

Item 3.2

Institute of Global Homelessness

File No: S051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

Last year, I met with Dame Louise Casey, Chair of the Advisory Committee for the Institute of Global Homelessness and Graham West, National President of the St Vincent De Paul Society as well as other key stakeholders to discuss the Institute's work to address homelessness and the possibility of establishing one of their projects in Sydney.

The Institute of Global Homelessness is committed to ending street homelessness in cities around the world through partnerships with local, national and regional organisations.

The Institute's global initiative, *A Place to Call Home*, aims to end street homelessness in 150 cities by 2030. The first step in achieving that goal will be pioneer projects to reduce and end street homelessness by 2030 in up to 14 cities around the world.

Key organisations have been looking at whether Sydney could be involved in one of the pioneer projects. The organisations include St Vincent De Paul Society, Mission Australia, St Vincent's Health, the Mercy Foundation and Catholic Care, the NSW Government, as well as our own City staff.

The first step is the establishment of a local office for the Institute for Global Homelessness. The Institute will work with all key stakeholders to establish a collaborative project focused initially in our local area.

St Vincent De Paul Society has indicated that a one-off seed grant of \$100,000 is needed to establish the office and to launch the project in Sydney.

As part of the project, the Institute of Global Homelessness, St Vincent DePaul, the NSW Government and the City of Sydney will also agree to a Memorandum of Joint Commitment to outline the how we will all work together. That Memorandum is currently being finalised.

City Action

While homelessness is a State Government responsibility, the City has been working to help people sleeping rough in the inner city for over 30 years.

As the first council in Australia with a dedicated Homelessness Unit, our innovative, evidence-based responses to reduce homelessness include:

- Public Space Liaison Officers who work seven days a week to support people sleeping rough including connecting them with specialist services;
- Conducting twice-yearly street counts that track the number of people sleeping rough;

- Helping people vulnerable to extreme weather through our collaborative Emergency Response Protocol which includes offering water, sunscreen and health checks to people sleeping rough along with information about welcoming places to keep cool such as the City's libraries and community centres;
- Offering training and education for specialist homelessness services, businesses and community groups;
- Hosting quarterly homelessness inter-agency meetings; and
- Engaging and coordinating services across our city.

We invest \$2.2 million every year to support the delivery of specialist homelessness services including investing \$3.5 million over three years to fund specialist homelessness services in the inner city. In 2018/19 the City is funding:

- \$700,000 for assertive outreach and case coordination and post crisis support services, delivered by Neami Way2Home;
- \$300,000 for prevention and support to young people at risk of homelessness, delivered by Launchpad, and;
- \$200,000 for culturally specific outreach services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, delivered by Innari and Aboriginal Housing Corporation.

No one organisation can solve homelessness. A coordinated and systemic approach is needed. Our work with specialist homelessness services, Family and Community Services (FACS), Police, Health and others demonstrates how collaboration, and sharing expertise and resources can deliver better outcomes for our community.

In 2017/18, 415 people were assisted to exit homelessness or were prevented from becoming homeless as a result of a program supported by the City.

In April 2018, I was proud to launch HomeGround Real Estate in Sydney.

HomeGround, a not-for-profit real estate agency, is an initiative of Bridge Housing that works to increase the number of affordable rental properties in Sydney. Its establishment was supported by a \$100,000 grant from the City. By June 2018, it had 41 properties under its management. Over the next two years, HomeGround aims to increase its portfolio by 150 properties per annum, with a specific focus on Sydney's inner city and middle-ring suburbs.

Social and Affordable housing

Less than one per cent of total housing in the inner city is classed as affordable. So more social and affordable housing is critical.

It's why I so strongly believe that the Sirius building in Millers Point (purpose built for low income people) should be retained for social and affordable housing and why I am calling for any future development of the Waterloo Housing Estate to include more social and affordable housing.

While housing is another State responsibility, the City does all it can to encourage more social and affordable housing - we offer sites we own, sell land at discounted prices to community housing providers, facilitate affordable developments via our planning controls and invest in affordable housing projects.

Most recently we provided a \$1.5 million grant to HammondCare for the development of a residential aged care facility, approved a grant of \$3 million to St George Community Housing Ltd for young people at risk of homelessness; and approved land sales in Alexandria and Redfern, with a subsidy of approximately \$18 million to deliver around 450 additional affordable housing properties.

To date, the City has supported the delivery of 835 new affordable housing dwellings – there are an additional 423 dwellings with a Development Application (DA) lodged, approved or under construction, and 533 dwellings in the pipeline that have not yet reached DA stage.

It's an important contribution but for real change we need sustained and urgent investment of social and affordable housing in the inner city by the State Government.

National campaign to fix the housing system

There is a national campaign currently running that seeks to end homelessness in Australia by 2030. The *Everybody's Home* campaign is an initiative of housing and homelessness specialist providers.

Everybody's Home calls for the provision of more affordable housing options, the prioritisation of first home buyers over investors, nationally consistent tenant protections and immediate relief for people experiencing housing stress.

Achieving these goals would require reforms to our taxation system, the development of a National Housing Strategy, getting rid of unfair rental increases and no grounds evictions; increasing Commonwealth Rent Assistance and developing a plan to end homelessness in Australia by 2030.

It will need our Federal and State Governments to work with City Governments and key stakeholders and to make this work a priority.

Next week, the City will hold our twenty-second bi-annual Street Count.

Volunteers at the August 2018 count found 278 people sleeping rough on a very cold winter morning and while it was a reduction in numbers compared to 2017, it was still 278 people too many.

There are many reasons someone can become homeless, from domestic and family violence, mental health, substance use, and unemployment. A key issue is also a lack of social and affordable housing in Sydney and especially in the inner city.

We need to give people better options and we urgently need more social and affordable housing in the inner-city.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council enter into a Memorandum of Joint Commitment with the Institute of Global Homelessness, St Vincent DePaul Society NSW and the NSW Government to outline the commitment and partnership under which we will work together to try and end street homelessness and that a copy of the Memorandum be circulated to all Councillors once it is finalised;
- (B) Council support the establishment of a collaborative initiative to reduce homelessness in Sydney through the Institute for Global Homelessness' A Place to Call Home project, following consultation with key stakeholders;
- (C) Council approve a one-off grant of up to \$100,000 (excluding GST) to be funded from the 2018/19 Homelessness Unit budget to St Vincent De Paul Society NSW to support the establishment of an office for the Institute for Global Homelessness in Sydney, subject to the submission of a detailed grant proposal;
- (D) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to enter into a grant agreement with St Vincent De Paul Society NSW and report back to Councillors via a CEO Update; and
- (E) the Lord Mayor call on the State and Federal Governments to respond urgently to the requests made by the Everybody's Home Campaign.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE

Lord Mayor