

# HANDBOOK FOR GRASSROOTS ORGANISATIONS HELPING PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS



CITY OF MELBOURNE



# A CITY FOR PEOPLE

A city for people welcomes all. It is accessible, affordable, inclusive, safe and engaging. It promotes health and wellbeing, participation and social justice.

## **Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners**

The City of Melbourne respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Land. For the Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri), Boonwurrung, Taungurong, Dja Dja Wurrung and the Wathaurung groups who form the Kulin Nation, Melbourne has always been an important meeting place for events of social, educational, sporting and cultural significance.

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Cover image: Vinnie Soup Vans nightly mobile meal service

## Disclaimer

This report is provided for information and it does not purport to be complete. While care has been taken to ensure the content in the report is accurate, we cannot guarantee it is without flaw of any kind. There may be errors and omissions or it may not be wholly appropriate for your particular purposes. In addition, the publication is a snapshot in time based on historic information which is liable to change. The City of Melbourne accepts no responsibility and disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information contained in this report.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Thank you also to the City of Melbourne's Homelessness Advisory Committee members for their advice and input. Special thanks to Launch Housing and Vinnies Soup Vans for sharing documents, policies and procedures as part of this Handbook.

This Handbook also draws upon resources and information from:

- The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission
- Volunteering Victoria
- Institute of Company Directors Australia

For further information of all external resources referred to within this document please go to [melbourne.vic.gov.au/grassrootsorgs](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/grassrootsorgs)

# 1. WHY THIS HANDBOOK WAS DEVELOPED

Since early 2016, there has been a significant increase in the number of people sleeping rough within parks, on streets and in other locations across the municipality of Melbourne. Response to this situation has been significant from government and specialist homelessness agencies and business. There has also been a rapid increase in the number of informal, grassroots organisations providing mobile support services to people sleeping rough or experiencing homelessness and poverty.

This involves the provision of meals, clothing and bedding and haircuts, along with larger operations offering shower and laundry facilities. These grassroots organisations operate with enormous goodwill, volunteer their time and provide invaluable social inclusion and support for people who can be very socially isolated.

Grassroots organisations work in the public realm, often after hours, when much of the homelessness service system is not operational. This work is undertaken in a dynamic and fluid environment and presents some distinct challenges for operators, clients and other city users.

## Research

In 2017, City of Melbourne undertook research to better understand the grassroots organisations operating within the municipality and how it could work with them more effectively to ensure public amenity and deliver integrated pathways out of homelessness. The research project involved 63 interviews with people who operate and volunteer with these organisations, those who donate and those who consume their services.

The grassroots organisations work within Melbourne's central city, including at Queen Victoria Market, Batman Park, Enterprise Park, Federation Square, Flinders Street Station and Southern Cross Station. Operators reported working with anywhere between 20 to 450 people per evening, responding to a gap in service provision, particularly prevalent during evenings and weekends.

While organisations operating within central Melbourne generally responded to a number of basic human needs such as providing food and clothing, most were motivated by principles of social inclusion, and emphasise the value of the relationships they develop with the people that use their services. They reported a range of motivations, including social justice, empowerment of marginalized people, and religious faith.

The research found that stakeholders wanted the City of Melbourne to create a reference guide or handbook to help support the grassroots organisations in delivering their services.

## 1.1 Purpose

This Handbook is a framework for grassroots organisations to implement best practice approaches. It includes information on standards, mandatory reporting, emergency and risk management planning and referral pathways to homelessness support agencies. Policy and procedure advice, templates and links to online resources and training courses for staff and volunteers are also included.

The Handbook is part of a three-year Council plan initiative to implement an integrated coordination approach with grassroots operators to amplify their impact and reduce duplication of services. The Handbook was co-designed with grassroots organisations and homelessness agencies.

## 1.2 Why and how to use this Handbook

This is a voluntary resource for grassroots organisations, to help you provide the best outcomes and service delivery possible, for your clients, volunteers and other grassroots groups. It is a live document and will be reviewed and updated regularly. We hope it makes it easier for you to navigate the requirements of running your programs and meeting legal requirements. It includes content on working with clients, volunteers, other grassroots groups and the broader Melbourne community. Case studies will be added in the future.

The Handbook includes the topics, tools and information grassroots operators told us are most important to know. It is not an operational manual or an exhaustive list. Your organisation can decide to what extent you use these tools. If you are small or your activities limited you may want to keep it simple; larger organisations or those with more volunteers and mobile services may need to implement more training, systems and procedures.

The following definitions are used throughout the document:

- **Grassroots organisations** - Groups or programs that provide mobile services for people experiencing homelessness, rough sleeping and poverty. Many groups or programs operate independently and involve volunteers.
- **Clients** - A person who uses or receives services provided by grassroots organisations and groups. The consultative group members chose this term to use throughout the Handbook. However some do not use the term 'client' within their own organisations, preferring other terms such as friends on the street, patron, consumers or referring to each individual by their names.

## 2. PRINCIPLES OF SERVICE DELIVERY

The Handbook was created with a Consultative Group of grassroots organisations and people with a lived experience of homelessness. The Group came up with three key principles of service delivery:

1. Dignity and respect
2. Health and wellbeing
3. A safe and welcoming environment

### 2.1 Principle one:

### Dignity and respect

This principle refers to treating your clients, volunteers, other grassroots operators and charities and the broader community with dignity and respect. This includes knowing how to work with people who have complex needs. It also includes properly screening, inducting, training and supporting your volunteers, respecting your clients' rights and providing mechanisms for complaints and feedback. To create a safe and welcoming environment for staff, clients, volunteers and other grassroots operators, your organisation needs to be structured well and have effective and clear governance, policies and procedures in place.

### 2.2 Principle two:

### Health and wellbeing

The health and wellbeing of your clients is about caring for both physical and mental health. Ideally, interactions with people who are rough sleeping or experiencing homelessness should lead to pathways out of homelessness, not just addressing immediate needs. Food and drinks need to be handled according to the *Food Act 1984* and the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.

### 2.3 Principle three:

### A safe and welcoming environment

Your staff, clients and volunteers and City of Melbourne residents, businesses and visitors need to feel safe and welcome in all areas of the municipality. This includes understanding child protection and mandatory reporting requirements. Risk management plans and health and safety procedures are essential to ensure safe outcomes for all.

# 3. HOW TO ACHIEVE THESE PRINCIPLES

To assist your organisation in achieving these principles we have compiled a series of topics and information for your consideration.

## 3.1 Working with people with complex needs

You and your teams are working with some of Melbourne's most vulnerable community members, many of whom have experienced intense childhood/adult trauma. People may be vulnerable because of their age, because they have a disability, or because of their circumstances. Vulnerability may be a temporary or a permanent condition. This definition is fairly broad, but includes children, youth, older people, people with physical, developmental, social, emotional, or other disabilities, and people who have been victims of trauma, crime or torture. This includes people who are sleeping rough or experiencing homelessness.

**At all times, the aim is to minimise harm to clients.** To minimise harm, staff and volunteers need to be aware of how to manage situations such as clients experiencing mental illness, clients under the influence of alcohol and other drugs, complaint management, responding to disclosures and referral pathways to homelessness agencies.

As part of your staff and volunteer induction and ongoing support processes, it is important to properly train staff and volunteers so they are able to work with and understand clients who are vulnerable and have complex needs. It is easy to unknowingly trigger emotions or re-traumatise people, even just by asking about their past.

We recommend staff and volunteers undertake understanding homelessness and the service system, mental health first aid, and understanding complex trauma/supporting recovery training. Training around working with culturally diverse community members and Aboriginal and LGBTIQ people is also encouraged. The Training section below has recommended courses and workshops.

## 3.2 Working with each other

Every day and evening, many different grassroots organisations and volunteers provide services to people sleeping rough and experiencing homelessness and poverty in Melbourne. Some have been operating for 45 years, while some are very informal groups who provide goods and services for a short while. It is very important for all grassroots organisations to respect each other and work well together. This means not preventing others from operating, and not over crowding and over servicing areas where other groups are already working. It also means respecting the policies and procedures of other groups and their ways of working with clients.

Sharing resources and cooperating with other grassroots organisations and formal homelessness agencies will create a more effective service delivery system and improve client outcomes. It will also create a safer and more welcoming environment for clients, volunteers, other grassroots groups and the broader community.

## 3.3 Child Safe Standards

Victorian organisations that provide services or programs to children or manage and operate facilities for children are required by law to comply with the Child Safe Standards. A child refers to a person under the age of 18. These are compulsory minimum standards, legislated under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 and help ensure children are protected from abuse and harm.

The seven standards are:

1. Strategies to embed a culture of child safety through effective leadership arrangements.
2. A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety.
3. A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
4. Screening, supervision, training, and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing staff
5. Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.
6. Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse.
7. Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

The Commission for Children and Young People have powers to oversee and enforce organisation's compliance with the standards. For more information on your legal responsibilities visit their [website](#)

### 3.4 Child abuse and reporting responsibilities

Abuse is an act(s) or omission which endangers a child's health, wellbeing and/or development. It can be a single event or a series of traumatic events resulting in 'cumulative' harm. It is rarely limited to one form of abuse and is often multi-dimensional, where several abuse types are experienced at the same time. For example, sexual abuse also involves physical and emotional abuse. Abuse can have lifelong consequences for those who experience it.

#### When to report?

If you see, hear or reasonably believe a child is in danger you must report the matter to your organisation and relevant authorities. Abusive and harmful behaviours include sexual abuse, grooming, physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, racial cultural or religious abuse and family violence.

1. If the child is in immediate danger or your concern relates to child sexual or physical abuse, you must call Police on **000**
2. If you have formed a reasonable belief that the child is in need of protection, and the matter does not relate to sexual or physical abuse, call Child Protection West Division on **1300 664 977**
3. To report concerns for a child after hours, on weekends or public holidays call Child Protection Emergency Service on **13 12 78**.

Please see the Further Resources document for details of DHHS's free Child protection information sessions.

#### More information

- Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) webpage on [Child Safe Standards](#)
- DHHS webpage on [reporting child abuse](#)

### 3.5 Tips for training and inducting volunteers

- Provide written volunteer position descriptions, including the activities and responsibilities associated with the role.
- Undertake screening processes. Volunteers should complete the Working with Children check and the National police check. This screening process will help to protect your clients and any children using your services from harm. See Safety Screening processes section.
- Support new volunteers with a good induction process and a mentor who knows how your organisation works.
- Provide welcome letters when volunteers are first recruited and ongoing feedback and recognition of their work.
- Provide a Volunteer Handbook including: a code of conduct, rights and responsibilities, policies and procedures, contact details within the organisation and emergency contacts, organisation history, expense reimbursement claim form.
- Train your volunteers in understanding homelessness, working with vulnerable people, first aid and mental health first aid and understanding complex trauma training where possible.
- Provide information on self-care so your volunteers are able to process and cope with difficult situations they may experience whilst working with you.
- Use online services to help recruit volunteers such as GoVolunteer, a free national database where you can advertise volunteer positions.

#### More information

- [Volunteer Management Toolkit](#)
- [Support and information for volunteers](#)
- [Volunteering Victoria's guide for volunteers](#)
- [Engaging volunteers - tips for organisations](#)



### 3.6 Safety screening process for staff and volunteers

It is recommended that staff and volunteers should complete the Working with Children check and the National police check. This screening process will help to protect your clients and any children using your services from harm.

#### Working with Children Check

The Working with Children Check is a screening process for assessing people who work with or care for children in Victoria. It is a detailed look at the criminal history and relevant professional conduct findings of applicants to protect children for sexual or physical harm.

Under the *Working with Children Act 2005* (the Act) if you're doing child-related work and are not otherwise exempt under the Act, you must have a Working with Children Check even if you already have a Police Check.

To complete a working with children check: <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/>

#### National police checks

A national police check can be completed quickly and online. "Volunteer for an authorised organisation" checks are available from the official police website. A completed, hard-copy form needs to be printed out and mailed, with payment and 100 points of certified identification. [www.police.vic.gov.au/national-police-records-checks](http://www.police.vic.gov.au/national-police-records-checks). Online checks take just a few hours to be approved at the following sites: [check.clearwork.com.au/](http://check.clearwork.com.au/) or [www.checked.com.au/](http://www.checked.com.au/)

### 3.7 Clients' rights, feedback and privacy

Clients using your services and support need to be able to provide feedback and make a complaint. Both verbal and written options should be available. They should also be aware of their rights and responsibilities, privacy and what they can expect from your service. The best way to provide this information is through signage at your service, and a simple feedback form.

If you are considering taking photos or video of your clients, please think carefully about how you use people's images and stories and whether the public sharing of this information will impact them. For example taking a group photo that includes a person escaping domestic violence could affect their safety. Please make sure that the person whose consent you are seeking understands that once their image or story is online it may be shared through social media and that you cannot control how it is used.

- The Further Resources document includes a template feedback form, client consent forms for photography, a client code of conduct, client rights and responsibilities and a complaint resolution process. Your clients have the right to raise matters with external bodies, including relevant government departments.

#### Consider providing the following information to your clients:

- If you would like to speak to an advocate please contact: Council To Homeless Persons Advocacy Services  
Phone: 03 8415 6213 or 1800 066 256  
Address: 2 Stanley Street, Collingwood 3066  
Web: [has@chp.org.au](mailto:has@chp.org.au)
- You can also contact the [Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission \(ACNC\)](#) to raise concerns about charities.
- If you are worried about the conduct of a registered charity, report your concern to the ACNC using the [online form](#). Or you can call on 13 ACNC (13 22 62) and their Advice team will take you through the form over the phone.

### 3.8 Referral pathways and links with housing and homelessness service providers

- If you feel that a client using your services needs additional help or a referral to a specialist housing service, health or other service provider, please use the relevant contact numbers below.
- If you have concerns for someone who appears to be under 18 years, please see the Child safety and reporting responsibilities section above for contact numbers.
- Hand out the City of Melbourne's [Helping Out guide](#) at any time. It provides a comprehensive list of more than 70 free and low-cost services available from organisations in the central city and surrounding suburbs.

If you see someone at risk:

- Contact the City of Melbourne on 9658 9658 or [report using our online support tool](#)
- Call Launch Housing's Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) on 8598 1170 (business hours)
- Drop into Frontyard Youth Services at 19 King Street, Melbourne VIC 3000 or call 99770077 or free call 1800 800 531 (Monday – Friday 9am – 8pm , Saturday and Sunday 10am -6pm)
- DHHS Homelessness assistance call 1800 825 955 (open 24 hours, 365 days)
- Call Safe steps Family Violence Response Centre for women and children: 1800 015 188 (open 24 hours, 365 days).
- Call 1800 Respect (1800 737 732) National sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling and information referral service open 24 hours, everyday
- Call [Salvation Army Crisis Centre](#): 1800 825 955 or 1800 627 727 (open 24 hours, 365 days).

### Indications that you should take action in response to a person who appears to be experiencing homelessness

#### Concerns for the person's welfare

- They request assistance, appear distressed or in need of help.
- They are sheltering where it may threaten the health and safety of themselves or others such as a fire exit or doorway.

#### Think "Child Safety"

- They are a child who appears to be under 18 years.
- Think "mandatory reporting" and think Speak-up!"

#### Inappropriate or unsafe behaviours

- Their behaviour threatens their safety or the safety and security of people around them.
- The person's belongings are posing a risk to safety and the amenity of the area
- Their behaviour is likely to result in damage to property or to the environment.
- Their safety is threatened by others.
- If you witness an accident or crime call 000.

### 3.9 Responding to disclosures

How someone responds to a disclosure will impact on the person/victim/survivors comfort and willingness to proceed with seeking help. Below are some suggestions of what to do – and what not to do – if someone discloses an experience of family violence or sexual assault (courtesy of the [Partners in Prevention](#) network).

#### What to do in responding to a disclosure

- Actively listen, without interruption, giving the victim/survivor time to share their experience
- Show that you believe what the victim/survivor is saying to you
- Affirm that they have done the right thing in disclosing their experience
- Take their fears or concerns seriously
- Emphasise that they are not to blame for their experience
- Be clear about the limits (if any) to confidentiality
- Provide information about what you will do in response to the disclosure and that you will continue to support them in your role
- Provide information about referral pathways (including websites, phone numbers and details of [support services](#))

## What to do in responding to a disclosure from children and young people

- When responding to disclosures from children and young people, use a child centred and strength based approach in responding. Let them know how courageous they have been in coming forward and highlight their strengths.
- Remember mandatory child abuse reporting responsibilities: if you see, hear or reasonably believe a child is in danger you must report the matter to your organisation and relevant authorities (e.g. police, DHHS). Abusive and harmful behaviours include sexual abuse, grooming, physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, racial cultural or religious abuse and family violence. See “When to report?” section above for contact details.

## What not to do in responding to a disclosure

- Talk about your own experiences of violence
- Ask a lot of questions to try and find out details
- Judge or criticise their choices
- Make comments that imply there’s something the victim/survivor could have done to ‘protect themselves’
- Promise the victim/survivor you will keep their confidence (if you’re not able to do so as a mandated professional)
- Get angry or frustrated at the victim/survivor or their experience
- Try to ‘fix’ the problem for them
- Tell them what to do
- Talk negatively about the perpetrator
- Force them to disclose information
- Provide counselling

The **three most important things** you can do are to:

1. Listen, without interruption or judgement
2. Believe and validate their experiences
3. Provide information that will support the victim/survivor to make their own choices (as much as possible) in what happens next such as providing them with the contact details of available support services

### More information

- [1800 Respect](#)
- [Support services available in the Western Melbourne region](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Reporting child abuse](#)

## 3.10 Vicarious trauma

Work that involves supporting people through difficult times can be highly rewarding but it can also be very exhausting. It’s not uncommon for support workers to experience their own stress when helping other people through personal trauma.

Supporting people who have experienced trauma requires empathy and compassion. The stress and demands of this type of work can become overwhelming and can result in work-induced stress and trauma.

The effects of work-induced stress and trauma can also vary from person to person. Some people experience ‘burnout’ or ‘compassion fatigue’ which may express itself as negativity or disinterest towards clients, or exhaustion.

When the symptoms become more severe, it turns into ‘vicarious trauma’, which can produce nightmares, sleep problems, depression, fearfulness and complete withdrawal, similar to post traumatic stress reactions. If these things are not addressed, they can have serious effects, both at work and in your personal life.

### More information

- [Video on stress, trauma and work: how to look after yourself 1800 Respect wellbeing and self-care information](#)

### 3.11 Food handling and safety

Food poisoning is a serious health problem. It can cause severe illness and even death. Food poisoning is frequently caused by bacteria from food that has been poorly handled, stored or cooked. Vulnerable people are more likely to become very sick or die from food poisoning. People who may be vulnerable include those sleeping rough and experiencing homelessness, young children, pregnant women, older people and people with other illnesses.

Keeping food safe is crucial to prevent food poisoning. To do this, all food businesses and community groups must comply with the *Food Act 1984* and the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.

Food poisoning can be prevented by following proper procedures during food preparation, storage and display. Personal hygiene is an important part of preventing food poisoning.

[Do Food Safely](#) is a free, non-accredited online training course provided by DHHS to enable you to work safely with food. Please see the Training section for how to enrol.

#### More information

- [Community Food Guide](#)
- [How to keep food safe](#)
- [Food handlers - personal hygiene tips](#)
- [Safe food preparation, storage and display](#)
- [Preventing food poisoning](#)
- [Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code](#)
- [Food Act 1984](#)

### 3.12 Governance policies and procedures

The City of Melbourne and Volunteering Victoria recommend that you:

- Develop Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) policy and processes for volunteers and handling incidents.
- Make sure your insurance is adequate and you have accessed legal advice.
- Implement a privacy policy for volunteers and clients.
- Undertake location risk assessment and emergency management planning.
- Include people with a lived experience of homelessness on your Board or advisory committee.
- Consider registering as a charity if you have not already done so.

If you are intending to operate within the Melbourne municipality we recommend you contact the City of Melbourne Homelessness team on 9658 9658 to discuss your program location, service and how to coordinate with other grassroots organisations and homelessness agencies.

#### Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) policy and processes

Volunteers are legally entitled to a healthy and safe work environment. The best way to manage their health and safety is the same way you do for paid employees.

All community service organisations with employees have obligations to protect the health and safety of both employees and volunteers under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (OHS Act) and regulations. Other community service organisations that have no obligation under the OHS Act should also meet the same standards to protect their volunteers from harm. To help, WorkSafe has developed a [Volunteer Health and Safety handbook](#).

Free, template work health and safety policies and occupational health and safety procedures are available [here](#).

You need to develop a first aid plan outlining how you will manage an incident if one was to occur. Injury and incident reporting must form part of your OHS policy. A free incident and injury reporting policy and procedure template is available [here](#).

#### More information

- [WorkSafe Victoria information on volunteer health and safety](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations](#)
- [Volunteer Health and Safety Handbook for community service organisations](#)
- [Institute of Community Directors Australia Policy Bank](#)

## Insurance

- If you have public liability insurance, the policy will generally extend to your volunteers for as long as they are engaged in duties authorised and directly related to your organisation. To ensure that this cover is extended to volunteers, check your policy or seek advice from your insurer.
- Personal accident insurance - is another form of insurance that you may want to consider for your volunteers.
- Personal accident insurance (sometimes known as volunteer insurance) generally covers members, volunteers, officials or participants for any out-of-pocket expenses following accidental injury, disability or death while carrying out their work on behalf of the organisation.
- This type of insurance would, for example, normally cover loss of income if the injured party were unable to work through sickness or injury. This policy complements public liability insurance. The public liability insurance covers volunteers where there is negligence involved, whereas the personal accident insurance covers the injured party where there is accidental (no negligent act) injury.
- We recommend that you seek legal advice from Justice Connect on the best insurance for your organisation and the level of cover needed.

## Legal advice

Justice Connect is a registered charity that provides a range of specialist and generalist legal services, including on homeless and not-for-profit law. They specialise in helping not-for-profit organisations on a wide range of topics including insurance and risk, tax, working with other organisations, communications, reporting to government, disputes and conflict and changing or ending your organisation. They also provide training for community organisations on topics from governance to privacy law. Refer to Recommended training section below.

## Privacy legislation and policy

We recommend you implement a privacy policy for staff, volunteers and clients (a template policy is provided in the Further Resources document).

In Victoria, there are three main laws that protect information privacy rights:

- *The Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*
- *The Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)*
- *The Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)*

The *Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act)* regulates how individuals' personal information is handled by Australian Government agencies, medium-to-large businesses, the not-for-profit sector, the credit reporting industry and health service providers. It is administered by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC).

The *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)* is a Victorian law that protects the privacy of your personal information when it is handled by Victorian public sector organisations, including Victorian government departments, local councils, statutory offices, government schools, universities and TAFEs. The PDP Act can also protect your personal information when it is handled by private or community sector organisations that are carrying out functions for or on behalf of a Victorian public sector organisation. It is administered by the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner.

The *Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)* is a Victorian law that protects health information that is held by public and private health service providers in Victoria. This includes doctors, hospitals and pharmacists, as well as any other organisation that holds your health information, such as fitness centres and employers. It is administered by the Health Complaints Commissioner.

## Risk management planning

The detailed risk management planning tools in the more information section (below) will help you through a structured process to ask: What can go wrong in my operations? How can we stop it? What will happen if it does? In your risk management plan you would detail procedures and policies to limit this risk.

Your organisation can decide to what extent you use these tools. If you are small or your activities limited you may want to keep it simple; larger organisations or those dealing in risky activities would benefit from a more formal process. (This risk management content sourced from Volunteering Victoria).

## Location risk assessments

It is recommended that you conduct a Location Risk Assessment for all locations to which you currently visit. This risk assessment is a process for determining the likelihood of harm occurring to staff, volunteers, clients, general public or vehicles and equipment.

The location risk assessments should be reviewed every 12 months or when any new risk factors emerge during the provision of the service, this includes any changes to the location. Risk management training should be provided to anyone conducting location risk assessments.

If you are operating your service alongside other operators within the same location you may want to consider developing a combined risk assessment. This will help assess the collective impact your services have on the safety and amenity of the location and plan for any elevated risks.

Vinnies Soup Vans have generously shared their location risk assessment documents and their Location Risk Control Plans. These documents are in the Templates section below.

### More information

- [Institute of Community Directors Australia Policy Bank](#)
- [Justice Connect community legal service](#)
- [Volunteering Victoria Risk Management](#)
- [The main areas of risk for not-for-profit organisations](#)
- [Risk management help for not-for-profits](#)
- [Volunteering Australia Risk Management Tool](#)

## Include people with a lived experience of homelessness on your Board or advisory committee

People who have a lived experience of homelessness can provide invaluable advice about understanding homelessness and how to improve the service system. Please consider including them on your Board, advisory committee or as special advisors.

The Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) runs Peer Education Support Program (PESP) – a volunteer program that provides people who have experienced homelessness with the opportunity to improve the response to homelessness, educate and raise awareness about homelessness and provide consumer input into homelessness policy and service delivery and design. Two PESP team members were part of the Consultative Group for this Handbook, and both contributed incredibly helpful insights and perspectives.

CHP's currently has 13 PESP team members and graduates volunteering who've all experienced homelessness themselves and who now volunteer their time to help others understand homelessness, its causes and, its solutions. For information, contact CHP's Peer Education and Support Program, Ph: 8415 6200, [cassandra@chp.org.au](mailto:cassandra@chp.org.au)

## Registering as a charity and appointing Board members

If you are considering registering your organisation as a charity, the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) website [start a Charity](#) section has all the information you'll need.

Charities must meet the [ACNC's Governance Standards](#) to be registered. The [fourth governance standard](#) requires charities to take reasonable steps to be satisfied that [Board or Committee members or trustees](#) are not disqualified from: managing a corporation under the Corporations Act, or being a Responsible Person by the ACNC Commissioner, within the previous 12 months.

The [Institute of Company Directors](#) website also has a huge amount of information including tools, fact sheets, governance and legal information on starting a not-for-profit or charity organisation, help for board members and help for Boards. They provide detailed advice on planning, policies and reporting and finances, including "Dam Good Advice for Treasurers" and "Damn Good Advice for Board Members"!

### More information

- [How to start a charity](#)
- [Governance Standards for charities](#)
- [Institute of Company Directors Tools & Resources](#)
- [Council to homeless persons](#)

### 3.13 Operating within the Local Laws

When operating your programs and services in the municipality, you are required to operate in accordance with the Activities Local Law 2019 and the Environment Local Law 2019. This includes adhering to noise level regulations, waste management, event management and safety for visitors, residents and your clients.

The [Activities Local Law 2019](#) contributes to City of Melbourne's long term and responsible approach to the ongoing health, vitality, prosperity, security and welfare of the city's residents, businesses and environment. The objectives of this local law are to protect the use of public places and provide for safety, control and manage the use of premises and vehicles, and promote a healthy and peaceful physical and social environment.

The relevant sections for pop-up operators and grassroots charities begin at Page 8. They include the following: Part 2, behaviour, from Part 3, consumption of liquor and smoking, Part 4, Advertising and Use of Shopfronts and Public Places, Part 5, Street Trading and Special Events, Part 6 Works on Roads and Part 12 Miscellaneous. Part 2 contains provisions which aim to protect the amenity of public places for all citizens by controlling behaviour in public places and by prohibiting persons from causing damage to public places or acting in a socially unacceptable manner. Failing to comply with this law can lead to fines and infringements.

The [Environment Local Law 2019](#) includes laws governing waste management and disposal, burning of material in the open and open fires and the generation of offensive odours and fumes. The objective of the law is to provide for peace and order; to protect and conserve the environment and maintain the amenity of the municipality. The relevant section of this law relates to waste materials and disposal. Failing to comply with this law can lead to fines and infringements.

#### Cleanliness / waste management

At the conclusion of your service, all food, packaging, printed material, excess rubbish and other equipment is to be removed and the area left in a clean and tidy condition.

Reduce your waste and increase recycling through simple actions such as:

- ensuring that the packaging used for any products available at the service is recyclable
- making sure that recycling and rubbish bins are placed next to each other
- ensuring that recycling and rubbish bins are clearly signed to show where items should be disposed.

#### Noise management

Managing noise levels is an important part of the City of Melbourne's commitment to providing a liveable, supportive environment for all. Please be considerate of the amenity of the surrounding area. Noise from vehicles, activities and clients can cause disturbance. When using public open spaces, operators must comply with the [Activities Local Law 2019](#), which regulates all noise affecting public places, either by its nature or volume. Please see page 30 of the Local Law.

No amplification equipment is to be used in association with any activity unless written approval from the City of Melbourne has been obtained, and amplified sound must not start prior to 10am and must cease by 10pm Sunday to Friday and 11pm on Saturdays.

#### Pedestrian access/crowd management

When delivering your service, whether you are operating in a street, park, city square or an open area, you must maintain access to public spaces for members of the general public. It is suggested that you develop a pedestrian management plan to outline your strategies for managing pedestrian access and include access for people with disabilities.

The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR) released the [Safe and Healthy Crowded Places Handbook](#) and the [Crowded Places Checklist](#) in 2018. The handbook includes reference to crowd behaviour and psychology, preparing managers of crowded places to understand and anticipate different elements that may produce or result from an incident or emergency.

## Vehicles, parking permits and access

Under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, the City of Melbourne manages a number of the parks and gardens located in the municipality. These public spaces are environmentally sensitive and as such need to be protected where possible.

Vehicles are not permitted to enter City of Melbourne parks and gardens without prior written approval. Parks, gardens and Council infrastructure must remain accessible to the public.

Access to sites must be maintained at all times for:

1. emergency services vehicles
2. owners or tenants of nearby or adjoining properties requiring access
3. pedestrians; a minimum footpath width area of two and a half metres
4. areas cannot be roped or cordoned off.

Vehicle Access Permits are required for all vehicles wishing to enter the following areas:

- Swanston Street, between Flinders and La Trobe Streets
- Bourke Street (Mall), between Elizabeth and Swanston Streets
- Bourke Street (East), between Swanston and Russell Streets.

This permit controls vehicle access and parking in areas that are primarily for the use of pedestrians.

Applications for Vehicle Access Permits can be made in person at the Town Hall. Please note that you will need registration numbers of all vehicles requiring access. Fees and conditions apply. Please visit [Vehicle access permits](#) for more information.

The number of spaces to be made available is assessed on a case-by-case basis depending on where and when the spaces are required, and whether there is any other activity planned for the area. Please note that parking restrictions still need to be observed (for example, No Parking during Clearway times and No Stopping areas).

- If you are applying for parking spaces near where your mobile grassroots service operates, you will need to submit an application online. Fees apply. You can call the City of Melbourne's on-street Compliance Services team on 9658 9658 or email them at: [permits@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto:permits@melbourne.vic.gov.au). Under the Road Management Act, no vehicles are permitted to remain on a footpath, without a letter of exemption from the Road Safety Group at VicRoads. To obtain an exemption from this road rule please contact [VicRoads](#).



# 4. PREFERRED LOCATIONS FOR CHARITY OPERATIONS

This section is currently in development.

# 5. RECOMMENDED TRAINING

The following training sessions and resources are free or low-cost and relevant to the topics covered in this Guide. We also encourage you to look at courses and workshops offered by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and other providers in your area.

TRAINING TYPE	CONTENT DETAILS	PROVIDER/BOOKING DETAILS
<b>ASIST Training (2 days) – workshop</b>	ASIST is an evidence-based approach to suicide intervention, and is the most widely used and recognised suicide intervention framework. The two day workshop provides attendees with the skills to recognise when an individual is at risk of suicide, how to clarify that risk, enhance their immediate safety and link them to further help. Attendance on both days is essential.	Wodonga Institute of TAFE and DHHS offer the specialist homelessness sector training calendar <a href="http://www.wodongatafe.edu.au/shs">www.wodongatafe.edu.au/shs</a>  <a href="#">Book training course</a>
<b>Understanding homelessness (2 hours) FREE</b>	Understanding Homelessness training  Presented by Peer Education Support Program members, this training provides a comprehensive overview of key homelessness issues from the perspective of individuals who have lived it. 1.5 hours.  This workshop also includes a Homelessness Service System Orientation by Launch Housing. 30 mins	Council to homeless persons CHP, Cassandra Bawden, PESP Team Leader on 8415 6210 or <a href="mailto:cassandra@chp.org.au">cassandra@chp.org.au</a> and  Meredith Gorman – Homelessness Networker - Northern Region, Launch Housing M 0424 112 445 Meredith. <a href="mailto:Gorman@launchhousing.org.au">Gorman@launchhousing.org.au</a>
<b>Introduction to homelessness and social housing (2 days)</b>	This workshop explores the social housing sector. The training focuses on the causal and structural issues of homelessness, the current issues that impact on the sector and different models of work, the components and structure of the social housing sector (including the range and variety of service provision), the context of social housing provision including historical, social, political, and economic aspects, and the issues that clients face.	Wodonga Institute of TAFE and DHHS offer the specialist homelessness sector training calendar <a href="http://www.wodongatafe.edu.au/shs">www.wodongatafe.edu.au/shs</a>  <a href="#">Book training course</a>
<b>First aid training – workshop (4 hours)</b>	CPR First Aid Training Kensington  After completing this Provide CPR unit, you will be able to provide the necessary skills needed to respond to a medical emergency with the goal of saving lives, reducing pain and injury until qualified medical help takes over. Two hours online theory + 2 hours classroom practical.	Kensington Neighbourhood House, 89 McCracken St, Kensington VIC 3031. Unit Code:- HLTAID001  <a href="#">Book course</a>
<b>Mental Health First Aid (2 days) - workshop</b>	Mental health first aid is the help provided to a person who is developing a mental health problem or who is in a mental health crisis until appropriate professional treatment is received or the crisis resolves. The training provides information about mental health problems and mental health crisis situations. Participants learn the signs and symptoms of common mental health problems, where and how to find help, and the type of help that research has shown to be effective. Attendance on both days is essential.	Wodonga Institute of TAFE and DHHS offer the specialist homelessness sector training calendar <a href="http://www.wodongatafe.edu.au/shs">www.wodongatafe.edu.au/shs</a>  <a href="#">Book training course</a>
<b>Ice training – workshops FREE (4 hours)</b>	Free half day workshops to frontline workers across Victoria until June 2020. As a frontline worker, you have a greater likelihood of coming into contact with people who use methamphetamine ('ice' or 'speed').  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the effects of ice and identify users</li> <li>• Find out how to work safely to protect yourself and others</li> <li>• Learn how to respond to ice-affected people</li> <li>• Discover what works in treatment</li> </ul>	360 Edge <a href="http://www.360edge.com.au/events/#free-ice-training">www.360edge.com.au/events/#free-ice-training</a>  Contact Anna on 1300 988 184 or <a href="mailto:icetraining@360edge.com.au">icetraining@360edge.com.au</a>  You can read more about initiative and the other providers <a href="#">here</a> . These free practical workshops are funded by the Victorian Government's Ice Action Plan.

TRAINING TYPE	CONTENT DETAILS	PROVIDER/BOOKING DETAILS
<b>Ice training – online</b>  <b>FREE</b>	<p>A free online training resource for frontline workers who want to enhance their crystal methamphetamine skills and knowledge. The training contains flexible content that suits a variety of needs. It has seven independent but complementary modules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About Ice</li> <li>• Effects of Ice</li> <li>• Communicating with Ice Users</li> <li>• Ice Users and Critical Incidents</li> <li>• Interventions</li> <li>• Prevention</li> <li>• Organisational Responses to Ice</li> </ul>	<p>National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA)</p> <p><a href="#">Do online training</a></p>
<b>Food handling – online</b>  <b>FREE</b>	<p>Do Food Safety is a free, non-accredited online learning resource about understanding how to work safely with food. It includes seven topics: Why food safety? Personal hygiene, food handling, food contamination, food delivery, storage and display, cleaning and sanitising and food allergens. Participants complete an assessment and receive a Certificate of Completion.</p>	<p>DHHS</p> <p><a href="#">Undertake online learning course</a></p>
<b>Child protection and reporting information session</b>	<p>Information about child protection, and what happens when you make a report, what do you need to say</p>	<p>DHHS – regular sessions held. To attend, email Michelle Ferren at <a href="mailto:Michelle.Ferran@dhhs.vic.gov.au">Michelle.Ferran@dhhs.vic.gov.au</a></p>
<b>LGBTIQ Training</b>	<p>LGBTI+ Family Violence and homelessness training</p>	<p>Wombat Housing and Support Services, in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services, Family Safety Victoria,</p> <p>Rainbow Health Victoria and Zoe Belle Gender Collective are offering free training sessions to homelessness and housing workers in the north and west, as well as any other professionals who work with those experiencing domestic/family violence and homelessness. Phone 8327 2222 or <a href="mailto:ashleigh@wombat.org.au">ashleigh@wombat.org.au</a></p>
<b>Promoting Recovery understanding complex Trauma &amp; Trauma Informed Practice</b>  <b>(1 day)</b>	<p>Trauma informed practice influences every aspect of our work and encompasses key conditions for recovery, including: therapeutic relationships, group processes, therapeutic environments, organisational parenting and sense of community. Participants will be introduced to a framework for understanding the experience of people who have a history of complex trauma and will be provided with tools for practical application in their work to support recovery.</p>	<p>Wodonga Institute of TAFE and DHHS offer the specialist homelessness sector training calendar <a href="http://www.wodongatafe.edu.au/shs">www.wodongatafe.edu.au/shs</a></p> <p><a href="#">Book training course</a></p>
<b>Responding to disclosures of family violence or sexual assault (online toolkit for frontline workers)</b>	<p>The 1800RESPECT Frontline Workers Toolkit contains resources for workers who come into contact with people affected by sexual assault, domestic and family violence in the course of their day-to-day work. For access to 1800 Respect's Frontline Workers Toolkit register at <a href="http://www.1800respect.org.au/toolkit/">www.1800respect.org.au/toolkit/</a></p>	<p>To access the toolkit, simply use the link to register your details. Once logged in, you can tailor your toolkit to your own needs or share resources with colleagues and staff. Good practice resources include apps, videos and digital content for organisations and workers in a variety of sectors.</p>
<b>Legal training</b>	<p>Topics from governance to privacy law, as well as <a href="#">webinars on a range of legal issues</a> faced by community organisations.</p>	<p>Justice Connect provides <a href="#">in-person legal training</a> for community organisations.</p>

## How to contact us

### Online:

[melbourne.vic.gov.au](http://melbourne.vic.gov.au)

### In person:

Melbourne Town Hall - Administration Building  
120 Swanston Street, Melbourne  
Business hours, Monday to Friday  
(Public holidays excluded)

### Telephone:

03 9658 9658

Business hours, Monday to Friday  
(Public holidays excluded)

### Fax:

03 9654 4854

### In writing:

City of Melbourne  
GPO Box 1603  
Melbourne VIC 3001  
Australia



### Interpreter services

We cater for people of all backgrounds  
Please call 03 9280 0726

03 9280 0717 廣東話  
03 9280 0719 Bahasa Indonesia  
03 9280 0720 Italiano  
03 9280 0721 普通话  
03 9280 0722 Soomaali  
03 9280 0723 Español  
03 9280 0725 Việt Ngữ  
03 9280 0726 عربي  
03 9280 0726 한국어  
03 9280 0726 हिंदी  
03 9280 0726 All other languages

### National Relay Service:

[melbourne.vic.gov.au](http://melbourne.vic.gov.au)



CITY OF MELBOURNE