

Post Exhibition - Mobile Voluntary Services Policy and Guidelines

File No: S111435

Summary

This report seeks Council approval of the City of Sydney Mobile Voluntary Services Policy and Guidelines. The Policy and Guidelines set out the City's expectations of Mobile Voluntary Services operating in the local area.

Approval was given by Council on 6 April 2020 to publicly exhibit the Draft Mobile Voluntary Services Policy and Guidelines, with the documents being placed on public exhibition from 20 April to 18 May 2020.

Consultation included online engagement, a media release, and direct email to more than 65 homelessness sector organisations and groups. Members of the public were able to comment through Sydney Your Say or directly to City staff.

During the exhibition period, 24 written and online submissions were received, six of which were received prior to exhibition.

Sector partners and services were complimentary of the City's leadership, and the guidelines. Mobile voluntary services were also positive about the guidance and clarity the guidelines offer, and note that they will welcome any training and support the City can provide.

Of the 24 submissions, ten residents and three organisations made submissions about the ongoing impacts of mobile voluntary services in Woolloomooloo, including Tom Uren Place.

Following analysis of the public exhibition consultation, minor amendments to the draft Guidelines were incorporated. A full summary and analysis of the submissions is available at Attachment C.

Following endorsement of the Draft Policy and Guidelines, the City will undertake a series of activities to support the effective implementation of the policy and guidelines.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council :

- (A) note the submissions and feedback received through the public exhibition process as shown at Attachment C to the subject report;
- (B) adopt the Mobile Voluntary Services Policy and Guidelines, as amended and shown at Attachments A and B to the subject report;
- (C) note the activities planned and resources required to support effective implementation of the policy and guidelines;
- (D) note that people and organisations who made submissions will be notified of the adoption of the Mobile Voluntary Services Policy and Guidelines and the City responses as shown at Attachment C to the subject report

Attachments

- Attachment A.** Mobile Voluntary Services Policy
- Attachment B.** Mobile Voluntary Services Guidelines
- Attachment C.** Summary of Submissions and Feedback Received
- Attachment D.** List of Organisations and Groups Consulted

Background

1. Approval was given by Council on 6 April 2020 to publicly exhibit the Draft Mobile Voluntary Services Policy and Guidelines.
2. The documents were on public exhibition from 20 April to 18 May 2020. Twenty-four written and online submissions were received during the exhibition period, six of which were received prior to exhibition.
3. Sector partners were complimentary of the City's leadership, and praised the guidelines, and the City's intention to build capacity of services. Mobile voluntary services who made submissions were positive about the guidance and clarity the guidelines offer, while welcoming any training and support the City can facilitate to improve their service delivery.
4. Of the 24 submissions received, 10 residents and three organisations made submissions about the ongoing impacts of mobile voluntary services in Woolloomooloo, including descriptions of anti-social behaviour and other issues arising from the nightly service operation in Tom Uren Place.
5. Tom Uren Place is owned and managed by NSW Rail Corporation, except for Junction Lane which runs along the back of Tom Uren Place, which is the responsibility of the City.
6. As the City is not the landowner, we are unable to require groups, including mobile voluntary services, to obtain event permits, or take compliance action in relation to activities, except where there is excess noise.
7. The Chief Executive Officer and Director City Services will meet with appropriate NSW Government staff to discuss the ongoing management of Tom Uren Place.
8. Key themes from submissions received from local residents and business included:
 - (a) concerns about the use and management of public space in Woolloomooloo, and in particular the need to resolve jurisdictional and management issues with Tom Uren Place;
 - (b) the need for a stronger regulatory approach;
 - (c) the need for better coordination of services, particularly in Woolloomooloo and on Martin Place;
 - (d) anti-social behaviour, particularly in Woolloomooloo and on Martin Place a result of people being attracted to the area;
 - (e) requests for City support in the form of training, interagency meetings, parking permits;
 - (f) questions and concerns around approvals and permits;
 - (g) requests to move services indoors;
 - (h) hours of operation;

- (i) mobile voluntary services do not address the causes of homelessness and disadvantage; and
 - (j) the Covid-19 pandemic.
9. Following endorsement of the Draft Policy and Guidelines, the City will undertake a series of activities to support the effective implementation of the policy and guidelines, including:
- (a) active use of enforcement powers for breaches of existing legislation;
 - (b) high-level discussions with NSW Rail Corporation with the goal of achieving improved the management of Tom Uren Place;
 - (c) working with mobile voluntary services to ensure they comply with applicable legislation; and
 - (d) implementing a program of education and engagement to ensure service is appropriate and targeted to need.
10. If the Mobile Voluntary Services Policy and Guidelines are adopted by Council this will rescind the existing Mobile Free Food Services Policy and Voluntary Accord 2007.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

11. Sustainable Sydney 2030 is a vision for the sustainable development of the City to 2030 and beyond. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the City, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 5 - A Lively and Engaging City Centre;
 - (i) 5.1 The city centre has safe and attractive public spaces for people to meet, rest and walk through at all times of the day or night: Cleanliness, safety and high levels of amenity are a feature of the city centre;
 - (b) Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies;
 - (i) 6.4 There is equitable access to community facilities and places, parks and recreational facilities to support wellbeing in daily life: Residents and visitors can enjoy quality places and spaces where they can take part in cultural life and build connections with people from a range of backgrounds;
 - (ii) 6.5 The community has the capacity, confidence and resilience to adapt to changing circumstances: Communities naturally pull together and support each other in times of change and of stress and crisis;
 - (c) Direction 10 - Implementation through Effective Governance and Partnerships;
 - (i) 10.6 Strategic partners and collaborators support the delivery of Sustainable Sydney 2030: Collaboration and integration occurs with federal, state and other local governments for the benefit of our city.

Organisational Impact

12. Enforcement activities and issuing of permits and licences may have a minor impact on resources within City Rangers, Venue Management and City Properties Teams. These can be managed within existing resources.

Risks

13. In managing certain issues relating to the operation of mobile voluntary services through the application of existing powers available to the City, there may be a perception that the City is prohibiting or hindering charitable activity. In managing this risk and in ensuring fairness, the City will embark on engagement and education to support services to improve service models, redirect to areas of need, and improve outcomes for service users, residents and businesses.

Social / Cultural / Community

14. Mobile voluntary services are an important element within the range of services provided to people facing disadvantage, including people experiencing homelessness in the City of Sydney.
15. The City encourages people to do something good for their community through volunteering. Volunteering can assist people to make social connections, reduce social isolation and improve self-esteem.

Environmental

16. Whilst the sustainability outcomes for this project are primarily in the area of social sustainability, there are substantial potential co-benefits, such as a reduction in the amount of waste generated (including food waste), reduced food miles, and associated emissions.

Economic

17. Improving the amenity of the public domain will assist in maintaining Sydney's reputation as a welcoming, safe and inclusive place to live, visit and do business.

Budget Implications

18. Funds to support the implementation of the program of engagement and education associated with the Mobile Voluntary Services are budgeted in the 2020/21 Operating Budget and future year forward estimates. Funding for this work will be reassessed and included within existing resources wherever possible.
19. Any opportunities for significant additional investment in major initiatives will be subject to budget processes and Council approval.

Relevant Legislation

20. Local Government Act 1993.
21. Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997.
22. Road Transport Act 2013.

23. Work Health and Safety Act 2011.
24. Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017.
25. Food Act 2003.

Public Consultation

26. The Mobile Voluntary Services Policy and Guidelines were placed on 28 days' public exhibition from 20 April 2020 to 18 May 2020. Submissions could be made in writing or via the City of Sydney website online survey form, telephone and email.
27. A link to the draft Mobile Voluntary Services Policy and Guidelines on the Sydney Your Say website was distributed via direct email to more than 65 organisations and groups in the Homelessness sector inviting comment. Organisations and groups included:
 - (a) 45 mobile voluntary services (list of organisations shown in Attachment D) that operate in the City of Sydney's local government area;
 - (b) Six key stakeholder organisations involved in drafting the Mobile Voluntary Services Policy and Guidelines, including:
 - (i) Homelessness NSW;
 - (ii) NSW Department of Communities and Justice;
 - (iii) NSW Food Authority;
 - (iv) NSW Health;
 - (v) NSW Police, and;
 - (vi) St Vincent's Homeless Health.
 - (c) 11 Homelessness Assertive Response Team (HART) partner organisations (list of organisations shown in Attachment D);
 - (d) Woolloomooloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board (NAB), a key organisation in notifying social housing tenants in Woolloomooloo;
 - (e) Key residents and businesses that have engaged with the City on the issue of mobile voluntary services, and;
 - (f) People sleeping rough in key mobile voluntary service hotspot locations were verbally notified about the new policy and guidelines, and were invited to provide feedback in person through the City's Public Space Liaison Officers.
28. The City of Sydney released a dedicated media release regarding the public exhibition of the draft documents during the exhibition period.
29. The draft Mobile Voluntary Services Policy and Guidelines were available for download on the City of Sydney's Sydney Your Say website. They were available as accessible Word and accessible PDF documents.

30. During the consultation period, the webpage was visited 488 times, and the public exhibition documents were downloaded 171 times.
31. Over the public exhibition period, the City received a total of 18 submissions. The City also received six submissions prior to the formal public exhibition. These included:
 - (a) Eleven submissions from individuals, nine of whom did not wish to be named;
 - (b) Thirteen submissions from the following organisations and groups;
 - (i) Potts Point and Kings Cross Heritage and Residents Society;
 - (ii) Coptic Orthodox Community Outreach Service;
 - (iii) Ruff Sleepers;
 - (iv) The Footpath Library;
 - (v) NSW Food Authority;
 - (vi) Investa;
 - (vii) Homelessness NSW;
 - (viii) Beddown;
 - (ix) Department of Communities and Justice;
 - (x) Homelessness Health - South Eastern Sydney Local Health District;
 - (xi) Jesus Cares Ministry; and
 - (xii) Two submissions from organisations not wishing to be named.
32. A summary of all feedback received, and the City's response are provided at Attachment C.
33. As a result of the feedback received during the public exhibition period, changes and additions have been made to the draft Mobile Voluntary Services Policy and Guidelines, including to the Do and Don't section regarding safety, and to the safety section noting that mobile voluntary services must adhere to relevant Public Health Orders and restrictions issued by NSW Health and the Australian Government.
34. These are shown on pages 13 and 14 of Attachment B.

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