

# Councils putting homelessness in focus

The Centre for Housing, Urban and Regional Planning (CHURP) is working in partnership with the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) and state-based local government organisations to explore the role of local government in addressing homelessness and housing.

A survey is being conducted to collect data on what local governments are currently doing to address the issues. The aim is to gain a comprehensive snapshot of the behaviours, actions and strategies being used by local government to address homelessness and related issues.

Funded by the Department of Families, Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), the research will inform a final report and handbook of best practises for local government.

Both City of Melbourne and City of Adelaide councils are taking steps to address homelessness in their respective areas, suggesting that the issue is already of concern for many local governments.

The City of Melbourne carried out its annual StreetCount survey on June 6,



Across Australia, 1000 business leaders slept rough and raised just over \$5.2 million for Australia's homeless in the annual St Vincent de Paul CEO Sleepout.

(traditionally one of the coldest mornings of the year), gathering information on the number of homeless people sleeping rough in the city.

Streetcount 2012 revealed that 101 people are sleeping

rough in Melbourne's streets and parks as winter takes hold. Fifty-four of the homeless were surveyed, revealing that 61 percent had been homeless for more than two years and

33 percent had been homeless for more than five years. Lord Mayor Robert Doyle said the figures highlighted the issue of homelessness in Melbourne.

"Over the past few weeks,

winter has really taken hold and it's obvious that anyone who is forced to sleep on park benches, in doorways or on the streets on such bitterly cold nights really has nowhere else to go," said Lord Mayor Doyle.

"People who sleep rough are those most in need of help. By collecting data on how many people sleep rough we get an idea of who the most vulnerable people are and can target our efforts towards helping them."

Adelaide City Council staff members have drawn attention to and raised funds for South Australia's homeless, joining CEO Peter Smith for the annual St Vincent de Paul CEO Sleepout on June 1st.

"Many of the city's homeless services rely on the support of the community to carry out the work they do; to transition people from living on the street to living into an affordable housing arrangement," said Mr Smith.

"The Vinnies Sleepout is an important cause and I am hugely supportive of the staff in their desire to organise their own community event."

St Vincent de Paul Society state president Dominic Lagana spoke at the staff sleepout about some of the challenges the Society faces in tackling homelessness.

"To see Adelaide City Council staff going to the lengths of organising their own community sleepout to raise funds is a true example of community working together to make a positive change for people doing it tough," Mr Lagana said.

## The steps to grant application success\*

The Australian Government has allocated grants to local governments through eight programs in the first half of 2012.

Did your council apply for a grant and were you unsuccessful? If you missed out, are you wondering how to draft a successful application for the upcoming rounds in 2012/13?

Colin Steele is Managing Director of Section51, a consultancy that assists local and state governments with Australian Government grants and funding. Colin believes more councils should receive funding and, in the steps below, outlines ways to improve the chance of success.

"This is my perspective on what makes a difference — a six-point summary of steps the department or assessor may take to cull, rank or rate your application and what you can do to get through each step."

1. Guidelines compliance. Up to 25 percent of applications don't get past this first gate. Even if you disagree with the guidelines, find them complex, or have difficulty with the timeframe, if you really want the money, make sure every box is ticked. Read the guidelines, read them again, ask questions, read them again. Think carefully about applying
2. Be clear. As assessors, with deadlines ourselves, we don't have a lot of time to work out what you are doing. If you are really clear in the first 200 words, it saves us searching through 15 attachments trying to work it out
3. Purpose of a grant. The Commonwealth Grant Guidelines say the purpose of a grant is to meet one or more 'National Policy

Objectives'. Write your application in the knowledge that the Australian Government is providing money so you can do their work for them. Read the guidelines, do your research, work out which national policy objective it falls under and how your project achieves it

4. Show you can deliver. A great project plan, risk management plan, and clear ideas provide the confidence that you can deliver. If you have a delivered grant already, and completed the paperwork properly, refer to it. You will be ahead of the pack
5. Have passion. If you want to stand out, then be proud of your community, your council and your project. Be passionate about the multiple benefits the project will provide both locally and nationally. This includes promotion in innovate ways. Show that you can do more than place a sign under a bush and a small post on your website
6. Be different. Make the application interesting by being different. Any council can plant trees, change the light globes, build a tourist information centre or clean up graffiti. If you are creative and innovate and show that you are adding value, such as contributing to the national policy objective, you will get noticed.

So, in conclusion, ensure that you comply with the guidelines, are clear about your project, contribute to a national policy objective, show confidence in delivery, have passion and do something different. These are the starting points that can help your council on the way to a more successful application, and to more money for local government.

\*Copy supplied by Section51



**SECTION51**  
Australian Government Grants and Funding

Section51 specialises in making Australian Government Grants and funding simple, successful and work for you.

Was Council successful in the recent grant rounds and you would like a simple explanation of your commitment to Canberra?

Or was Council unsuccessful, you would like to know why, and how to improve your chances for the next round?

The Section51 team can help. The rules have changed with grants and we know why. It is now harder to apply, and easier to lose your funds during delivery. Call the specialists to find out more, and for solutions.

**Our courses can help too.**

For councillors and senior managers, in partnership with Rod Brown (Cockatoo Network), how to maximise access to federal decision makers and programs.

For grant managers and operational staff, with my grants team, how to improve your success with grant applications, delivery and reporting.

To find out how we can help you with the Australian Government  
e-mail [colin.steele@section51.com.au](mailto:colin.steele@section51.com.au)  
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