

# HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2015-2017





# CONTENTS

<b>Mayor’s Message</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Acronyms</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Definitions</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Policy Framework</b>	<b>10</b>
International Context	10
National Context	10
State Context	10
Local Context	11
Changes in Government Policy	11
<b>Role of Local Government</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Homelessness in Liverpool City - A Snapshot</b>	<b>12</b>
Homelessness Statistics	12
Structural Drivers of Homelessness	16
Personal Drivers of Homelessness	17
<b>Development of the Homelessness Strategy</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Action Plan 2015-2017</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>30</b>

## *Aboriginal Acknowledgement*

*Liverpool City Council acknowledges the original inhabitants of the Liverpool area; the Darug, Gandangara and Tharawal Aboriginal People.*

*Liverpool City Council would like to thank everyone who contributed to the development of the Homelessness Strategy 2015-2017. Particularly peak homeless organisations, local community organisations, state and local government authorities, Liverpool City Council staff and people who have experienced homelessness.*

*© Liverpool City Council 2015. No part of this document may be reproduced without permission of Liverpool City Council. For further information, contact the Manager Community Development and Planning on 9821 9108.*

# A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



*A nation's greatness is measured by how it treats its weakest members*



*(Mahatma Gandhi)*

Homelessness is a complex and challenging issue. Its effects can be devastating on individuals and families. That's why Liverpool City Council is adopting a proactive and preventative approach to the issue through this strategy and action plan. It sets out a framework under which Council will use its political influence to bring key stakeholders around the table to agree how best we can respond to the challenges of homelessness and to coordinate services to those who need them most. Through a partnership approach, we are committed to doing whatever we can to mitigate the effects of homelessness on vulnerable members of our community.

At a human level, Gandhi's exhortation reminds us of our moral obligation to care for those less fortunate than ourselves. So at a time of unprecedented growth and opportunity for Liverpool, it is timely that Council recognises that with growth, the level of homelessness within the city is likely to increase as people are drawn to the city.

Since 2011, we have been privileged to work with a range of service providers through the Community Kitchen and Hub – organisations including Anglicare, Inspire Community Services, Mission Australia, Partners in Recovery, Liverpool Uniting Church and Cabramatta Community Centre. This service model provides hot meals, case management and counselling services, emergency relief, advocacy and support and social and recreational activities to community members, including people experiencing homelessness.

More recently we have been engaged with other organisations including the Bill Crews

Charitable Trust, Drug Arm, St Vincent de Paul, Salvation Army and Sathya Sai community organisation in the provision of free food services, housing opportunities and counselling services in other locations across the city. Their compassion, co-operation and commitment have been truly inspirational in the provision of practical assistance and support to the most disadvantaged members of our community.

Council is committed to extending this type of partnership approach to address homelessness. This strategy and action plan represents a first for Liverpool City Council. In coming months, we will actively monitor its implementation and report back to you on its effectiveness. Where necessary, we will adapt our approach to increase our effectiveness in working with, and through, our community-based partners.

I urge you to assist us in whatever way you can. Above all else, Liverpool is an inclusive city and while we are unapologetically committed to bringing the benefits of development and growth to our citizens, we are committed also to ensuring that the most vulnerable aren't left behind.

**Mayor Ned Mannoun**  
Liverpool City

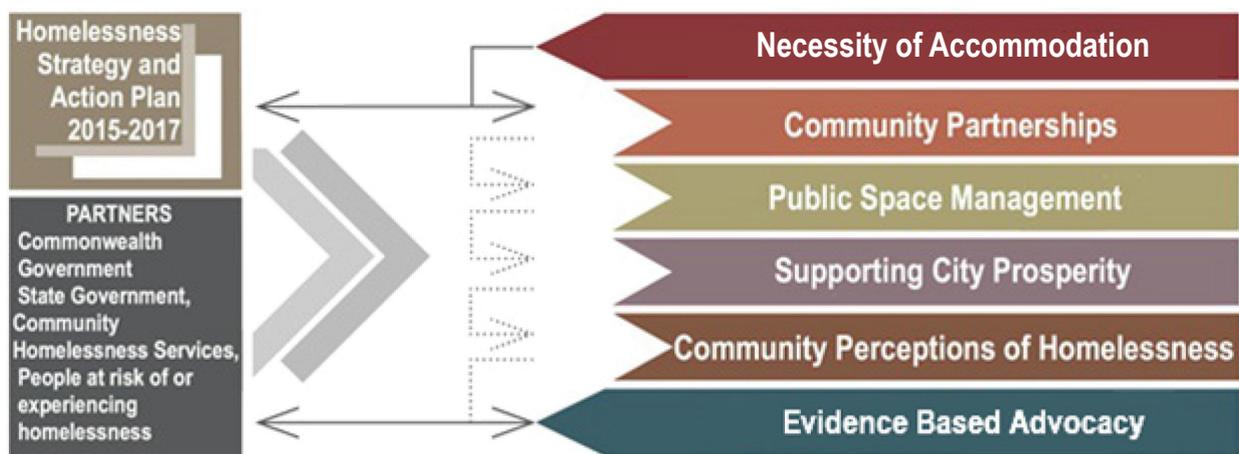
# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Liverpool is experiencing a period of exponential growth, with public and private investment being channelled into infrastructure and development. Liverpool City Council seeks to build upon its commitment to social justice, social sustainability and social inclusion by ensuring that all residents in Liverpool experience increased standards of living as we work towards Growing Liverpool 2023.

While it is acknowledged that Federal and State Governments hold the statutory authority and funding allocation to provide services to people who are at risk of, or experiencing homelessness, Council recognises that it has an important role in local leadership and can assist and complement the work of other tiers of government as facilitators of solutions to homelessness.

The Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2017 seeks to address the impact of homelessness in the Liverpool Local Government Area (LGA) through partnering with Commonwealth and State governments, community organisations, and people at risk of, or experiencing homelessness. As homelessness continues to grow across Australia, Council is committed to contributing to developing pathways out of homelessness through six key priority areas.

Liverpool has a higher than average portion of the population who experience drivers that create pathways into homelessness. Council recognises that homelessness is a complex issue influenced by multiple structural and personal drivers.



# ACRONYMS

## **ABS**

Australian Bureau of Statistics

## **GSHH**

Going Home Staying Home Reform Plan

## **HAP**

NSW Homelessness Action Plan

## **LGA**

Local Government Area

## **NAHA**

National Affordable Housing Agreement

## **NPSH**

National Partnership on Social Housing

## **RHAP**

Regional Homelessness Action Plan

## **UN**

United Nations

# DEFINITIONS

## Homelessness

The statistical definition of homelessness, as adopted by the ABS in 2012, defines homelessness as a lack of one or more of the elements that represent 'home' (ABS, 2012a). These elements may include a sense of security, stability, privacy, safety and the ability to control living space.

"When a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:

- Is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or
- Has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or
- Does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations."

## Primary Homelessness

People without conventional accommodation: people who live in the streets, 'rough sleepers', people who squat in derelict buildings, or use cars or railway facilities and carriages as their regular dwelling.

## Secondary Homelessness

People who move on a short term basis from one form of supported accommodation to another: people using supported accommodation facilities for short periods, including boarding houses, shelters, hostels, youth refuges, children and women dwelling in women's shelters; or people residing with other families.

## Tertiary Homelessness

People who live in supported accommodation or inadequate individual accommodation facilities on a mid to longer term basis: people living in boarding houses without a private room or who share amenities and facilities on an ongoing basis and are subject to unstable living arrangements, for instance, through lack of secure tenure provided by a lease arrangement.

## Affordable Housing

The national definition of affordable housing is 'Housing that is appropriate for the needs of a range of very low, low and moderate-income household, priced to ensure households are able to meet other essential basic living costs' (Housing NSW 2013).

## Census

The Census of Population and Housing conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics is a descriptive count of everyone who is in Australia on one night, and of their dwellings.

## Overcrowding

The ABS utilise the Canadian National Occupancy Standard to measure housing utilisation and overcrowding. This measure assesses a household's bedroom requirements by specifying that:

- there should be no more than two people per bedroom;
- a household of one unattached individual may reasonably occupy a bed-sit (i.e. have no bedroom);
- couples and parents should have a separate bedroom;
- children less than five years of age, of different sexes, may reasonably share a bedroom;
- children five years of age or over, of the opposite sex, should not share a bedroom;
- children less than 18 years of age and of the same sex may reasonably share a bedroom; and
- single household members aged 18 years or over should have a separate bedroom.

## Rental Stress

A renter household is in rental stress when its housing costs are more than 30 per cent of the gross household income.

## Rough Sleeper

The term 'rough sleeper' relates to people 'without shelter and sleeping outside in places not meant for human habitation' (Vitis et al 2010). Rough sleepers were previously defined by the ABS under the category of primary homelessness.



# INTRODUCTION

The Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2017 is the first of its kind developed for the Liverpool LGA. It is timely for Liverpool City Council to strategically address homelessness as it works towards Growing Liverpool 2023. Homelessness is an issue that affects all societies, particularly cities with high populations and dense infrastructure (Macready, 2012). As Liverpool grows into a regional city, its homeless population will also grow.

Homelessness is a complex issue and does not exist in isolation. Rather structural and personal drivers create pathways into homelessness. A lack of affordable housing and long term unemployment form the overarching structural drivers of homelessness. The leading personal driver of homelessness is domestic violence. Other personal drivers include relationship breakdown, mental illness, substance misuse and problem gambling.

Homelessness affects the whole of community. Due to its complexity, homelessness is difficult to define. A universally accepted definition of homelessness does not exist in Australian legislation and definitions of homelessness continue to be widely debated (Rossi, 1989). A statistical definition of homelessness has been adopted by the ABS to estimate the prevalence of homelessness in Australia.

In September 2012, the ABS revised the definition of homelessness applied to the general population (ABS, 2012a). The definition was developed by Australian researcher Mallett (2004) and defines homelessness as a lack of one or more of the elements that represent 'home'. These elements may include a sense of security, stability, privacy, safety and the ability to control living space.

"When a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or
- does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations." (ABS, 2012)

This definition acknowledges the lack of safety and social exclusion as an expression of homelessness and reflects the reality that in some situations people may reject acceptable forms of housing for reasons of personal safety and the safety of children.

Previously, the ABS defined homelessness in three categories. This definition was developed by Australian researchers Chamberlain and MacKenzie (1992) and included:

- Primary Homelessness: People who live in improvised dwellings. This includes people who sleep on the street, in parks, derelict buildings or cars.
- Secondary Homelessness: People who live in temporary accommodation. This includes people in emergency or short-term homeless services and people residing temporarily with friends or family.
- Tertiary Homelessness: People who live in accommodation without a lease or the private use of bathroom or kitchen facilities. This includes people in medium to long term boarding houses or caravan parks.

In contrast to definitional difficulties, homelessness is addressed by a hierarchy of policies which establish a clear framework for intervention. Those policies are detailed in the following section.

# POLICY FRAMEWORK

## INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The international response to homelessness is guided by the United Nations Human Rights covenants to which Australia is a signatory. These include:

### *Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948) Article 25*

*Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.*

### *United Nations Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) Article 11*

*The States Parties to the present Covenant recognise the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right, recognizing to this effect the essential importance of international cooperation based on free consent.*

## NATIONAL CONTEXT

### *The Road Home- The Australian Government White Paper on Homelessness*

The 2008 White Paper Strategy outlines the national approach to reducing homelessness and establishes targets to halve homelessness by 2020 and offer supported accommodation to all rough sleepers who need it.

### *National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA)*

The NAHA commits the Commonwealth and States to the objective that all Australians have access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing. The national funding agreement covers social housing, assistance to people in the private rental market, support and accommodation for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and assistance with home purchasing.

### *National Partnership on Social Housing (NPSH)*

The NPAH contributes to the NAHA through the delivery of services to prevent and reduce homelessness. The Australian Government has committed \$230 million for two years until 30 June 2017, with funding priority given to frontline services focusing on women and children experiencing domestic violence, and homeless youth under 18 years.

## NSW STATE CONTEXT

### *NSW Homelessness Action Plan 2009-2014- A Way Home: Reducing Homelessness in NSW (HAP)*

The NSW HAP sets the direction for reform of the homelessness sector. The key objectives of the NSW HAP 2009-2014 remain current in NSW and inform State directions. The three key strategic directions include:

- Preventing homelessness: to ensure that people never become homeless;
- Responding effectively to homelessness: to ensure that people who are homeless receive effective responses so that they do not become entrenched in the system; and
- Break the cycle: to ensure that people who have been homeless do not become homeless again.
- Increase the proportion of young people who successfully move from Specialist Homelessness Services to long-term accommodation by 10 per cent.

### *New Premier and State priorities announced in September 2015*

Reducing Youth Homelessness - Increase the proportion of young people who successfully move from Specialist Homelessness Services to long-term accommodation by 10 per cent.

Protecting the Vulnerable - Increase the number of households successfully transitioning out of social housing by 5 per cent over three years to create sustainable social housing.

### *Going Home Staying Home Reform Plan (GSHS)*

The GSHS is a Housing NSW funding initiative for specialist homelessness services. The GSHS provides a funding package valued at \$515 million over three years from 2013-2016.

### *NSW State Government Protocol for Homeless People in Public Space*

This Protocol provides a framework for interactions with homeless people in public places. The aim of the Protocol is to ensure that homeless people are treated respectfully and appropriately and are not discriminated against on the basis of their homeless status. The Protocol also facilitates a homeless person's access to housing and support services if they need or request them.

## **LOCAL CONTEXT**

### *The Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2009-2014 Greater Western Sydney (RHAP)*

The RHAP is the regional implementation mechanism for the NSW Homelessness Action Plan (HAP). The key objectives of the RHAP 2009-2014 are current for addressing homelessness in the Greater Western Sydney area.

## **CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT POLICY**

### *Reform of the Federation*

A White Paper will be released in the first half of 2016, which clarifies the roles and responsibilities between levels of government across a range of government activities, including housing and homelessness. Specific reform proposals will be identified in a Green Paper on the Reform of the Federation which will be released in the second half of 2015.

# ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Commonwealth and State governments hold the statutory responsibility and allotted funding to provide services to people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness. They also influence the fundamental drivers of homelessness. This includes the supply of affordable housing and employment, as well as the provision of health and welfare services.

There is a lack of clarity around the division of responsibilities between the tiers of government in responding to homelessness. (Beer and Prance, 2012) The Road Home, Australia's white paper on homelessness, notes the significant role local governments are playing in addressing homelessness (FAHCSIA, 2008). However, Australian legislation does not obligate local government to play any role in addressing homelessness (Beer and Prance, 2013).

As the tier of government closest to the community, local government is an important source of local leadership (Megarrity, 2011). Local governments undertake functions and devise policies that impact on people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Therefore local government can assist and complement the work of other tiers of government, as facilitators of solutions to homelessness.

This can be achieved through:

- Encouraging diverse housing options in the LGA through development controls, building approval processes and subdivision controls;
- Facilitating networks and building connections across various government and non-government agencies working with people at risk of or experiencing homelessness;
- Promoting inclusive access to public space and community facilities;
- Assessing community needs and identifying gaps in service provision;
- Educating and positively influencing the community's awareness of the nature, causes and consequences of homelessness; and
- Advocating on behalf of vulnerable groups in the community.

To determine how best Liverpool City Council should respond to homelessness, it is important to examine next in more detail the nature and prevalence of homelessness within Liverpool City.

# HOMELESSNESS IN LIVERPOOL CITY A SNAPSHOT

It is difficult to enumerate people experiencing homelessness as: the definition of homelessness continues to evolve in Australia; the accuracy of various data collecting methods is not universally agreed upon; and limited data is publicly available at a local level (Rossi, 1989).

It is generally accepted that point-in-time data collection methods such as census counts and street counts should be considered alongside ongoing data collection methods such as data from local homelessness services to capture the true extent of homelessness experienced in a local government area (Chamberlain, 1999; Fopp, 1998; Rossi, 1989).

## HOMELESSNESS STATISTICS

The best statistical estimates on homelessness come from the ABS Census data. The ABS classifies persons as homeless on census night if they fall under one of six 'Homelessness Operational Groups':

- Persons in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out
- Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless
- Persons staying temporarily with other households
- Persons staying in boarding houses
- Persons in other temporary lodging
- Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings

According to the 2011 ABS Census Data:

- 105,237 people were estimated as homeless across Australia<sup>1</sup>.
- 28,190 people were estimated as homeless in NSW<sup>2</sup>.
- 2,102 were estimated as homeless in South West<sup>3</sup> Sydney<sup>4</sup>.
- 798 were estimated as homeless in the Liverpool LGA<sup>5</sup>.

The number of people experiencing homelessness nationally increased by 17.28 per cent between 2006 and 2011<sup>6</sup>. Whilst the rate of homelessness rose by 8 per cent nationally, in NSW the rate rose by 20 per cent over the last five years<sup>7</sup>. This increase has been largely a result of a rise in the number of people living in severely crowded dwellings, which were the largest homelessness group. People who were born overseas accounted for about three quarters of the increase in overall homelessness.

<sup>1</sup> Data obtained from the ABS publication '2049.0 Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness\_2011 Statistical Area Level 2', accessed online <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/2049.02011?OpenDocument>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> SA4 area 'South-West' Sydney comprises SA3 areas Bringelly-Green Valley, Fairfield and Liverpool.

<sup>4</sup> 2049.0 - Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Which also reflects the increase in the population over that time. ABS (2012) 105,000 people homeless on Census night 2011, accessed online <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/latestProducts/2049.0Media%20Release12011>.

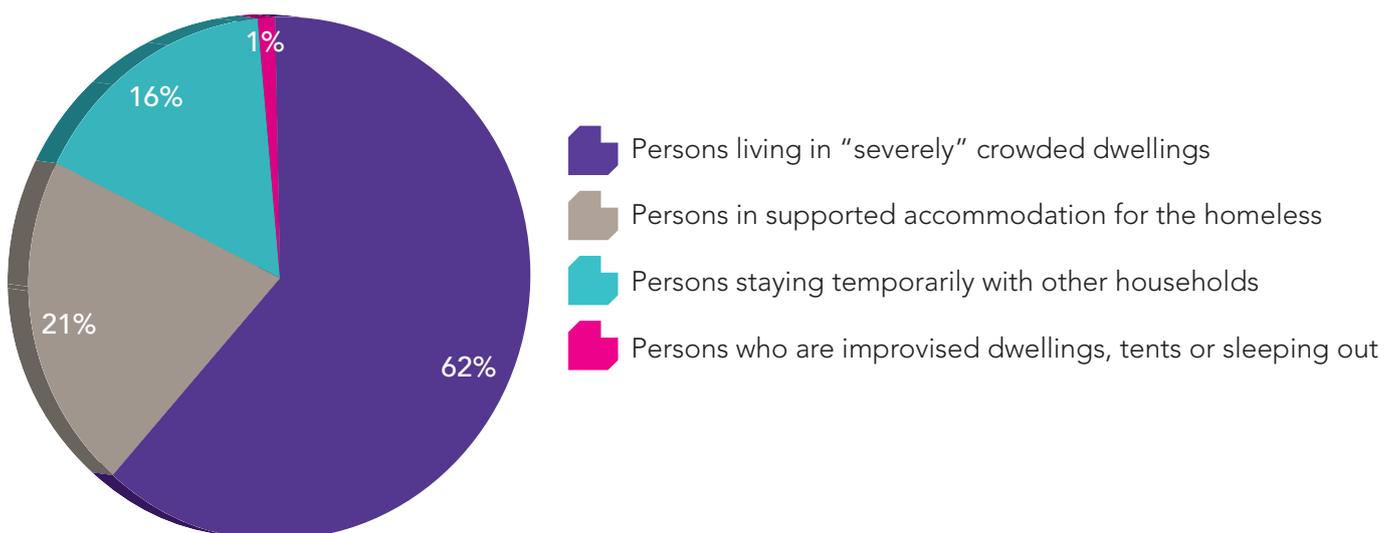
<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Figure 1: Broad comparison of people experiencing homelessness

No. persons experiencing homelessness	2006 <sup>8</sup>	2011 <sup>9</sup>	Percentage Change
Liverpool	556	798	43.53%
Fairfield	837	1304	55.79%
Bankstown	633	644	1.74%
Parramatta	1,350	611	-54.74%
Campbelltown	384	645	67.97%
Camden	59	58	-1.69%
Wollondilly	69	73	5.80%
<b>NSW</b>	<b>22,219</b>	<b>28,190</b>	<b>26.87%</b>
<b>Australia</b>	<b>89,728</b>	<b>105,237</b>	<b>17.28%</b>

Homelessness is largely unseen in Liverpool. People living in severely crowded dwellings constituted the largest category of people experiencing homelessness. A dwelling is categorised as severely crowded when it requires four or more extra bedrooms to accommodate the occupants (ABS, 2012b). In 2011, 491 people were living in severely crowded dwellings across the Liverpool LGA.

Figure 2: Types of homelessness experienced in the Liverpool LGA<sup>10</sup>



<sup>8</sup> 2049.0 - Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2006, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/2049.0main+features12006>.

<sup>9</sup> 2049.0 - Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2011.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

People living in supported accommodation services is the second largest category of people experiencing homelessness in Liverpool. On census night in 2011, 163 people were living in supported accommodation services. In 2015, the Department of Family and Community Services established eleven new specialist homelessness services across South West Sydney under the Going Home Staying Home reforms (FACS, 2015). The focus of these reforms is on long term housing and early intervention strategies rather than short term or crisis accommodation.

People staying temporarily in other households is the third largest category of people experiencing homelessness in Liverpool. 123 people classified themselves as visitors in a household without a usual address on census night 2011. These people may include youth and people fleeing domestic or family violence. Newly arrived migrants are not included under this category (ABS, 2012b).

## LIVERPOOL HOMELESSNESS STREET COUNT

Liverpool City Council conducted annual homelessness street counts in February 2014 and 2015 respectively. The count covered six areas across the Liverpool City Centre and Warwick Farm. In 2015, 118 people were counted as homeless in Liverpool. This figure decreased from 158 people counted in 2014. However this figure did not include data from Housing NSW on people in crisis or temporary accommodation<sup>11</sup>.

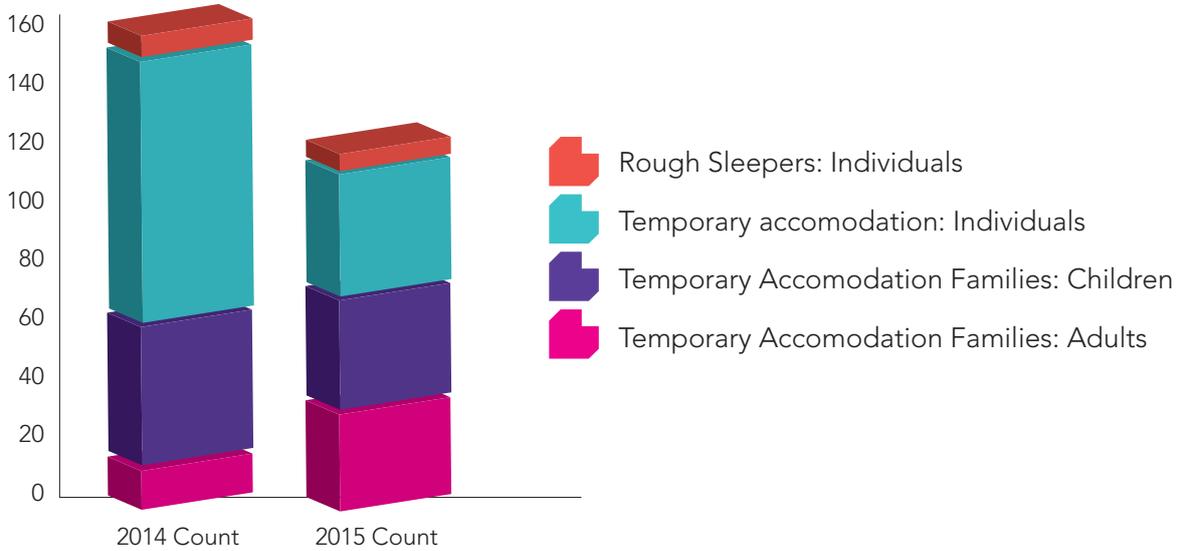
Figure 3: The number of people sleeping rough in Liverpool<sup>12</sup>

Homelessness Count Liverpool	No. Persons 2014	No. Persons 2015
Temporary Accommodation		
<i>Individuals</i>	92	42
<i>Families</i>	12	8
Adults	14	29
Children	43	41
<b>Temporary Accommodation Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>112</b>
<b>Rough Sleepers Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>118</b>

<sup>11</sup> It is not possible to make a like for like comparison, as the data sources available for use were different in each year.

<sup>12</sup> Liverpool Homelessness Street Count Evaluation Report 2015

**Figure 4: A comparison of persons by homelessness type across the 2014 and 2015 Liverpool street count**



## SPECIALIST HOMELESSNESS SERVICES DATA

Since 2011, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has collated data from Specialist Homelessness Services across Australia on a monthly basis. This data includes demographical information on people at risk of or experiencing homelessness, the services provided by Specialist Homelessness Services, and the outcomes achieved. Data by Local Government Area is not publicly available. Nevertheless information at national and state levels provides useful insight into the personal and structural drivers of homelessness.

## STRUCTURAL DRIVERS OF HOMELESSNESS

### RENTAL STRESS

A lack of affordable housing is a significant structural driver of homelessness. In 2013-2014, almost 60 per cent of people who accessed specialist homelessness services identified housing affordability or financial difficulties as a reason for seeking assistance (AIHW, 2014).

When rental payments are viewed with household income data they indicate the level of housing stress experienced. (Nepal et al, 2008). In 2011, 10,257 households experienced rental stress in the Liverpool LGA. This amounted to 31.2 per cent of all renting households in the Liverpool LGA compared to 25.1 per cent in Greater Sydney.

One parent families in private rental households are more susceptible to housing stress (Taylor and Edwards, 2012). In 2011, 14 per cent of households in the Liverpool LGA comprised of one parent families, compared to 10.8 per cent in Greater Sydney<sup>13</sup>.

Figure 5: Top five Suburbs in the Liverpool LGA experiencing Rental stress<sup>14</sup>

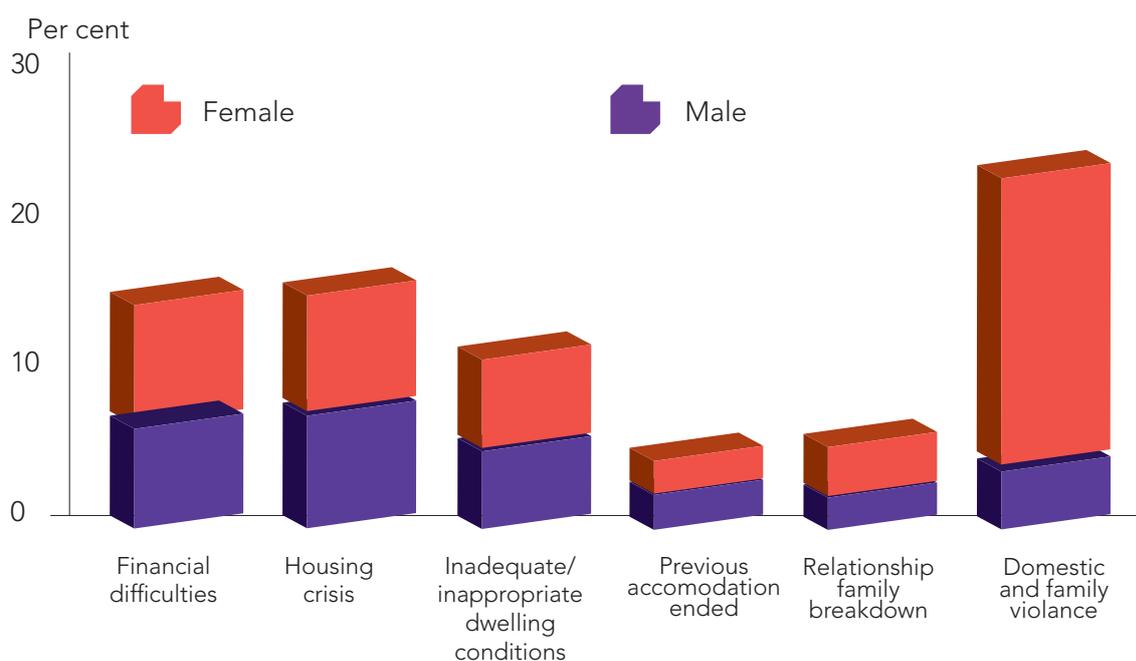
Area	No. of Households	Total renting households	Per cent %
Liverpool	1,567	3,965	39.5
Hoxton Park - Carnes Hill	96	243	39.5
Hinchinbrook	214	569	37.6
Green Valley	289	777	37.2
Lurnea	346	1,004	34.5
Liverpool LGA	5,125	16,429	31.2
Greater Sydney	122,165	487,404	25.1

## PERSONAL DRIVERS OF HOMELESSNESS

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In 2013-2014, the main reason for seeking assistance from specialist homelessness services nationwide was due to domestic violence. From March 2014 to March 2015, 997 recorded criminal incidents of assault related to domestic violence were recorded in the Liverpool LGA (BOSCAR, 2015). This represents the fourth highest rate of recorded domestic violence incidents in NSW.

Figure 6: The main reason for seeking assistance from specialist homelessness services<sup>15</sup>.



<sup>13</sup> ABS, Census of Population and Housing 2011. Compiled and presented in atlas.id.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> AIHW, 2014.

## MENTAL ILLNESS

People with unmanaged mental health difficulties are more likely to experience repeated episodes of homelessness or remain homeless long-term. They are also more likely to experience rough sleeping or move between crisis accommodation services (FAHCSIA, 2008).

The NSW Adult Population Health Survey found that from 2011-2013, 11.5 per cent of residents surveyed in the Liverpool LGA reported that they suffered high or very high psychological distress compared to 10.5 per cent in Greater Sydney (PHIDU, 2014).

## SUBSTANCE MISUSE AND PROBLEM GAMBLING

The NSW Adult Population Health Survey found that from 2011-2013, 4.6 per cent of the population in South West Sydney consume alcohol at levels posing lifetime risk to health compared to 17.0 per cent of Greater Sydney (PHIDU, 2014).

In 2012, South West Sydney had the lowest rate of problem gamblers in NSW at 0.3 per cent of the population compared to 0.9 per cent in NSW. However South West Sydney had the highest cumulative percentage of low and moderate risk gamblers at 8.23 per cent compared to 5.55 per cent in NSW (OLGR, 2012), demonstrating that gambling affects more households in South West Sydney than in NSW.

## DISADVANTAGED YOUTH

Children and young people are over-represented in the homeless population. Over a quarter of people accessing specialist homelessness services in 2013-2014 were under the age of 18 years old and 16 per cent were under 10 years old. Family breakdown, domestic violence, physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and substance misuse are strongly linked to homelessness amongst children and young people (NYC, 2008). Nearly 30 per cent of the population in Liverpool is under the age of 18 compared to 25.5 per cent in Greater Sydney.

## ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

From 2009-2013, 3,041 refugees resided within the Liverpool LGA. This is the second highest number of refugees residing in an LGA (Refugee Council of Australia, 2014). The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare does not collect data on the visa status of people experiencing homelessness. However housing and homelessness is of primary concern for refugees and humanitarian entrants who struggle to secure sustainable and appropriate housing (Refugee Council of Australia, 2013).

## INDIGENOUS STATUS

23 per cent of people across Australia accessing specialist homelessness services identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (AIHW, 2014). 1.5 per cent of people in Liverpool identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, compared to 1.2 per cent of people identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in Greater Sydney (ABS, 2012c).

The particular patterns and trends pertaining to homelessness suggest that interventions should be targeted at both the structural and personal drivers of homelessness.

# DEVELOPMENT OF THE HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

Liverpool City Council's Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2017 have been developed in line with the University of Adelaide's Tool Kit for Local Government in addressing homelessness (Prance, Beer, Horne 2013). The methodology undertaken included the four phases outlined below.

## REVIEW PHASE

- i. The role and responsibility of Council in responding to homelessness
- ii. Current homelessness initiatives undertaken by Council
- iii. Local triggers of homelessness and the tier of government delegated to respond to it

## RESEARCH PHASE

- i. Australia's National, State and Regional policy frameworks for homelessness
- ii. Literature of best practice initiatives nationally and internationally for addressing homelessness
- iii. Responses by other Australian local councils in addressing homelessness
- iv. Responses by peak homelessness services to local council initiatives

## DATA COLLECTION

- i. Australian Bureau of Statistics data
- ii. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data
- iii. Liverpool Homelessness Street Count data
- iv. Crime, Welfare and Health data

## STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

- i. Semi structured interviews with Liverpool community homelessness services
- ii. Surveys or semi-structured interviews with people who are experiencing homelessness
- iii. Liverpool Listens survey for local community feedback
- iv. Survey for local businesses

## LIMITATIONS

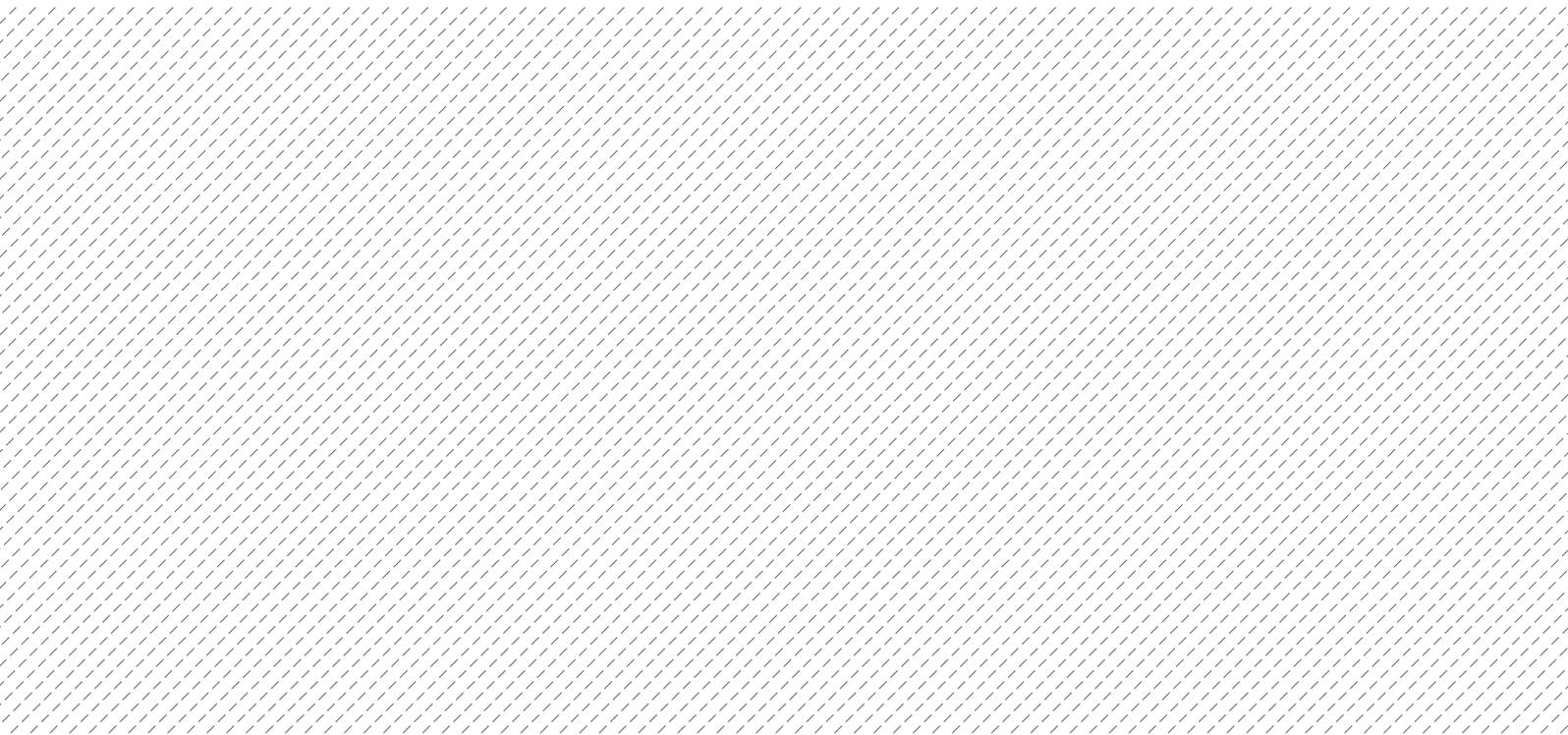
The homelessness sector underwent significant change under the NSW Going Home Staying Home reforms. On 1 November 2014, a new approach to the delivery of specialist homelessness services was implemented across NSW. Many homelessness services noted that it was too soon to comment on the effectiveness of the homelessness sector in addressing homelessness in Liverpool, or the role that Council could play under the new structure.

The community development workers at Liverpool City Council have extensive experience with homelessness issues, including long term collaboration with the homeless and community services sectors. It is the combined expertise and knowledge of Council staff and the homeless and community services sectors that has been utilised to develop these documents.

# MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In order to promote the effective implementation of the Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2017 across all areas of Council, annual reviews will be undertaken with the outcomes available to the community through reports to Council.

The Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2017 will be comprehensively reviewed in 2017 to ensure it remains relevant and reflects the changing needs of the community across the Liverpool LGA.





# ACTION PLAN 2015-2017

## PRIORITY 1: NECESSITY OF ACCOMMODATION

	Actions	Timeframe	Measurable Outcomes	Stakeholders	Resourcing
1.1	Establish a multi-departmental affordable housing working group within Council.	6 months	An affordable housing working group is established and meets on a monthly basis with relevant departments within Council.	Planning and Growth; Community Development and Planning	Within existing resources
1.2	Map all existing affordable housing dwellings in the Liverpool LGA including shop top housing, boarding housing, secondary dwellings and student accommodation.	6 months	Data tables indicating the quantity, location and nature of affordable housing in the Liverpool LGA are produced.	Planning and Growth; Community Development and Planning; GIS	Within existing resources
1.3	Calculate the demand for affordable housing in line with population growth forecasts and set specific targets for the provision of affordable housing in line with Council's strategic planning framework, <i>Growing Liverpool 2023</i> .	1 year	Targets for the provision of affordable housing in the Liverpool LGA are established in line with population forecasts and the local demand for affordable housing.	Planning and Growth; Community Development and Planning; Relevant State Departments	Within existing resources
1.4	Explore affordable housing supply incentives for the not-for-profit sector and commercial developers and engage in effective partnerships and strategies to increase affordable housing in the Liverpool LGA	1 year	A report on effective supply incentives for the not-for-profit sector and commercial developers in Liverpool is produced.	Planning and Growth; Community Development and Planning	Within existing resources
1.5	Develop an Affordable Housing policy.	1-2 years	An Affordable Housing policy is developed by Council's affordable housing working group and informed by local data collated from points 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4.	Community Development and Planning; Planning and Growth	Within existing resources

## PRIORITY 2: COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

	Actions	Timeframe	Measurable Outcomes	Stakeholders	Resourcing
2.1	Continue to provide support to specialist homelessness services, and coordinate local homelessness initiatives for people experiencing, or at risk of homelessness.	Ongoing	<p>Council supports the Liverpool Community Kitchen and Hub Strategic Committee.</p> <p>Council convenes the Free Food Services Working Group.</p> <p>Develop a Protocol to facilitate coordination of free food services in the Liverpool City Centre.</p> <p>Council coordinates and promotes free food services for people experiencing, or at risk of homelessness.</p> <p>Support the Liverpool/Fairfield Homelessness Steering Committee.</p> <p>Convene the Homelessness and Housing Crisis Taskforce.</p> <p>Partner with homeless services in the annual Nite Under the Stars community event to raise awareness for homelessness.</p> <p>Deliver an event during anti-poverty week to raise awareness of homelessness and social disadvantage.</p>	<p>Community Development and Planning</p> <p>Relevant external stakeholders.</p>	Within existing resources
2.2	Promote and engage people who have experienced or are experiencing homelessness in the decision-making process when planning strategies related to homelessness.	Ongoing	<p>Include people who have experienced, or are experiencing homelessness in interagency meetings, including the Liverpool Community Kitchen and Hub Strategic Committee.</p> <p>When planning strategies relating to homelessness or affordable housing, consultations should be designed to include people who have experienced, or are experiencing homelessness.</p>	<p>Community Development and Planning</p> <p>Family and Community Services Housing NSW</p>	Within existing resources

## PRIORITY 2: COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS CONTINUED

2.3	Support local homelessness services and local initiatives in seeking funding for projects that support identified gaps in the Liverpool homelessness sector.	Ongoing	<p>Funding opportunities from government, philanthropic and other private sector donors are identified and disseminated to local homelessness services.</p> <p>The ClubGRANTS and Community Grants Program are promoted to specialist homelessness services and local homelessness initiatives through existing networks.</p>	Community Development and Planning	Within existing resources
2.4	Facilitate opportunities for increased participation in initiatives that promote pathways out of homelessness for corporate and community groups.	1 year	Maintain a database of corporate and community groups that have an interest in addressing homelessness.	Community Development and Planning; Economic Development	\$2,000
2.5	Develop a community-based rough sleepers protocol with relevant local homelessness services working with this target group to facilitate timely and sustainable pathways out of homelessness.	6 months	A community-based rough sleepers protocol is agreed upon, and developed with local homelessness service providers.	Community Development and Planning; Relevant external stakeholders.	Within existing resources

## PRIORITY 3: PUBLIC SPACE MANAGEMENT

	Actions	Timeframe	Measurable Outcomes	Stakeholders	Resourcing
3.1	Develop an internal protocol for requesting assistance for people sleeping in public places or on Council assets	6 months	Enquiries or notifications of people sleeping rough are actioned within 48 hours.  Feedback is provided within one week of notification.	Community Development and Planning; Customer Service	Within existing resources
3.2	Provide training to all new staff on the nature, impacts and challenges of homelessness. Develop standard homelessness presentation notes on Council's homelessness protocol and the NSW Protocol for Homeless People in Public Spaces during induction.	Ongoing	Induction training for all Council staff includes a short session on homelessness.	Community Development and Planning; People and Organisational Development	Within existing resources
3.3	Develop and implement a practical training program for all Council staff.  Provide staff with the knowledge and practical tools to respond to people experiencing homelessness.	Ongoing	Training will be offered every two years to customer service, rangers, cleaners, Parks and library staff.	Community Development and Planning; People and Organisational Development	Within existing resources

## PRIORITY 4: SUPPORTING CITY PROSPERITY

	Actions	Timeframe	Measurable Outcomes	Stakeholders	Resourcing
4.1	<p>Mapping of specialist homelessness services, welfare and emergency relief services.</p> <p>Investigate opportunities to improve the provision of basic personal care facilities.</p>	6 months	<p>Current basic personal care facilities are mapped, and gaps identified.</p> <p>Avenues to collate resources, or access funding opportunities from government, philanthropic and other private sector donors are identified.</p>	Community Development and Planning	Within existing resources
4.2	<p>Update Liverpool assistance card and emergency relief directory.</p> <p>Ensure resources are readily available to the public and Council staff that come in contact with people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.</p>	3 months	<p>Emergency relief directory and Liverpool assistance card reviewed quarterly and updated when needed.</p> <p>Provide resources to Council staff that may come into contact with people at risk of, or experiencing homelessness.</p>	Community Development and Planning	Within existing resources

## PRIORITY 5: COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF HOMELESSNESS

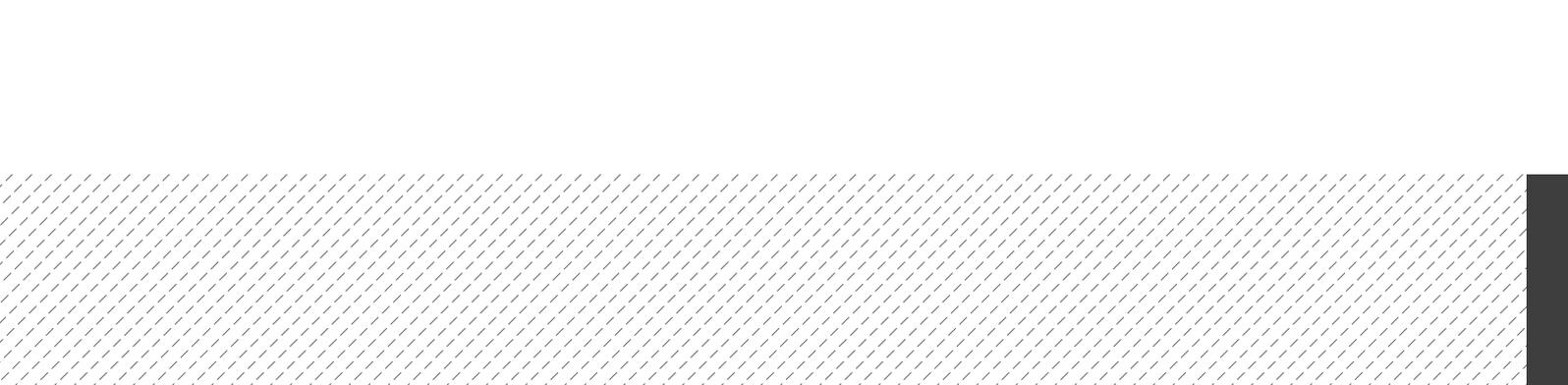
	Actions	Timeframe	Measurable Outcomes	Stakeholders	Resourcing
5.1	<p>Provide information to the community via a page on Council's website including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Local programs and activities for people at risk of homelessness and other members of the community concerned about an individual.</li> <li>b. Council's emergency relief and assistance card.</li> <li>c. Information on volunteering, donating or assisting those who are homeless.</li> <li>d. The NSW protocol for homeless people in public places and advice on the appropriate course of action.</li> <li>e. Information on Australia's whole-of-government approach to homelessness.</li> <li>g. List of local free food services.</li> <li>h. Liverpool Street Count.</li> <li>i. Data from Census and the Liverpool Street Count.</li> </ul>	6 months	<p>Webpage created with relevant information.</p> <p>Information updated annually with input from local homelessness services and homelessness.</p> <p>Service Directory developed and updated annually.</p>	Community Development and Planning; IT Digital Services; Strategic Communications and Research design	Within existing resources
5.2	<p>Explore opportunities for Council to promote awareness and to encourage support for homelessness in the Liverpool LGA.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Media opportunities are identified and utilised to convey a consistent message to the community on Council's approach to addressing homelessness.</p>	Community Development and Planning; Strategic Communications and Research	\$5,000

## PRIORITY 6: EVIDENCE BASED ADVOCACY

	Actions	Timeframe	Measurable Outcomes	Stakeholders	Resourcing
6.1	<p>Maintain accurate data on homelessness.</p> <p>Monitor the community's access to local homelessness services.</p> <p>Increase knowledge of service gaps in the Liverpool LGA.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Liverpool Street Count is reviewed and conducted annually.</p> <p>All customer service enquiries or notifications related to homelessness are tracked through Council's systems.</p> <p>The number and location of rough sleepers are documented and reported.</p> <p>Data is collected quarterly from local homeless services including a regular count of people turned away from crisis accommodation.</p> <p>Statistics are sought from the NSW homelessness information and referral service Link2Home.</p> <p>Statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics are collated.</p>	Community Development and Planning; IT Projects; IT Business Engagement; City Presentation; relevant external stakeholders	\$6,000
6.2	Maintain awareness of Federal and State government policy changes related to homelessness and respond to calls for submissions where deemed appropriate.	Ongoing	Opportunities to respond to Federal or State government housing or homelessness reforms are identified and where deemed appropriate submissions are written.	Community Development and Planning	Within existing resources
6.3	Advocate to the State and Federal government, and the private sector on key structural issues affecting homelessness in Liverpool including the supply of affordable housing, early intervention measures to prevent homelessness and other identified service gaps.	Ongoing	<p>Council representation on relevant reference groups for planning policies and strategies regarding homelessness is sought.</p> <p>Explore formal strategic partnerships with relevant State government departments.</p>	Community Development and Planning	Within existing resources

# REFERENCES

- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006) 2049.0- *Census Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness*. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011) 2049.0- *Census Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness*. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012a) 4922.0- *Information Paper- A Statistical Definition of Homelessness* Australian Bureau of Statistics. Canberra.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012b) 2049.0.55.001- *Information Paper- Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing*. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012c) 3238.0 *Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001 to 2026*. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (2014) *Specialist Homelessness Services 2013–2014*. Cat no. HOU 276. Canberra: AIHW.
- Beer, A. & Prance, F. (2012) *The Role of Local Government in Addressing Homelessness: Literature Review*. Adelaide: University of Adelaide Centre for Housing, Urban and Regional Planning.
- Beer, A. & Prance, F. (2013) *The Role of Local Government in Addressing Homelessness: Research Paper*. Adelaide: University of Adelaide Centre for Housing, Urban and Regional Planning.
- Chamberlain, C. (1999) *Counting the Homeless: Implications for Policy Development*, Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- Chamberlain, C. & MacKenzie, D. (1992) 'Understanding Contemporary Homelessness: Issues of Definition and Meaning.' Canberra: *The Australian Journal of Social Issues* 27(4), 274-287.
- FACS (2015) *Specialist Homelessness Services: South Western Sydney District Factsheet* Canberra: Department of Human Services.
- FAHCSIA (2008) *The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness*. Canberra: Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.
- Fopp, R. (1998) 'Re-Presentations of Homelessness', *Parity*, 11 (9): 18-19. Melbourne: Council to Homeless Persons.
- Housing NSW (2013) *NSW Affordable Housing Guidelines*. Family & Community Services.
- Macready, D. (2012) *Comments on the Future Directions for Specialist Homelessness Services- Consultation Paper*. Mission Australia.
- Mallett, S. (2004) 'Understanding Home: a critical review of the literature', *The Sociological Review*, 52 (1): 62-89.
- Megaritty, L. (2011) *Local government and the Commonwealth: an evolving relationship Research Paper No.10 2010-11*, Canberra: Parliament of Australia.
- National Youth Commission (NYC) (2008) *Australian Youth homelessness: A Report of the National Youth Commission Inquiry into Youth Homelessness*. Victoria: National Youth Commission.



Nepal, B., Tanton, R., Harding, A., & McNamara, J. (2008) *Measuring housing stress at small area levels: How much do definitions matter?* Canberra: National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling. University of Canberra.

NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOSCAR) (2015) *New South Wales Recorded Crime Statistics Quarterly Update March 2015 Statistical Report Series*. Sydney: BOSCAR.

Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing (OLGR) (2012) *Prevalence of Gambling and Problem Gambling in NSW*. Sydney: Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing.

Public Health Information Development Unit (PHIDU) (2014) *Social Health Atlases of Australia - Released Online: 2008 to 2014*. Adelaide: University of Adelaide Public Health Information Development Unit.

Prance, F., Beer, A. & Horne, S. (2013) *The Role of Local Government in Addressing Homelessness: A Tool Kit for Local Government*. Adelaide: University of Adelaide Centre for Housing, Urban and Regional Planning.

Refugee Council of Australia (2013) *Submission to the NSW Department of Family and Community Services on Future Directions for Specialist Homelessness Services in NSW*. Sydney: Refugee Council of Australia

Refugee Council of Australia (2014) *Humanitarian Entrants in New South Wales: A resource for New South Wales government agencies*. Sydney: Refugee Council of Australia.

Rossi, P. (1989) *Down and out in America: The Origins of Homelessness*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Taylor, M. & Edwards, B. (2012) *The influence of unstable housing on children's wellbeing and development: Evidence from a national longitudinal study*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Vitis, L., Gronda, H. & Ware, V.A. (2010) *International Rough Sleeping*. Melbourne: Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI), Research Synthesis Service for the Australian Government, Melbourne, Australia.

**LIVERPOOL  
CITY  
COUNCIL**



---

**LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL**

Ground Floor, 33 Moore Street,  
Liverpool NSW 2170



1300 36 2170



[www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au](http://www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au)



[lcc@liverpool.nsw.gov.au](mailto:lcc@liverpool.nsw.gov.au)



NRS 133 677 (for hearing and  
speech impaired callers only)