

**Submission  
No 16**

## **INQUIRY INTO THE PROTOCOL FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE IN PUBLIC PLACES**

**Organisation:** Liverpool City Council

**Date Received:** 28 February 2020

Ms Wendy Lindsay MP  
The Chair  
Committee on Community Services  
Parliament House, Macquarie Street  
**SYDNEY NSW 2000**

Dear MS Lindsay,

**Re: Inquiry into the Protocol for Homeless People in Public Places**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments to the Inquiry into the Protocol for Homeless People in Public Places. The following are responses relating to the following terms of reference:

- a) Whether the Protocol continues to provide an effective framework for government organisations with an operational presence in public places and for services that support people who are experiencing homelessness.**

As the closest level of government, councils are uniquely placed to creating practices that standardise and increase outcomes for homeless people such as access to public places, regulation of affordable housing and boarding houses, service coordination. Further, owing to their multifunctional organisational structure, local government has the ability to plan and coordinate a range of local services within the social and community planning functions.

With these considerations, it is noted the current Protocol is limited to the State Government signatories. Arguably, councils are also responsible for, and have an operational presence in public places. Staff often come into contact with homeless people, and are usually the first point of contact for the community when reporting rough sleepers. It is recommended that Local Government NSW be invited to inform the new Protocol, and is made a signatory.

- b) The extent to which the Protocol is being implemented in practice by government organisations providing direct service delivery, and non-government organisations contracted on behalf of government.**

While Council does not provide direct service delivery, the Protocol has served as a useful guide for the development of Liverpool City Council's Draft Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan, and has been instrumental with informing internal processes. As the co-convenor to the local homelessness interagency, it is noted the underpinning principles of

the Protocol are also observed by participating government and non-government agencies.

**c) The appropriateness of the Protocol to support joint responses between government organisations, non-government organisations and local governments working in partnership to respond to homelessness.**

The current Protocol does not speak to partnerships and active communication as fundamental to mitigating homelessness. To improve joint responses between partners, the new Protocol should:

- Encourage more councils to formalise a localised homelessness policy and strategy.
- Highlight the need to work collaboratively and proactively to address homelessness.
- Include a Charter of Rights for Homeless People as agreed by the signatories.

**d) Whether the Protocol adequately protects the rights and interests of people who are experiencing homelessness who use public places, including indigenous people and minority groups.**

Broadly, the Protocol sufficiently articulates the rights and interests of people experiencing homelessness that include indigenous people and minority groups. It is noted that *Point 6.4 Appropriate responses to Aboriginal People* does not reference referral pathways to relevant services as required.

**e) Whether the Protocol appropriately balances the rights and interests of people who are experiencing homelessness with those of residents, businesses and other people and organisations using public places.**

Council's experience has been that community is largely empathetic to the needs of people experiencing homelessness. The current Protocol could be further strengthened to increase awareness raising and community education as key to ensuring the rights and interests of homeless people in public places are protected.

Should you require any further information on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely



**Galavizh Ahmadi Nia**  
Manager Community Development and Planning