

## OPERATING PROTOCOL / POLICY OPERATING STATEMENT

Adopted by:



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**Chief Executive Officer**  
**City of Melbourne**



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**Chief Commissioner**  
**Victoria Police**

### Introduction

These protocols set out operating practice agreed and trialled by City of Melbourne and Victoria Police following ongoing engagement with the homeless sector service providers.

City of Melbourne (CoM), Victoria Police (VicPol), Department of Health and Human Services, and the homeless sector will partner to create an environment:

- That feels safe, friendly and accessible for the 900,000 people who daily live, work, study or socialise in the city
- Where people who are homeless are connected to the services and support that they individually request or require and their welfare is protected

By partnering we will ensure a stronger and more immediate approach to impacts on the amenity, enjoyment and use of the public space.

The key themes of the new operating protocols are:

- stronger connection and partnerships with service providers
- earlier intervention by CoM with support from VicPol
- more assertive actions by CoM and as required by VicPol
- lower tolerance of street clutter and amenity impacts
- a high level of consistency in application of the Local Law.

The parties commit to regularly reviewing the operation and effectiveness of the protocols in consultation with homeless sector.

### Protocols

1. CoM will ensure rough sleepers are connected with appropriate services:
  - a. to commence the pathway to housing
  - b. to address drivers of homelessness which may include being a victim of family Violence, alcohol addiction, drug addiction or poor mental health.
2. Belongings should be kept to a reasonable minimum, being two bags which can be carried and other bedding like a sleeping bag, blanket or pillow.

3. Belongings not to be kept in the public space are mattresses, furniture, tents or any other structure that could be deemed as camping.
4. Items left unattended which impact on the amenity, enjoyment and use of the public space or that create a potential security risk will be removed with personal items stored and the remainder disposed of.
5. In general, groups of people sleeping rough in close proximity will be strongly discouraged due to the heightened amenity impacts and the risks to welfare for the individuals involved.
6. Behaviour in the public space should not impact the enjoyment of other users of the public place.
7. Unacceptable behaviour such as using drug paraphernalia, blocking the thoroughfare, intimidation or unruly activity which impacts on others' enjoyment of the public space is not permissible.
8. Entrances to businesses and residences must not be blocked and customers are to be free to enter and exit all buildings when open.
9. Fire escape doorways are not to be blocked at any time.
10. Access for people with a disability must not be impeded.

### **Relevant Operational Processes**

- CoM now has a dedicated Daily Support Team delivered by Launch Housing. The team delivers daily engagement with and provides support to people sleeping rough. The team is not involved in addressing non compliance matters.
- CoM will continue to work with the homeless sector to find appropriate storage solutions for people sleeping rough.
- VicPol Officers will not be authorised under Council's Activities Local Law, rather they will support CoM Authorised Officers if and when a safety risk is perceived.
- Authorised Officers, VicPol and the homeless sector (including the daily support team) work together daily to address immediate issues.
- The group, consisting of City of Melbourne (CoM), Victoria Police (VicPol), Department of Health and Human Services, and the homeless sector will meet weekly to ensure the appropriate and timely level of support and services are provided to the rough sleepers and that there is a balanced approach to support, compliance and enforcement.

- CoM has recruited 4 additional local law officers with the requisite skills and will upskill other Authorised Officers to deal with the complex issues relating to rough sleeping and ensure that those officers have appropriate and ongoing training.
- CoM will continue to undertake occupational health and safety assessments in considering all proposed actions.

## Scenario Examples

- A. A small number (up to 4) of rough sleepers set up during the evening/night with their two bags and other bedding (like a sleeping bag, blanket or pillow), and sleep parallel alongside the shop fronts without blocking the doorways. When each individual leaves the area they take their belongings.
  - a. CoM has no issue.
- B. A small number (up to 4) of rough sleepers set up during the day with their two bags and other bedding (like a sleeping bag, blanket or pillow), and sleep parallel alongside the shop fronts without blocking the doorways. When each individual leaves the area they take their belongings.
  - a. CoM will monitor for breaches of the Protocol.
- C. A group of rough sleepers set up in one city block during the day which intimidates the other uses of the public space and impacts amenity.
  - a. CoM will use its power under the Activities Local Law regarding behaviour (part 2), specifically nuisance (clause 2.1a) and amenity (clause 2.1b) to take action and will call upon VicPol to intervene if safety risk is perceived.
- D. A camp is established which includes tents, furniture and bikes impacting the enjoyment and amenity of the public space for other users.
  - a. CoM will use its power under the Activities Local Law regarding behaviour (part 2), specifically nuisance (clause 2.1a), amenity (clause 2.1b) and camping (clause 2.8) to take action and will call upon VicPol to intervene if safety risk is perceived.
- E. An individual is consuming an illegal drug and or is behaving aggressively in public, impacting the enjoyment and amenity of the public space for other users.
  - a. CoM will ensure that VicPol is informed if criminal behaviour is present and/or a safety risk is perceived.