

## IMAP Implementation Committee

### Briefing Paper

#### Consistent approach in the response to Homelessness - StreetCount 2018

---

#### BACKGROUND

1. Strategy 3.6 of the Inner Melbourne Action Plan states:

*“We will implement joint programs to improve the health, wellbeing and safety of the Inner Melbourne community. Opportunities include... Improving the coordination of accommodation and social support services for homeless people.”*

In response to this strategy, in November 2017 the IMAP Implementation Committee identified and funded the project “Consistent approach in the response to Homelessness” in the IMAP three year implementation Program for 2017-18.

2. At the IMAP Communities Steering Group meeting of 9 February 2018, the Group resolved to propose a joint rough sleeper StreetCount, potentially on the same night, across member municipalities. The approximate cost of this would be City Of Melbourne contributing \$60k, IMAP contributing \$45k and the other Councils each contributing approximately \$12k to \$17k.
3. The aim of a StreetCount is to collect accurate and up to date information at a point in time about the extent of people sleeping rough in parks, streets and other areas of a municipality.
4. A joint StreetCount would create an inner-Melbourne baseline that could be used to:
  - improve program and response planning to address homelessness
  - strengthen IMAP relations with the homelessness service sector
  - improve understanding of the transient nature of rough sleepers
  - support IMAP advocacy.
5. The IMAP Executive Forum identified the need for the StreetCount to be part of a wider advocacy/communication framework that addressed:
  - service coordination
  - information sharing
  - communication and advocacy to the state government regarding their response (recognising that improved data from the StreetCount will help with this)
  - advocacy around the impacts of government social policies reducing support for vulnerable people
  - setting a baseline on numbers, movements etc. that can be used to assess if any differences have been made as a result of introduced programs.

#### DISCUSSION

6. The City Of Melbourne is currently preparing for its eighth StreetCount on 5 June 2018. It conducts its count every two years. Over 100 trained volunteers walk around a pre-identified segment of the City of Melbourne pre-dawn, surveying or counting by observation people they encounter who are sleeping rough. The count area covers approximately 20 per cent of the municipality taking into account all known hot spots.
7. The City of Port Philip has also recently undertaken an inaugural StreetCount of its entire municipality. Both Councils' experiences and learnings could contribute significantly to the proposed joint StreetCount through sharing of collateral and documentation, processes and systems as well as enabling economies of scale e.g. joint volunteer training and collateral.
8. Critical components for a successful StreetCount include –
  - a. a dedicated council staff member managing the internal project logistics;
  - b. relationships with community agencies working in homelessness;
  - c. volunteers (at least 25 per cent skilled);

- d. intelligence on the local rough sleeping cohort;
  - e. volunteer equipment and training;
  - f. GIS mapping capability;
  - g. human resources, and
  - h. media/communications support.
9. The IMAP Council areas vary significantly in relation to geography, demographics, resources and relationships. A feasibility study commissioned on the joint count has recommended an appropriate methodology for each Council taking into account these factors.
  10. Central management and delivery of the StreetCount by an external partner would be the most effective and efficient approach to conducting a combined count across the IMAP council areas. Organisations such as Launch Housing who have conducted previous StreetCounts and have extensive agency partnerships across the CBD and inner-regions could be well placed to deliver a coordinated IMAP StreetCount.
  11. If progressing, an appropriate RFQ process for this contract needs to be undertaken as a matter of urgency with work to commence by 5 March 2017.
  12. A proposal seeking funding from DHHS for all or part-thereof of the overall joint StreetCount project costs has been sent on behalf of the IMAP Councils.

## RECOMMENDATION

13. That the IMAP Implementation Committee resolves to:
  - a. Agree to a joint IMAP StreetCount being conducted in June 2018
  - b. Support the development of an ongoing homelessness advocacy approach that utilises the data and knowledge collected, should the joint IMAP StreetCount proceed.