

CM9.1. Notice of Motion - Shelter for the Homeless in Albury

Cr Stuchbery moved

That Council staff investigate and report back to Council a proposal to create a shelter for the homeless of Albury.

CEO Note:

AlburyCity's Prevention of Homelessness Strategy was endorsed in October 2019. The aim of the Strategy is to work with service providers and the community collaboratively to reduce homelessness. In addition to the Strategy, AlburyCity has homelessness protocols to guide our team members when someone who is homeless seeks assistance, or a member of the public seeks information regarding someone who is homeless.

Homelessness encompasses those who are Roofless (rough sleepers), Houseless (temporary accommodation) and those living in Insecure Housing. Local support organisations have reported that there are over 200 people in Albury and the surrounding areas that are experiencing, or have recently experienced, a housing related crisis, with up to three to five people rough sleeping in Albury.

In the Albury LGA, YES Unlimited is the lead agency for all specialist Homeless Services. YES Unlimited, Public Housing (Dep Communities & Justice) and Community Housing Providers such as Homes Out West, provide a range of crisis or longer-term accommodation to those in need. Beyond the local need to provide expanded and more appropriate crisis accommodation for women and children escaping domestic and family violence, YES Unlimited is not supportive of the creation of additional temporary accommodation per se, as this is not a long term solution, and they would rather focus on the development of affordable housing options to reduce homelessness.

In addition to the Prevention of Homelessness Strategy, AlburyCity is soon to commence developing a Local Housing Strategy, which will include Affordable Housing. The Strategy will look at the themes of Affordability, Diversity, Supply and Resilience. The scope and key stakeholder engagement plan to support the creation of the Strategy will be presented to Council in September 2021. AlburyCity does not provide homeless services. Instead we work with service providers to support and advocate for the provision of funding, facilities and programs as needed in our community. AlburyCity is part of the Steering Group for the Albury Project, an innovative early intervention program which connects schools and community services to gather to identify young people who are at risk of becoming homeless and provide support to the individual and the family. This has been a highly successful model when piloted in Geelong with a 40% reduction in young people accessing specialist homelessness services. In addition, in response to the recent increase in rough sleepers in our LGA, AlburyCity is part of a newly established Homelessness Taskforce. The Taskforce, chaired by YES Unlimited, comprises service providers, the Police and AlburyCity's Communities and Education & Compliance Teams and aims to provide a coordinated response to assist rough sleepers in our community.