

ASPIRATION	Community
RESPONSIBLE DIRECTORATE	Community Services
RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS UNIT	Community Development/Ranger & Emergency Services
RELEVANT LEGISLATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Public Health Act 2016</i> • <i>Dog Act 1976</i> • <i>Litter Act 1979</i> • <i>Caravan and Camping Grounds Act 1995</i> • <i>Criminal Code Act 1913</i> • <i>Lands Administration Act 1997</i> • <i>City of Armadale Property Local Law</i> • <i>Activities and Trading in Thoroughfares and Public Places Local Law</i>

1. Objective

This policy is to define the approach of the City of Armadale to the issue of primary homelessness in the community.

2. Policy

Scope

This policy applies to City staff and contractors who are delivering services in the community who come into contact with people at risk of, or are experiencing, primary homelessness. It also applies to how City staff support external organisations to deliver services to people at risk of, or are experiencing, primary homelessness. This guides all enforcement measures considered to be in the best interests of public health and safety, including the person experiencing homelessness.

Introduction

Causes of homelessness

The main drivers of adult homelessness are family and domestic violence, leaving prison, low incomes, housing affordability or access, physical or mental health problems, and relationship breakdown (Kaleveld et al. 2018).

Risk of homelessness is increasing for low-income older person households, particularly older women, which is driven by a lack of social housing, high rents, and absence of retirement savings (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW] 2025; Thom 2024).

Homeless children are also a large and growing group; they become homeless with their families due to poverty or because of family violence or abuse in the home. Early experiences of homelessness are highly correlated with adult homelessness (Kaleveld et al. 2018). Children placed in out-of-home care have a much higher incidence of homelessness after exiting care than for other young Australians (AIHW 2025).

There is an overrepresentation of Aboriginal people seeking homelessness and social housing services compared with non-Aboriginal people (Salvation Army 2025). This relates to complex and interrelated factors including exposure to family violence, substance disorders, unemployment, low education levels, and poor health. These factors are both contributors to, and outcomes of, insecure housing circumstances.

Approach

The City of Armadale will take a compassionate approach to the issue of primary homelessness by its support and when possible, coordination of the relevant departments, sector organisations and service agencies involved in this area. City staff and its contractors who interact with people experiencing **primary homelessness** will do so with an attitude of empathy and a disposition to assist.

It is not illegal to beg or sleep rough. However, there are some circumstances where the WA Police, the Rangers and Health Services can, using their discretion, deal with associated issues under their respective legislation.

The City will:

Direct Services

- Provide ongoing support to vulnerable community members who access the Champion Centre, including people experiencing primary homelessness, through the informal drop-in service offered, the Food Relief Program, direct access to external organisations based at the Centre and referrals to other local service providers offering emergency relief.

City of Armadale Employees and Contractors

- Proactively provide options to people experiencing primary homelessness for example:
 - Provide a list of services available including accommodation options and organisations providing food/emergency relief services including the City's Champion Centre
 - Contact relevant departments who will take a collaborative approach to assist further if required and if possible, for example, making calls to support services on behalf of the person.

- For issues that are deemed to be a potential health and/or safety risk (for example, dogs belonging to the person but classified as 'stray', fires the person may use to keep warm, littering, public drinking or engagement in anti-social behaviour), staff will notify the City's Rangers and/or the WA Police for assistance. The implementation of local and State law may be required.

The City, in conjunction with the WA Police, may move individual/s on from land under the care and control of the City where, in the opinion of City officers:

- those experiencing homelessness are not proactively seeking alternative accommodation and are not engaging with relevant organisations to secure alternative accommodation; or
- they are residing in public facilities including public toilets.

Following the issue of a warning the City will issue a prohibition notice applying to the place, to individual/s on land under the care and control of the City, where, in the opinion of City officers:

- there are no sanitary facilities available or accessible; or
- their actions, activities or behaviour are disturbing the peace or amenity of the area by way of noise, or refuse, or public drinking or unseemly acts or verbal abuse of members of the public including antisocial behaviour¹; or
- there is a reasonable belief or evidence that individual/s are defecating or urinating in a place that is not a sanitary facility; or
- there is a reasonable belief or evidence of any excrement from animals accompanying the individual/s which is not being collected and disposed of appropriately; or
- they are camping within 200m of any children's playground, Primary School, Early Learning Centre or Childcare facility

and will seek the cooperation of the WA Police to give effect to the notice by moving the individual/s on.

Following the issue of a warning the City will issue a prohibition notice applying to the whole of the City to individual/s on land under the care and control of the City, where, in the opinion of City Officers:

- there has been a breach of any provision of any Act of Parliament that the City administers, or any local law of the City; or
- there has been subsequent breach of a prohibition notice for a place; or
- there is a reasonable belief or evidence that criminal or illegal activities are being undertaken

¹ For the purpose of this Policy, the term anti-social behaviour does not include sleeping in a public area.

and will seek the cooperation of the WA Police to give effect to the notice by moving the individual/s on.

Advocacy

- Align with the WA Government's Strategy on Homelessness where possible.

Support to Sector Organisations

Provide in-principle support to services assisting individuals to transition into housing and to maintain housing

- Provide financial assistance to organisations providing food/emergency relief services through Community Grants and contracts
- Assist organisations seeking to provide services for local people experiencing primary homelessness with the allocation of a suitable location and promotion of the service
- Lead the coordination of the South East Emergency Relief Forum.

3. Influencing Strategies or Plans

NA

4. Applicable Legislation

- *Public Health Act 2016*
- *Dog Act 1976*
- *Litter Act 1979*
- *Caravan and Camping Grounds Act 1995*
- *Criminal Code Act 1913*
- *Lands Administration Act 1997*
- City of Armadale Property Local Law
- Activities and Trading in Thoroughfares and Public Places Local Law.

5. Definitions

Homelessness:

The Australian Bureau of Statistics define a person as homeless if they do not have suitable accommodation alternatives and their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate;
- 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.

This includes persons living in; improvised dwellings, tents, sleeping out, in cars, buses, trains, and buildings not designed for housing (rough sleeping); supported accommodation for the homeless; temporarily with other households; boarding houses; other temporary lodging; and living in severely crowded dwellings.

Primary Homelessness

People in the sleeping rough or the sleeping out category are considered to be experiencing **primary homelessness**. This policy is focused on addressing this category of homelessness.

References

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. 2025. "Specialist homelessness services annual report 2023–24." Australian Government. [Specialist homelessness services annual report 2023–24, Clients leaving care - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](#)

Kaleveld, Lisette, Ami Seivwright, Emily Box, Zoe Callis, and Paul Flatau. 2018. *Homelessness in Western Australia: A review of the research and statistical evidence*. Perth: Government of Western Australia, Department of Communities.

Salvation Army. 2025. "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homelessness statistics." Salvation Army. [Aboriginal Homelessness in Australia Statistics | The Salvation Army Australia](#)

Thom, Greg. 2024. "Older women on the frontline of housing affordability crisis." Institute of Community Directors Australia. [Institute of Community Directors Australia | Older women on the...](#)

VERSION CONTROL			
RELEVANT DELEGATIONS INITIAL COUNCIL ADOPTION	CEO		
	19 April 2021	REFERENCE	CS9/4/21
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