



Council Policy

Homelessness Policy Commitment

Version 1 - 29 April 2019

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Policy Commitment

Homelessness is a national issue, however all tiers of Government have a role in reducing the occurrence of homelessness in Australia. Lake Macquarie City Council (Council) has an important role to play in reducing the occurrence of homelessness in the Lake Macquarie Local Government Area.

Therefore, Council will endeavour to:

- contribute to the prevention of homelessness – preventing those at risk from tipping over into homelessness;
- support and work with the local homelessness sector – building local capacity to break the cycle of homeless people;
- continue educating Council staff on the issues affecting homelessness;
- identify opportunities to improve outcomes for a sustainable increase in affordable housing; and
- champion regional planning and partnerships – encouraging collaborative, evidence based, actions to combat homelessness by Government, businesses and service providers.

Definitions

Research suggests that one thing local governments can do before implementing any solutions is to establish definitions for homelessness to ensure all stakeholders have a shared understanding of key terms and phrases. Therefore, for clarity, Council adopts the definitions listed in the glossary of the NSW Government's *Homelessness Strategy 2018-2023* (an extract is included in Appendix A for completeness).

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Appendix A – Definitions

Term	Definition
Affordable housing	Housing provided by housing provider organisations (usually community housing providers) that meets the needs of people on very low to moderate incomes and is priced according to income so that people can afford other basic living costs.
Assertive outreach	A purposeful, proactive and persistent approach that has the common goal of ending homelessness for those who are sleeping rough. It is conceptualised as part of a broader, integrated and intentional policy response that requires both a multidisciplinary team and the availability of long-term housing. It aims to work with people over the medium to long-term as a means to assist people to access housing and sustain their tenancies post-homelessness.
Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program	A program that targets people experiencing homelessness by providing health and dental care, assistance to apply for benefits, accommodation and medical respite.
Case management	A process whereby an individual and/or family's needs are identified and services are coordinated and managed in a systematic way. The core elements of case management include assessment, case planning, implementation (service delivery), monitoring and review.
Census	The Census of Population and Housing is a descriptive count of population of Australia on one night, and of their dwellings, held every five years.
Chronic homelessness	An episode of homelessness lasting six months or longer or multiple episodes of homelessness over a 12 month period or more.
Commissioning for outcomes	Places a person's outcomes at the heart of the service system. It is a needs-led and outcomes-focused process.
Common Ground	A housing model based in Camperdown in inner city Sydney using Housing First principles. The program provides services that are tailored to individuals in order to help people transition to permanent accommodation and assist with other needs. See also 'Housing First'.
Communities Plus	A new generation of integrated housing developments being delivered in partnership with the private, non-government and community housing sectors. The program includes sites in metropolitan Sydney and regional NSW.
Core and cluster accommodation	This form of accommodation creates a set of individual 'satellite' private units on a piece of land (cluster) connected to a communal area for shared living and support needs (core). Needs are supported by centrally located staff.
Crisis accommodation	Accommodation for people who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness, which provides short-term accommodation including refuges, shelters, motels, flats, boarding houses or caravan parks.
Culturally appropriate service delivery	Delivery of programs and services so that they are consistent with the cultural identity, communication styles, meaning and value or normative systems and social contexts of clients, program participants and other stakeholders.

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Domestic and family violence	Includes any behaviour, in an intimate or family relationship, which is violent, threatening, coercive or controlling, causing a person to live in fear.
Early intervention	Actions designed to reduce the impact of homelessness when it does occur and reduce the risk factors for longer-term homelessness. These strategies are targeted at individuals who have recently become homeless, aiming to ensure that short periods of homelessness do not become chronic.
Foyer models	Purpose-built centres offering young people a safe and affordable place to live while they engage in education, training and employment.
Homeless	Where a person does not have suitable accommodation which meets basic needs including a sense of security, stability, privacy, safety and the ability to control living space. May be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary: no conventional accommodation or shelter; • Secondary: living in shelters, emergency accommodation, refuges and couch surfing; • Tertiary: living in accommodation that falls below minimum community standards.
Household	A group of two or more related or unrelated people who usually reside in the same dwelling, and who make common provision for food or other essentials for living. A household can also be a single person living in a dwelling who makes provision for his or her own food and other essentials for living, without combining with any other person.
Housing affordability	The cost of housing compared with the financial situation of households. Generally refers to housing across major cities, states or nationally, as opposed to individual households.
Housing First	Housing First means offering affordable housing to people experiencing homelessness as quickly as possible, removing potential barriers and providing the supports they need to avoid returning to homelessness.
Human Services Outcomes Framework	A cross-agency framework which specifies seven wellbeing outcomes for the people of NSW: safety, home, economic, health, education and skills, social and community and empowerment. Provides a tool to support agencies and NGOs understand and measure the extent to which positive outcomes are achieved, and is used to guide human services planning, delivery and evaluation.
Individual support packages	An allocation of funding to a person in order to purchase the supports which will best meet their ongoing needs and help them to support their goals. It enables choice and individualised preference to be incorporated in government service delivery.
Mainstream services	Generalist services provided by either government or non-government agencies that are available to the general population, e.g. hospitals, schools, correctional systems.
Medium-term accommodation	Medium term accommodation (or transitional housing), usually provided or managed by a specialist homelessness service and not expected to be long term or permanent.

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Micah Project's Integrated Healthcare and Supportive Housing model	Consists of a multidisciplinary team of health, psychosocial, and housing professionals. Enables tenants' needs to be identified, external resources accessed, and the delivery of a coordinated response that ensures that external service providers and the on-site service providers are operating in a way that realises tenant identified objectives.
Michael's Intensive Supported Housing Accord (MISHA)	A housing model based on the Housing First approach. It is a philanthropically funded initiative based in Parramatta which aims to support men in long-term accommodation, wrap-around services and intensive case management. See 'Housing First'.
Non-government organisation (NGO)	Includes organisations operating in the community or private sectors.
Not-for-profit sector	Community organisations providing a broad range of social services, including in relation to homelessness, housing, education, health, conservation and recreation.
Older women	Women aged 55 years and over.
Out-of-home care	The care of a child or young person who is in the parental responsibility of the Minister, or a non-related person, residing at a place other than their usual home, and by a person other than their parent, as a result of a Children's Court order that lasts more than 14 days, or because they are a protected person.
Person-centred	Placing a person at the centre of service delivery to ensure a high standard of customer service and the best outcomes are achieved for each individual.
Prevention	Actions to prevent someone who is at risk of homelessness from experiencing homelessness. Prevention activities identify people at risk of homelessness and support them to reduce risk factors and build protective factors.
Protective factors	Conditions or attributes of individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that, when present, promote wellbeing and reduce the risk of negative outcomes.
Psychosocial support	A range of supports which may include mental health treatment and counselling, education, social support and group support. It aims to address ongoing psychological and social problems experienced by individuals which may increase the risk of homelessness.
Public housing	Long-term, affordable housing for people on low incomes who are unable to rent privately. The properties are managed by FACS.
Repeat homelessness	The experience of multiple periods of homelessness in a reporting period.
Risk factors	Factors or triggers that can contribute to or increases the likelihood of homelessness.
Risk of homelessness	A person is at risk of homelessness if they are at risk of losing their accommodation. A person may be at risk of homelessness if they are experiencing one or more of a range of factors or triggers that can contribute

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	to homelessness.
Service integration	Structures and processes that attempt to bring together the participants in human services systems with the aim of achieving goals that cannot be achieved by those participants acting autonomously and separately.
Sleeping rough	Sleeping in uncomfortable conditions without housing and without shelter, often on the streets, in parks or in a car.
Social and Affordable Housing Fund	An innovative approach to the delivery of social and affordable housing in NSW. The SAHF model increases the supply of housing through outcomes based contracts with nominated service providers.
Social housing	Rental housing provided by not-for-profit, NGO or government organisations to assist people who are unable to access suitable accommodation in the private rental market. It includes public, Aboriginal and community housing.
Social impact investment	Investment seeking to generate social impact alongside financial return. It brings together capital and expertise from the public, private and not-for-profit sectors to achieve a social objective.
Specialist homelessness services (SHS)	Assistance provided by a specialist homelessness agency to a person aimed at responding to or preventing homelessness. Support includes accommodation provision, assistance to sustain housing, domestic/family violence services, mental health services, family/relationship assistance, disability services, drug/alcohol counselling, legal/financial services, immigration/cultural services, other specialist services and general assistance and support.
Specialist services	Provide services and support for people with particular issues such as those living with mental health issues, drug and alcohol issues or a disability.
Step-up/step-down model	A health program which has graded care according to need.
Structural drivers	Factors contributing to homelessness that are beyond an individual's control, such as the condition of housing and labour markets.
Supportive housing	Housing which incorporates additional supports, such as case management and psychosocial supports.
Temporary Accommodation	Emergency accommodation in low-cost hotels, motels, caravan parks, boarding houses and similar accommodation for people who are experiencing housing crisis or homelessness. Usually 1-2 days in duration and linked to homelessness services.
Tierney House	A 12-bed residential unit assisting people experiencing homelessness in inner city Sydney to access health care. It provides a safe and stable environment where residents can access assessment, treatment and support from St Vincent's Hospital and local health and support services.
Trauma-informed care	Provides a framework for service delivery that is based on knowledge and understanding of how trauma affects people's lives, their service needs and service usage.

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Controlled Document Information

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Related Document Information, Standards & References

Related Legislation:	(Legislation Name) Nil	(Relationship/Context) N/A
Related Policies:	(Policy Name) Nil	(Relationship/Context) N/A
Related Procedures, Guidelines, Forms, WHS Modules/PCD's, Risk Assessments, Work Method Statements:	(Document Name)	(Relationship/Context)
Standards, COP's & Other References	(Standard, COP or Other References) NSW Homelessness Strategy 2018-2023	(Relationship/Context) www.facs.nsw.gov.au

Definitions

Term / Abbreviation	Definition
Council	Lake Macquarie City Council

Consultation (update for each version created)

Key Departments, Teams, Positions, Meetings:	Lifestyle and Wellbeing Portfolio Committee
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Version History

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1	October 2018	D Hughes	Policy Commitment created