

2.1 PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO HOMELESSNESS - MONASH COUNCIL SUBMISSION
(EH:D20-9523)

Responsible Director: Natalie Reiter

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes and endorses Monash Council's submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Homelessness.

INTRODUCTION

The Legal and Social Issues Committee of the Parliament of Victoria has invited submissions from individuals and organisations across Victoria to contribute to a review on the changing scale and nature of homelessness. The Parliamentary Inquiry into Homelessness, which is open until 31 January 2020, has communicated a particular interest in hearing from people with lived experience of homelessness.

Monash Council has prepared the attached submission which brings to light the experiences of homelessness in Monash through a series of seven diverse case studies, and articulates urgently needed service improvements. The submission also details Monash Council's current coordination of championing a coalition of 14 Councils to consolidate a South East Region local government response to homelessness, and advocate for greater social housing across Victoria.

The submission communicates that Council requests to appear before the Committee to speak to the submission.

This report recommends that Council note and endorse the attached submission.

BACKGROUND

On 7 June 2019, the Parliament of Victoria agreed to the motion that its Legal and Social Issues Committee inquire into, consider and report on the state of homelessness in Victoria, and in particular, that the Committee should —

- 1. provide an independent analysis of the changing scale and nature of homelessness across Victoria;*
- 2. investigate the many social, economic and policy factors that impact on homelessness; and*
- 3. identify policies and practices from all levels of government that have a bearing on delivering services to the homeless.*

The online submission process is open until 31 January 2020.

Monash Council has welcomed the opportunity to prepare a submission based on its homelessness agenda of two distinct priorities:

- Assertive social outreach to people experiencing homelessness.
- Advocacy for systemic change through the coordination of a regional local government charter to respond to homelessness, and to generate more social housing across Victoria.

DISCUSSION

Monash Council's submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria proposes fundamental service improvements to support the most vulnerable members of our community experiencing homelessness. These are -

- (a) an appropriately funded homelessness outreach model to all Victorian local government areas;
- (b) an increase in social housing stock for people with complex issues; and
- (c) prioritisation by the service sector of individuals who are homeless.

The submission shines a spotlight on people experiencing homelessness in Monash that Council has supported through its assertive social outreach model. Through these case studies, Council has highlighted seven diverse cases of individuals and families it has intensively worked with who have experienced homelessness due to family violence, mental health, chronic health issues, inability to afford private rental, unemployment and addiction.

All seven individuals and families share a common aspiration of wishing to break their cycle of homelessness, but have been profoundly let down by an inadequate service system which has failed to provide appropriate, safe and timely housing and support services.

In addition to the case studies and proposed service improvements, Council through its submission, articulates its emerging agenda of championing a regional local government coalition of Councils committed to devising a unified response to homelessness and to advocate for more social housing across Victoria.

Monash Council initiated and hosted a *CEO Forum: Local Government Regional Response to Homelessness* on 26 November 2019. CEOs and executive staff from 14 eastern and south-eastern Councils explored a regional local government response to homelessness with a specific focus on generating more social housing stock. The coalition of Councils, representing more than two million residents, has committed to developing

a Regional Local Government Charter to Respond to Homelessness, which Monash Council will coordinate.

The Charter, in its early stages of development, will seek to prioritise the following three areas:

1. A regional strategic land utilisation project which will seek to scope and map available state and local government land for the purpose of social housing.
2. Advocacy for mandatory inclusionary zoning state-wide planning controls.
3. A Regional Housing Strategy including targets.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is envisaged Monash Council's submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria will contribute to fundamental service and housing provision improvements to achieve better outcomes for the most vulnerable members of the Monash community, and more broadly across Victoria.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

Implicit in Monash Council's homelessness agenda, and its submission to the Parliament, is that housing is a fundamental human right.

CONCLUSION

Monash Council has prepared the attached submission which brings to light the experiences of homelessness in Monash through a series of seven diverse case studies, along with articulating urgently needed service improvements. The submission also details Monash Council's current coordination of championing a regional coalition of Councils to coordinate a local government response to homelessness and advocate for greater social housing across Victoria.

The submission communicates that Council requests to appear before the Committee to speak to the submission.

This report recommends that Council note and endorse the attached submission.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Parliamentary Inquiry into Homelessness – Monash Council Submission (EH:D20-4790)