

POLICY NAME

Mobile Local Food and Homelessness
Support Services Policy

POLICY NUMBER

CD 001

DATE ADOPTED

10 July 2017

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PRC24

ECM NUMBER

8020366

POLICY TYPE

Council

REVIEW DATE

June 2020

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT

Community and Cultural Development

RELATED DOCUMENTS

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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support organisations that provide free mobile food and other support services in Council owned space in line with an integrated service delivery approach that encourages collaborative and safe service delivery in addition to managing issues around amenity and relationships with the local community.

Background

Definition: ***Integrated Service Delivery***

Integrated service delivery refers to a number of service agencies working together to collaborate and coordinate their support, services and interventions to clients. The focus is generally on clients, or client target groups, who have complex needs that require services from a number of agencies. Council officers will continue to support the Penrith Homelessness Interagency that enables organisations to connect, coordinate and deliver effective services to homeless people or people at risk of homelessness.

Mobile Local Food and Homelessness Support Services

Volunteer mobile services undertake an important role in providing ongoing and flexible support to homeless people. These services include the provision of hot and/or portable meals, food hampers, clothing and information and referral. Local free meal and support services are often the first point of engagement for people requiring assistance and these services can facilitate effective referral pathways to a range of accommodation, health and other support services that people may require.

Volunteer services operate within the broader homeless service system, alongside government funded Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) and other mainstream services and have an important role in providing outreach support to homeless people. These services complement the government funded service sector as they are not bound by government funding frameworks and are often able to respond to community issues in a more flexible way and in some cases these services are available after business hours and on weekends.

Council recognises the contribution provided by volunteer mobile food and other support services in addressing homelessness and social disadvantage across Penrith and consequently provides public space which is necessary for service delivery.

Other Stakeholders

Council owned spaces and facilities serve a wide range of purposes including parking, recreational and other uses. It is important that Council maintains a balanced perspective on the use of public space and addresses a number of challenges raised by stakeholders, including general community members and local businesses.

Policy Statement

This policy will support organisations that provide mobile local food and other support services to homeless people by encouraging collaborative and safe service delivery in addition to managing issues around amenity and relationships with the local community.

Scope

This policy has been developed to support organisations that provide free meals, food and other support services to homeless people in Council owned space including carparks.

The policy is based on compulsory requirements and discretionary elements as outlined below:

Compulsory requirements

Services are required to submit the following documentation to secure approval to operate in Council owned public space including carparks:

- Hold Harmless Agreement which includes service delivery information such as location, frequency of service delivery, organisational contact details and what the service delivery entails alongside a copy of the organisational Certificate of Currency for public liability insurance. The Hold Harmless Agreement will also outline food safety principles and practices and relevant resources will be made available to services.
- A brief outline developed in collaboration with Council detailing how services manage litter and excess food wastage. This will assist in managing a range of public health and community concerns and reduce the negative effects of litter in public space.
- Risk management plan that includes defined organisational policies and procedures to meet the varied issues that can arise through outreach service delivery in a public space. This would include policies and procedures for volunteers in how to respond to emergencies and working with people with complex needs.

Discretionary elements

Council officers will encourage free meal and support services to submit the following information that demonstrates their commitment to work within this policy to strengthen both their organisational capacity and service delivery to people who are homeless.

- Mobile free meal and support services to indicate their willingness to participate in training coordinated and/or delivered by Council to ensure their volunteers feel competent in responding to a range of issues that can present in service delivery. This would include improving referral processes and managing difficult behaviours. Council can assist these organisations with the provision of training and is able to work with them to develop and deliver appropriate training packages suitable for the specific organisation.
- Organisations also need to consider the impact of their service delivery on the business sector and there will be opportunity for them to outline how they will minimise any impact from anti-social behaviour on community and businesses as part of their regular procedures.
- Organisations operating a mobile service in a Council owned space will be requested to indicate their willingness to deliver their service as part of integrated service delivery approach to strengthen both their organisational capacity and service delivery to people who are homeless.

Implementation

The implementation of this policy requires increased liaison between Council and the mobile free food and related homelessness support services.

The Penrith Homelessness Interagency will continue to provide an effective forum for services to develop partnerships and identify opportunities to work collaboratively with a range of services. A wide range of organisations attend the interagency and there is structured opportunities for networking and sharing information on current issues, changes to policies and programs, professional development and systemic advocacy.

Additional in-kind resourcing will be provided by Council's Community and Cultural Development service to manage the policy. This includes identifying and facilitating linkages to funded organisations that have the capacity to attend free meal services and support homeless people, developing and delivering specialised training and monitor the success of the policy with various stakeholders across the community.