

City of Mandurah Submission 24th May 2109

WA Department of Communities: Directions Paper for the 10 year Strategy on Homelessness

Section 1: City of Mandurah's Homelessness and Street Presence Priority Actions

Mandurah's transformation from a small coastal town to a thriving regional City of 85,000 population has led to an increase in some social issues. In central Mandurah this includes a noticeable street presence of vulnerable people, with related general vagrancy around the City Centre in part linked to a probable increase in homelessness.

The City of Mandurah welcomes the opportunity to comment on the directions paper but notes that there is no additional funding linked to the key priorities identified. To have a significant impact on homelessness clear funding pathways are necessary. At a local level ABS 2016 data indicates somewhere around 170 homelessness sleeping rough. Local data as recent as March 2019 suggests up to 70 people are street present at any one time in and around Mandurah's central areas.

The City is focused on improving the City Centre and indeed more broadly across Mandurah, through activation, business development, improved infrastructure and improvements in safety and security. In seeking to improve safety and security, the City and WA Police recognise that there are some people within the City Centre who are in need of support across a range of issues include inadequate housing, mental health issues and addiction. There is a deficiency in Mandurah of outreach services for these people. In trying to resolve criminal and antisocial issues, it is clear an enforcement alone approach will not be successful.

In addition, central to the City's approach to homelessness, is the aim to strengthen the system of support services to be able to effectively respond to homelessness, which could include the creation of social support services hubs. The City through its Homelessness and Street Present Network Group and via regular and ongoing discussions in the community has engaged with over 25 community sector and community organisations, including Government and Non-Government who support vulnerable communities. There has been strong support for a more strategic approach to this issue in Mandurah, improving outreach services and developing a more joined up approach to broadly improve support to people in need.

The two key priorities for the City with regard to addressing Homelessness are to **1) continue to support the sector driven strategic planning approach, informed by the state and federal strategic context and tailored to a local setting and 2) to develop a community support hub in the Mandurah Library precinct whereby complementary services are co-located to maximise a 'holistic', 'client centred' response to people in need.**

Homelessness and Street Present Network

The Homelessness and Street Present Network is comprised of over 80 members from over 25 organisations and has established its core function as being:

"Broadly on legitimately homeless people who are unable to find a regular roof over their heads; especially youth who may be intermittently homeless, however also street present people and negative behaviours especially in the City Centre. Creating a collaborative overarching framework for the group to add communication and resource delivery, with a clear focus on the client."

As a result of the ongoing work of the network, during February and March 2019 the group reached a consensus on a working group model to progress a multi-pronged approach to ending Homelessness. Central to the working group model is the formation of a 'Project Team' comprised of those services who are funded to provide homelessness services.

The project team will drive the development of a homelessness project for Mandurah based on the 'no wrong door', 'client centred' approach. The project team will further investigate the range of service planning and development approaches.

Supporting the project team are working groups established around key focus areas for the City and informed by WA Alliance to End Homelessness 10 year Strategy 2018 and the WA Government Directions Paper for the 10 year Strategy on Homelessness. Five working groups have been established which will connect with and support the project team of core homelessness services.

Figure 1. Homelessness and Street Present Working Group Model



Project	Key Activities e.g.
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing first, barrier removal • Investigations of live housing stock in Peel • Pathways to permanent housing
Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective impact model investigation • Partnerships on Food Relief Framework • Data and research • Forums and professional development opportunities such as "Bridges out of Poverty"
Safety and Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently reporting on community trends and issues • Negative Behaviours Strategy Management • Implementation of Local Laws • Public Health Act, development and alignments being identified
Support Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals • Person centred pathways

Facilities Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating co-location of services and feasibility of approaches.
Core Project Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination and delivery of support services • Network directions • Collective impact • Co-design

Community Support Hub

In 2013 the City endorsed the Social Infrastructure Plan (SIPS) 2013-2043 and supported some future community capital project concepts, which included a basic concept plan for a potential community support hub model 'likely externally delivered'. In 2017 following revised need, the City undertook a four (4) year review of the SIPS and Council recommended the community support hub become a priority project in Mandurah, still potentially externally delivered. During the last 12 months the need for a community hub model that supports the area best described broadly as central Mandurah, has become more apparent.

To this end the City is currently negotiating with a number of service providers who directly support homeless and street present groups to establish a 'Community Support Hub' of co-located services in the Mandurah Library precinct 331 Pinjarra Road Mandurah.

Section 2 City of Mandurah Response to Feedback Questions

1. What is the best way to provide advice to government on emerging issues and trends on homelessness over the life of the strategy?

The Department could consider undertaking an annual review of demographic data and trends in homelessness using individual data across the state inviting regions to give comments on trends they notice in writing.

Then bi-annually have stakeholder engagement session that:

- Gives the overview of data trends for stakeholders
 - reviews what's working in different areas
 - highlights collaboration successes
- a. A clear communication channel documented in the strategy and resourced by the department i.e. homelessness project officer
 - b. A number of peak body groups exist i.e. WA Shelter, Homelessness Alliance, LG Homelessness Network and Supporting Communities Forum homelessness working group. The role and function of these groups should be clearly defined in the strategy with clear pathway of how information should flow through the system. Local governments hold rich and localised data. An opportunity exists to develop and share the data to inform LG approaches.
 - c. Local government via its community service networks seeks to provide information to the Department of Communities in relation to service mapping, service delivery gaps and community needs and in particular providing comment in relation to specialist services.

2. How can the Strategy help stakeholders and services in your area to collaborate and work together?

- a. Provide incentives for organisations to collaborate i.e. grants to support sector led initiatives
- b. Mandate through funding arrangements where agencies have to demonstrate their involvement in local collaborative initiatives
- c. Ask local areas who have identified issues to collaborate and report back annually on collaborative initiatives and perceptions of outcomes – give them a date to report to.
- d. Consider capacity building approaches to increase sector collaboration by collating and reporting on latest data and benchmarking against national and international approaches to homelessness.
- e. Challenges exist in collaborating and connecting across several other state strategies including health, justice, housing, Alcohol and other Drugs (AoD), education and mental health. This issue relates to the 'Systems Transformation' focus area and ensuring hard measures are in place to ensure a joined up approach is critical to reduce silos. The strategy should identify the roles and responsibilities of each key department.

3. How can the Strategy support better data collection on outcomes for individuals?

- a. Better tracking of individuals throughout the system so they can be supported better. Making data collection person centred and inclusive of lived experience.
- b. Get consent from individuals for multiple agencies to have access to their data – so they aren't having to do this over and over again and it will support an integrated data management system
- c. The NAHA reporting and data collection system SHIP / SHOR is an example of a data collection and reporting software. Could this software be further developed and expanded across the homelessness sector or a similar program developed?
- d. Understanding and consensus on 'what' data is needed and how data is collected

4. Are these the vision, principles and focus areas that you would like to see in the Strategy?

- a. Yes – excellent, comprehensive as an umbrella strategy, however, there needs to be greater focus on **funding the homelessness sector**. Funding is needed to support Homelessness Peak bodies to drive existing strategies i.e. Alliance to End Homelessness - Strategy to End Homelessness, prevention and early intervention strategies with a proven track record, ongoing funding for research to measure the effectiveness of homelessness funding across the state. Continue to forge partnership with University of Western Australia Centre for Social Impact to continue research in this space.
- b. There could be a greater focus on education and targeting a range of groups including services, general community, volunteers and business and awareness campaigns to reduce stigmatisation of people who are experiencing homelessness and increase perceptions of safety.
- c. Inclusion of other target groups of the strategy including local business

- d. Could be greater focus on 'Regional Centre's' where there isn't the level of services to cater for rapidly growing issue
- e. While each community is unique in the issues they face the strategy could place greater recognition of key business and tourism centres such as Mandurah where there is a concentration of homelessness issues. These centres attract many homeless people from outside the local area further exacerbating local issues. It is widely known homeless people are transient and therefore greater emphasis for resources could be focussed at the key locations homeless people are accessing i.e. two ends of the train line Joondalup and Mandurah.

5. What actions would you like implemented as a priority under each focus area in the Strategy?

- a. Establish data collection framework that is respectful of individuals, consistent across sector and simple to use. The sector needs something like the AECD framework to measure homelessness.
- b. Change the model of existing housing to be lower threshold as there are examples where there are beds available but not being used – The **Functional Zero** Case Study in Adelaide is a good example of how housing stock can be maximised. Support similar initiatives with funding and provision of detailed case studies and workshops on best practice examples.
- c. There is significant stigma attached to homelessness and misunderstanding of homelessness risk factors and the cohort's impacts – more investment needed in awareness campaigns and promotion of key messages.
- d. There is significant untapped resources in local communities such as volunteers and other community groups who don't form part of the homelessness sector yet play a big role in prevention. A strengths based approach to identifying these local resource is critical. What does the community have to offer towards solving this issue?
- e. Training and support for employees of LGAs, resources and structures to respond at all levels

6. Are there any cohorts missing?

- a. People experiencing mental health issues
- b. People experiencing alcohol and other drugs addiction issues
- c. Young people who have been in care
- d. Greater focus on children in the education systems when fleeing domestic violence