



17 March 2017

Mayor and Councillors
City of Melbourne

Dear Cr Doyle,

Re: Proposed Amendment to City of Melbourne Activities Local Law 2009

The Seaford Housing Action Coalition (SHAC) was formed in early 2014 in response to the escalating problem of homelessness in the general Frankston/Seaford area. It soon became obvious that financial vulnerability and various social issues had put many other local residents at imminent risk of also becoming homeless.

We are concerned about the recent treatment of homeless people in the Melbourne CBD and object vehemently to any proposed By-Law amendment to change the definition of camping, and to confiscate peoples' property.

We believe that the media portrayal of those people was largely unfair and biased, and without real understanding of, or empathy for, the circumstances which may have led them to becoming homeless.

Surely it is the right of every Australian to make a temporary home, when they do not have a permanent one, on the land belonging to the people; public streets and other public land otherwise known as Crown Land.

Not every homeless person is a drug addict, unemployable or otherwise "undesirable" as is often implied - and often perceived by the general public. Those who are still deserve our support and a chance to better themselves. We all, as fellow Australians, have a responsibility to step up and help our fellow man.

The time is long overdue, we submit, for local governments to unite in a cohesive and determined effort to resolve the issue of homelessness as well as the social issues that lead to homelessness.

Every Australian resident should enjoy the basic human rights of food and shelter, yet a general lack of empathy, understanding, commitment and funding has led to the appalling situation in which we now find ourselves, where so many are deprived of those basic rights.

It is simply not good enough.

We refer you to our recent report "Sleepless in Seaford" (attached), which also considers your issue of people sleeping rough, in the Seaford – Frankston area. It explores and proposes a number of measures that might improve the security and well-being of homeless people in the broader community.

If, as is not disputed, there is insufficient 'crisis' or 'emergency' housing for people in need, we believe it is incumbent upon all levels of government to consider all transitional or interim initiatives such as measures to provide a level of safety and minimal amenity to people forced to

Coalition Members:

- St. Anne's Parish Social Justice Group
- St. Vincent de Paul Mt. Eliza Conference Social Justice Group

- Seaford Community Committee
- Residents of the Seaford Beach Cabin Park

sleep out. For example, on the Gated (or secure) Car Park model, and lockers for homeless people to store their possessions.

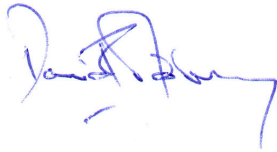
We challenge the Melbourne City Council, and you as Mayor, to listen to the voices of homeless people living in your municipality.

We believe that there are more creative and positive options to treat people sleeping rough than are proposed by the City of Melbourne's proposed amendments to Local Law 2009. We are concerned that this provision might influence other municipalities which are becoming increasingly aware of homelessness in their areas. The City of Melbourne should provide a good model, a standard, for local government in Victoria.

This challenge is also extended to the Federal, State and Local governments of Australia. We acknowledge the recent initiatives of the Victorian State government to respond to this immediate crisis, and we implore the City of Melbourne to take this issue to the leaders of all political parties.

Surely it is the duty of every Australian politician – including those elected to local government – to serve the people, and to uphold, and fight for, the human rights of all.

Yours sincerely,



David Moloney
Acting Chair,
Seaford Housing Action Coalition

Attachment: SHAC.-.Sleepless.in.Seaford.Report.-.2017.03.17 (first released in December 2016)

cc

Written submissions to MCC re Proposed Amendment Mailbox
Victorian Commissioner of Police
Municipal Association of Victoria
Mr Tony Nicholson, c/- Minister for Planning State Government of Victoria