

Resolution of Council

18 November 2019

Item 13.4

Use of City of Sydney Libraries to Tackle Homelessness

Moved by Councillor Scott, seconded by Councillor Miller -

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note:
- (i) homelessness is a complex issue with no single solution;
 - (ii) the August 2019 Street Count found 254 people sleeping rough, and 592 in crisis and temporary accommodation;
 - (iii) the NSW Homelessness Action Plan (HAP) lists education, employment, stable family life, and involvement in the community as key protective factors in preventing homelessness;
 - (iv) the City of Sydney is investing \$6.6 million over three years to operate our Homelessness Unit, this includes \$4.2 million funding for services to reduce homelessness through Family and Community Services NSW;
 - (v) rough sleeping is a significant portion of the City's homeless population, and currently there are scarce options for services to meet clients in the community in a confidential space. Options currently include parks and pubs, both of which are inappropriate;
 - (vi) the City of Sydney's commitment to working in the homelessness space highlights opportunity for partnerships with non-government organisations to grow;
 - (vii) libraries are well placed to make an impact by providing education opportunities, and space and occasion for social interaction and community involvement. Libraries allow a place that is safe, out of the elements, free, confidential, and sober for homeless patrons to meet with local non-government services;

- (viii) that San Francisco Public Library hired a full-time social worker in 2009, recognising that libraries are often frequented by homeless populations. Other American cities such as Washington DC, San Jose, Philadelphia, and Salt Lake City all also access social workers in some capacity through their library services; and
 - (ix) meeting with clients in a local community space such as a library allows for community connection and confidentiality where these spaces may not otherwise be available for homeless clients;
- (B) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to investigate the feasibility of a City of Sydney Community Centre and Library compact with non-government organisations who provide housing and homelessness support that operate within the City of Sydney to enable access and book private meeting spaces, for free, where available; and
- (C) should this study be feasible, the Chief Executive Officer be requested to investigate and roll out a 12-month trial.

Carried unanimously.

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