



TOWN OF
VICTORIA PARK



Homelessness Policy Implementation Plan 2021-2022

Progress update

July 2021 - May 2022

Policy Commitment - Play an active role in prevention

The Town will play an active role in homelessness prevention through providing information on services, resources and facilities to assist people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Action	Comment
Develop a homelessness landing webpage for the Town's website	<p>A homelessness landing webpage was created in year one (June 2020) and maintained throughout year two. The webpage aims to inform and build knowledge in the community. The page includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responses to frequently asked questions about homelessness.• Information on local inter-agency groups.• Information on how community members can help.• Contact details for emergency relief agencies and national and state phone help lines.• A copy of the Homelessness Policy Implementation Plan July 2020 – June 2023 and link to Policy 113 Homelessness – The Town's Role. <p>The landing webpage was viewed by the community over 400 times in year two, compared with 500 times over year one.</p>
Review and reprint 'Support for you and your family' service provider brochure	<p>The 'Support for You and Your Family' printed brochure details service providers close by or in the Town to support someone with their health, housing, food security and financial counselling needs. The brochure was initially developed in partnership with the Supporting People with Basic Needs group. The information contained within the brochure is also published and regularly updated on the Town's website. The emergency relief support webpage has been viewed by the community more than 1500 times per year over both year one and year two.</p> <p>The brochure was updated in year two (March 2022) and the newest version provided to the Town's Rangers, Library, Leisure Centres and local services. Roofforce, the Town's external outreach provider, now carry the flyer to provide to people they believe may benefit from support.</p> <p>The Town is currently in discussions with City of Belmont and the Belmont/Victoria Park Emergency Relief Network to review the printed brochure, with a view to developing a version of the flyer in Easy English. This will ensure that the brochure can be of benefit to people who speak English as a second language or are of low literacy. Other methods of delivery of this information are also being explored.</p>
Provide training to Town staff on homelessness and assisting people in need	<p>Homelessness Awareness Workshops were previously provided to Town staff in year one (February 2021) with follow up training currently being planned for year three.</p>

The Homelessness Management Practice was reviewed in year two (December 2021) and a refresher was provided to the Rangers team at the end of 2021. The Management Practice will be provided to C-Suite for endorsement at the conclusion of the review of Policy 113 – Homelessness the Town’s Role, with consideration given to any recommendations.

Once endorsed, additional refreshers on the Management Practice will be provided to all relevant teams in the Town including the Library, Customer Service, Parking, Rangers, Environmental Health, Communications, Finance, Aqualife, Leisurelife, Operations and Community Development.

Policy Commitment – Build community capacity

The Town will work with community organisations to build their capacity to contribute to ending homelessness through the community funding program, facilitating partnerships and coordinating local action where appropriate.

Action	Comment
Provide support and assistance to the Healthy Relationships Strategy Group	<p>The Healthy Relationships Strategy Group (the Group) is an inter-agency group representing service providers in the area of family and domestic violence (FDV). FDV is the leading cause of homelessness in Western Australia.</p> <p>The Group meets every six weeks to share information and work collaboratively on projects with a focus on awareness raising, prevention and early intervention. The Town is the backbone organisation of the group and has been an active member since it was established in October 2017. Since 2021 the Group has remained stable and in early 2022 has invited a representative of people with disabilities to join to ensure that there is diverse representation on the Group.</p> <p>The Group has been involved in the following projects over year two:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocated to State Government to continue respectful relationships education program in schools beyond the project timeframe of 2020-2022• Held celebrations leading up to 16 Days in WA to showcase work of the group over the last 12-18 months and built connections between group members. The event attracted 38 attendees.• Provided advice and support for successful West Coast Eagles 16 Days in WA online campaign. <p>Currently the Group is exploring opportunities to develop coercive control fact sheets and developing a program for a FDV conference provide the community and local agencies more information on the topic - with a focus on people with disabilities and FDV.</p>

<p>Provide support and assistance to the Belmont/Victoria Park Emergency Relief Network</p>	<p>The Belmont/Victoria Park Emergency Relief Network is an inter-agency network of service providers that provide food relief, housing support, financial counselling and/or bill assistance across the Town and the City of Belmont. The Town supported Star Street Uniting Church to establish the group in June 2019 and continues to attend the quarterly meetings. The network has an information sharing focus, although, collaborations between agencies have formed because of connecting through the network.</p> <p>Town staff attended these network meetings over year two. In early 2022, members of the Network reported increased demands on their services due to COVID-19 impacts, rising housing costs and rising cost of living putting low-income people under greater stress. The West Coast Eagles have attended a meeting and committed to hosting a future meeting to find out more about how they can be supportive of the Network's community organisations.</p>
<p>Funds provided through the Community Funding program to address homelessness</p>	<p>The Town provides funding to community organisations through the annual community funding program. In year two (the 2021-2022 financial year), the Town received one funding application from a local community organisation to deliver services for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. This successful application, from the Victoria Park Community Centre in collaboration with Nardine Wimmin's Refuge, resulted in a \$6,350 contribution to deliver a wellness program that will benefit current residents of Nardine, as well as other community members with experience of domestic violence.</p> <p>Project delivery has been delayed to the second half of 2022 given the impacts of the COVID-19 wave in Western Australia and the capacity of Nardine to devote resources to the initiative.</p> <p>The Town is continuing to promote the Community Grants to providers of services for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.</p>
<p>Develop and deliver a communications plan to increase awareness of local community organisations</p>	<p>A Town-led communications plan is in development to increase awareness of local community organisations contributing to ending homelessness. This action aims to address the lack of knowledge of services available in the area that was demonstrated by the community during the homelessness policy review engagement in early 2020.</p> <p>The creation of the homelessness landing webpage and the service provider brochure have assisted with this action, and the Town will continue to progress the communications plan.</p>

Policy commitment – Play an active role in prevention

The Town will proactively ensure public spaces and amenities are safe and inclusive.

Action	Comment
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<p>Develop a Management Practice to guide Town responses to left belongings and rough sleepers on private property and in public areas</p>	<p>Practice 113.1 Responding to Reports of Homelessness was approved by the CEO in year one (January 2021) and reviewed during year two. The practice provides staff with a consistent, compassionate approach to responding to reports of rough sleepers in public areas or on private property and suspected left belongings. The practice also provides staff with a guide in which to provide accurate and consistent information to concerned community members.</p> <p>In late 2021 the Management Practice was reviewed with input from Customer Service, Community Development, Parking and Rangers, Environmental Health, Building Services, Compliance and Place Planning teams.</p> <p>The updated Management Practice will be presented to C-Suite after the review of Policy 113 Homelessness – The Town’s Role has been tabled at the Policy Committee and OCM in September 2022, to ensure that any recommendations can be included. At this time refresher training will be provided to relevant teams.</p>
<p>Develop response process for afterhours contact to external customer service provider</p>	<p>The Town contracts an external provider to answer phone calls to the Town outside of business hours. A guide was developed in year one (February 2021) for the external provider to assist customers who are calling to report rough sleeping, begging, anti-social behaviour or left belongings, or are seeking emergency relief services. The guide is informed by Practice 113.1.</p> <p>Since this, the Town has received a total of 2,377 calls for Ranger related attendance. Of these calls, the following are in relation to homelessness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February - December 2021 - 16 calls • January - April 2022 - 2 calls <p>To date, the Town has not received any complaints regarding the quality of the Town’s after-hours service in relation to homelessness.</p>
<p>Develop internal process to waive impound fees for rough sleepers collecting left belongings</p>	<p>Practice 113.1 directs the Town to impound suspected left belongings if the owner cannot be found after a period of investigation. An internal process has been developed to ensure compassionate grounds is captured and considered an appropriate reason for waiving impound fees. Waiving the impound fee/s would be considered for someone who has no fixed address and has been rough sleeping in the Town.</p> <p>The Town’s Impounded Goods Register has identified 21 impounds from 2020-2022 related to rough sleeping:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020 - 6 • 2021 - 14 • 2022 – 1

	<p>This register, and discussion with the Town’s Customer Service Team shows that, to date, no impounded homelessness items have been returned to claimants. The impacts of the fee waiver cannot be established at this time.</p>
<p>Consider feasibility of funding an outreach service provider</p>	<p>RooForce was contracted for a 13-week trial in year one (mid-2020) to provide a community liaison service in the John Macmillan precinct. It was found that very few rough sleepers were in the precinct, and that most disturbances reported in the park were caused by people visiting or living temporarily with relatives in the area.</p> <p>RooForce was awarded a further contract for the remainder of year one (2020-2021) and year two (2021-22) following a competitive expression of interest process. Feedback indicates that RooForce continues to build positive relationships and provides information and referral to all users of the park.</p> <p>RooForce also patrol Edward Millen Park, Read Park, Memorial Gardens and car parks in the Albany Highway area. Reports indicate there has been decreases in antisocial behaviour and public drinking in these parks during the times that RooForce patrol.</p> <p>Recently RooForce has started to carry the Town’s Support for You and Your Family brochure to ensure they are able to provide advice on all support services available across the Town and in neighbouring local government areas.</p>

Policy commitment – Understand, monitor and advocate

The Town will collect accurate data to understand, monitor and respond to trends regarding homelessness in the community, and engage in evidence-based advocacy with local, State and Federal governments.

Action	Comment
<p>Develop an internal reporting system to capture and monitor ongoing occurrences of rough sleeping and left belongings</p>	<p>The development of Practice 113.1 incorporated three new CRM categories for recording customer report numbers and Town responses to rough sleepers in public areas, on private property and suspected left belongings.</p> <p>For year two (between July 2021 and May 2022), the following reports were recorded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34 reports of rough sleepers in public areas. • Four reports of rough sleepers on private property. • Seven reports of suspected left belongings. <p>The early months of 2022 have shown reduced reports of rough sleepers in public areas, with 0 to 4 reports each month since January. In comparison, in January to April 2021, 6 to 10 rough sleepers in public areas were reported per month.</p>

Participate in the City of Perth's Street Count

The Town joined the City of Perth's Street Count in year one (October 2020). The purpose of the Street Count is to collect reliable, current data on how many people are sleeping rough in the Town and more broadly across the Inner City region. A total of eight people were counted in the Town during the October 2020 Street Count.

In year two, the Town did not take part in the October 2021 Perth City Street Count as Ruah received funding to conduct a Connections Week in November, which would provide the Town the same data and greater insight into local rough sleeping. Subsequently, the City of Perth cancelled the count at last minute, and Ruah postponed Connections Week to early 2022.

The City of Perth are not planning any future Street Counts at this stage, as they found the numbers they gathered did not accurately reflect numbers of rough sleepers, due to movement of people in and out of the area and different regions. The City of Perth have found that establishment of the By-Name lists provides more accurate data on numbers of rough sleepers.

The Town will investigate whether there are other providers holding a similar activity this year and consider involvement if appropriate.

Monitor extent of service delivery in the Town

The Haven and St Mary's Outreach Service continue to operate in the Town, providing meals, food hampers, showers, laundry services and health checks to people experiencing homelessness. Both organisations are well connected, expanding their offerings through forming partnerships with other organisations including One Voice (mobile showers) and Orange Sky (mobile laundry).

Emergency relief providers are also well established in the Town. Emergency relief providers assist in preventing homelessness through providing food vouchers, bill assistance, financial counselling and tenancy advocacy.

In year two (early 2022) the Town has been approached by two service providers who would like to offer their services in the Town. These services have been encouraged to partner with organisations already operating within the Town. These relationships are progressing but are not yet in operation.

An assertive homelessness outreach provider is not located in the Town. Assertive outreach providers assist rough sleepers to access wrap around services, immediate accommodation, whilst also working to secure long term, stable accommodation. Rough sleepers in the Town have their immediate needs addressed, however, accessing pathways out of homelessness is restricted without case management support from an assertive outreach provider.

	<p>The Town has formed relationships with assertive outreach providers based in the Perth CBD. As a result, assistance is provided by agencies on occasion. However, it is ad-hoc and only where capacity permits.</p> <p>In year two, the Town applied to the Department of Communities Local Government Partnership Fund for Homelessness. If successful, the Town will use part of the funding to connect and upskill service providers to take a coordinated localised Advance to Zero approach. Advance to Zero approaches include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage, work with and train local communities to know the people who are rough sleeping in their communities by name, as well as their needs • Work with communities to produce quality data to track progress in successfully housing people • Line up supply of housing and match people to services they require, if needed • Move people into housing and support them to stay housed • Ensure rough sleeping homelessness is rare, brief and a non-recurring experience for individuals and families. <p>The Town is waiting for the announcement of successful applicants.</p>
<p>Analyse and monitor housing diversity through the five year review of the Local Planning Strategy</p>	<p>This action has been assigned to 2022-2023</p>
<p>Identify and action opportunities to advocate to local, State and Federal governments</p>	<p>The Town participates in regular Homelessness Outreach Collaboration Meetings, chaired by Uniting WA. The meeting includes Inner City assertive outreach providers, mobile health services, the City of Vincent and City of Perth amongst other organisations and agencies.</p> <p>This meeting allows members to share information on emerging trends in rough sleeping and coordinate resources when hot spots are detected. The Town attends the meeting to advocate for assertive outreach support to the Town as required.</p> <p>The Town has also participated in the Local Government Homelessness Knowledge Hub project over year two (2021-2022). The project will deliver an online homelessness resource for local governments to share information and inform evidence-based policy responses to homelessness. The website will go live in June 2022.</p> <p>Town staff are members of WALGA’s Community Industry Reference Group who since early 2022 are working on the drafting of problem statements, advocacy recommendations and next steps relating to homelessness.</p>

The Town's CEO and Mayor are members of the CEO-Mayor-Inner-City Group where homelessness is discussed, and collaborative approaches emphasised.

Policy Commitment – Raise community awareness

The Town will raise awareness of the nature, impacts and challenges of homelessness and how the community can play a part in minimising the impact of and preventing homelessness in the community.

Action	Comment
Deliver a community awareness raising activity to promote understanding and support community-led action	<p>The Town promoted Homelessness Week in year two (August 2021) with a series of posts which provided information on the reasons behind homelessness, access to supports and the Town's Homelessness Policy. The posts were extremely popular with the community, with two posts receiving the highest for Town engagement over the year.</p> <p>The Town is now preparing for Homelessness Week 2022 in the first week of August. The Town will partner with Fusion Youth Accommodation Service on a Sleep in Your Car event. Additionally the Town will partner in an event hosted by the Centre for Stories, who are facilitating a Homelessness Stories project for the Town. The project includes training story tellers with lived experience of homelessness, and collecting and recording stories, to be launched at the Homelessness Week event and highlighted through a communications campaign.</p> <p>The West Coast Eagles has donated a bench from the Subiaco Oval which will be refurbished to become the Town's second purple bench.</p> <p>Purple benches have been appearing in public spaces in WA since 2018. Launched by the Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing, purple benches serve to honour victims of domestic homicide and include a plaque with the contact details of the Women's Domestic Violence hotline.</p> <p>The Town's first purple bench was launched in Homelessness Week in 2020 at 269 Albany Highway, Victoria Park. and was the first 'bus stop' purple bench in WA.</p> <p>The Town will facilitate the installation and launch of the second purple bench in the second half of 2022.</p>