria Street, Melbourne, to Housing Choices Australia. This allowed 59 housing units to be built for low-income, vulnerable and marginalised people. The City of Melbourne supports the [Housing First](http://chp.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/FINAL-180606-Housing-First-2018-6-June.pdf) approach. We know that getting people into permanent housing with accompanying support services is the best way to reduce homelessness. |
| Hotspots  This is a weekly forum for the City of Melbourne and key partners to monitor locations identified as hotspots for rough sleeping across the municipality. The committee collaborates to share responsibility and coordination for supporting pathways out of homelessness and addressing issues of public safety and amenity. |
| Innovative solutions and training  We support innovative programs including [HomeGround Real Estate](https://www.homegroundrealestate.com.au/) – a not-for-profit real estate agency working to reduce homelessness, and [Connect Respect](https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/health-support-services/social-support/pages/connect-respect.aspx) – providing training to businesses and organisations on how to connect with and support people experiencing homelessness. |
| Libraries Social Support Worker  Libraries are among the last few public indoor spaces where people who are homeless or vulnerable can seek shelter, access technology and use resources. The Library Social Worker works proactively with library visitors as well as providing additional training and support to staff to help to respond appropriately to people who may require extra assistance. The Library Social Worker works alongside the City of Melbourne's Daily Support Team. |
| Night Time Safe Spaces  The Night Time Safe Space is open 11pm to 7am, 364 nights each year. This program provides a welcoming safe and inclusive space for men and women experiencing homelessness in the municipality. It is funded by the City of Melbourne. |
| Ongoing programs  We fund and partner with a range of organisations that support people at risk of homelessness, or people who are currently experiencing homelessness. Programs we fund include:   * cohealth – [Central City Community Health Service](https://www.cohealth.org.au/locations/central-city-2/) * cohealth – [Café Meals](https://www.cohealth.org.au/health-services/homelessness-support/homeless-allied-health/) * cohealth – [Rooming House program](https://www.cohealth.org.au/health-services/homelessness-support/homeless-support-services/) * cohealth – [Sleeping Rough Harm Minimisation, Women Against Homelessness and Connecting and Reconnecting Through the Senses](https://www.cohealth.org.au/news/cohealth-receives-pathways-innovation-fund-for-homelessness-projects/) * Inner Melbourne Community Legal – [community legal education and advice​](https://imcl.org.au/our-services/community-partnerships/ozanam-community-centre-north-melbourne-community-partnership) * Inner Melbourne Community Legal – [Youth Advocates against Family Violence​program](https://imcl.org.au/our-services/community-legal-education/youth-advocates-against-family-violence-program) in schools and community based organisations. * Justice Connect – [Women’s Homelessness Prevention Project](https://justiceconnect.org.au/how-we-help/homeless-law/womens-homelessness-prevention-project/) * Launch Housing – [HomeGround Real Estate](https://www.homegroundrealestate.com.au/) * Many Rooms Inc – Community meals at The Kitchen in the [central city on a Friday night](https://manyrooms.org.au/room/kitchen-meals-services/) and [Saturday in North Melbourne](https://manyrooms.org.au/room/saturday-kitchen/) * Pets of the Homeless – [Pet Foster Care Program](https://petsofthehomeless.org.au/) * Women’s Information and Referral Exchange (WIRE) – [AMICA lunch program](https://www.wire.org.au/amica-lunch-and-activities-program-2/) |
| Service Coordination Project  This project brings together representatives from 14 agencies who work with people sleeping rough in the central city. The program streamlines services for rough sleepers, linking people to suitable support and ultimately aiming to get them off the streets and into permanent housing.​ It is made up of specialist workers from a variety of services who work directly with people experiencing homelessness. The support these services offer include: housing, health, mental health specialists, alcohol and other drugs, youth specific and other relevant support programs. |

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