

Council Policy

Homelessness



Legislation/local law requirements	Local Government Act Section 2.7 – The Role of Council
Relevant Delegation	N/A
Related policy procedures and documents	Social Strategy

Introduction

The City of Kwinana acknowledges that homelessness is a growing concern within the community and across Western Australia. It is a multifaceted issue rooted in systemic inequalities, housing insecurity, and personal crises. In Kwinana, we recognise that homelessness is not limited to people sleeping rough, but also includes those in overcrowded housing, temporary shelters, or at risk of losing their home. This policy affirms the City's commitment to responding to homelessness with compassion, collaboration, and respect for all individuals,

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide a clear framework for the City of Kwinana's role in addressing homelessness.
- Guide the City's decision-making, resource allocation, and community engagement.
- Strengthen collaboration with key stakeholders and services to respond effectively to homelessness.
- Support initiatives that prevent homelessness and enable pathways out of it.

Objective

The City of Kwinana aims to:

- Prevent homelessness through advocacy, early intervention, and accessible local support services.
- Strengthen local responses by working in partnership with community services, housing providers, and peak bodies.
- Ensure public spaces are managed in ways that are inclusive and respectful of people experiencing homelessness.
- Promote community awareness and reduce stigma associated with homelessness.
- Support culturally safe and self-determined responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Advocate for increased social and affordable housing in Kwinana and the broader region.

Scope

This policy applies to all areas of the City's operations, including but not limited to:

- Community services and development activities.
- Engagement with individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- Partnerships with local organisations and participation in state and regional networks.
- Staff training and internal process development.
- Targeted case management for young people aged 12 to 18 experiencing or at risk of homelessness, delivered through the City's Kwinana Detached Youth Services (YSK), funded by the Department of Communities – Child Protection and Family Support.

Policy Provisions

Definitions

Homelessness: As defined by the ABS, homelessness includes people without suitable accommodation who are living in improvised dwellings, temporary shelters, or other insecure housing situations.

Rough Sleeping: People without shelter living in public spaces, vehicles, or makeshift dwellings.

At Risk of Homelessness: People whose housing situation is unstable due to financial stress, family violence, health issues, or other vulnerabilities.

Housing First: A model prioritising permanent housing as the first response, with wraparound supports provided to maintain tenancy.

Supportive Housing: Long-term housing linked with on-site or linked support services for individuals with complex needs.

Culturally Safe Practice: Approaches that are respectful of and responsive to the cultural identities and lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and multicultural communities.

Policy

The City of Kwinana is committed to:

Advocacy and Leadership

- Advocate for sustained investment in social and affordable housing across Kwinana.
- Represent the needs of residents experiencing homelessness in relevant forums and policy discussions at the state and federal level.

Early Intervention and Prevention

- Support local programs that address the root causes of homelessness, such as youth disengagement, family breakdown, and financial hardship.
- Promote access to services that assist with tenancy support, family violence, mental health, and income stability.

Partnerships and Place-Based Responses

- Collaborate with local service providers, housing organisations, ACCOs, schools, police, and community groups to deliver coordinated and timely responses.
- Participate in cross-sector networks such as the District Leadership Group, Mandurah Kwinana Rockingham Improvement Team and the Rough Sleepers Coordination Group and contribute to shared action plans.

Inclusive and Safe Public Spaces

- Ensure public spaces are welcoming and safe for all community members, including those without stable housing.
- Manage public space and interactions with a trauma-informed approach.

Cultural Inclusion

- Partner with Aboriginal-led organisations to support culturally safe and community-led responses to homelessness.
- Ensure cultural protocols are upheld in service delivery and public engagement.

Staff Capability and Practice

- Provide training and resources for staff to respond respectfully and effectively to people experiencing homelessness.
- Develop internal protocols that guide City staff in working with vulnerable community members.

Information and Evaluation

- Contribute to local data collection efforts (e.g. the By-Name List) to inform planning and monitor trends.
- Review this policy regularly to align with evolving needs, legislation, and best practice.

Youth-Focused Responses

- Deliver targeted case management and support to young people aged 12 to 18 years who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness, through the Kwinana Detached Youth Services (YSK).
- This service, funded by the Department of Communities – Child Protection and Family Support, is a priority initiative of the City and plays a vital role in preventing youth homelessness and promoting early intervention.

OFFICER USE ONLY

Officers may amend this section without council approval.

Responsible Team	Community Services and Partnerships
Initial Council adoption	Date: 11 May 2016 Ref#: 189
Reviewed/amended	Date: June 2025 Ref#: 654
Next Review Date	Date: June 2029
Policy Document Number	D16/35301[v3]