



WAVERLEY
COUNCIL

COVID-19 Response to homelessness in Waverley

Waverley Council is committed to supporting people who are experiencing homelessness. The [Waverley Protocol](#) sets out our commitment to providing support to homeless people living in public places, to increase their access to services and to minimise the negative impacts of being homeless on their lives.

We acknowledge homeless people are at greater risk of serious illness or even death if exposed to COVID-19. We also acknowledge that homeless people have a right to choose to be in public spaces and to decide not to accept offers of assistance or accommodation.

Support for rough sleepers

A network of specialist homelessness services work together to co-ordinate supports to meet the needs of people sleeping rough in the Eastern Suburbs. The network is known as the *Eastern Sydney Homelessness Assertive Outreach Collaboration* (ESHAC) and has operated in Waverley for approximately four years, successfully supporting and housing people who are homeless in the area.

Outreach

In response to COVID-19, extra outreach services and supports have been put in place across the eastern suburbs to help protect people who are sleeping rough in the community. Outreach workers are providing people with information on:

- public health directives to help reduce the spread of the virus
- where to access amenities to maintain personal hygiene
- where to access support services, food and other essential items

People are also being encouraged and supported to accept accommodation options as they become available.

Accommodation

Extra accommodation places and wrap-around supports are being arranged for homeless people to help them off the streets and to self-isolate if required.

Early indications show that many homeless people are taking up these offers of accommodation. It should be noted that some people may decline accommodation and it is their right to do so. For some people, especially those who have experienced significant trauma in their lives, accepting housing may not be an option they can cope with at this point.

Monitoring

Council is a partner agency of the ESHAC and supports the network by helping to co-ordinate responses, referring people in need and monitoring and cleaning public spaces where homeless people are located.

Council rangers monitor hotspot locations daily, including the number of people living in vehicles. The Police also monitor hotspot locations during night patrols in the area.

Cleaning

Council continues to keep public places clean, including the regularly cleaning of hotspot locations.

Food

Meals for homeless people continue to be provided by local homeless services, including Norman Andrews House, Wayside Bondi. They are supported by the major food suppliers operating in the area such as Oz Harvest, Our Big Kitchen and other major grocery chains such as Harris Farm, Coles, IGA and Woolworths.

Emergency relief

One-off support for people in financial hardship is provided by a number of charities operating in the area, including Anglicare, Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul Society and Sydney Multicultural Services.

What to do if you have concerns about someone who is homeless

- In an emergency, contact 000
- If concerned about someone's welfare, report to Waverley Council 9083 8000
- To report crime and anti-social behaviour contact Waverley Police 9369 800
- To help with accommodation contact Link-to-Home 1800 152 152
- To report rubbish dumping (such as clothing or other household items) contact Waverley Council 9083 8000. Although well intentioned, people donating clothes, unwanted items or food to homeless people is not the best way to support them and often results in waste accumulating and expensive rubbish removal. If you would like to help, please get in touch with our local charities to find out what you can do.

What do if you are at risk of homelessness?

If you are a tenant facing eviction or want information about how to negotiate rent with your landlord contact the Eastern Area Tenants Services (EATS) on 9386 9147 or make an online enquiry at www.eats.org.au.

Tenants Union is also keeping up to date with changes to tenancy laws and government subsidies related to COVID-19. Visit their website for the latest information at www.tenants.org.au.

More information about homelessness support services can be found at

https://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/community/housing_and_homeless/homelessness