

Victorian **protocol** for people who are **homeless** in **public** places

The aim of the *Victorian protocol for people who are homeless in public places* (the Protocol) is to provide a framework for relations between officials and people who are homeless in public places.

The Protocol has been developed to ensure that people who are homeless in public places are treated appropriately and that their rights are respected.

Individual agencies are accountable for service delivery of this protocol.

Underlying Principles

This Protocol is based on the following principles:

- People who are homeless can have complex social, mental and/or physical health needs.
- All people have a right to be in public places, at the same time respecting the right of local communities to live in a safe and peaceful environment.
- All people have a right to participate in public activities or events.
- People who work in areas where their responsibilities are likely to bring them into contact with people who are homeless will receive sufficient information to assist with referral to appropriate services if needed.
- In the conduct of their normal statutory obligations, Police and other authorities may need to seek further information or personal details from any member of the public.

If you encounter a person who is, or appears to be, homeless, you should only respond if:

- **they request assistance;**
- **they appear distressed or in need of assistance;**
- **they are sheltering in circumstances that threaten the health and safety of themselves and/or others (eg: in derelict buildings);**
- **they are unaccompanied children who appear to be under the age of 15;***
- **their behaviour threatens their safety or the safety and security of people around them;**
- **their behaviour is likely to result in damage to property or to the environment;**
- **their safety is threatened by others.**

* In the first instance, contact should be attempted with parent/s or guardian, or the Child Protection Crisis Line, tel: 131 278 toll free.

Homelessness Assistance in inner Melbourne

If people who are homeless require assistance, there are local government and state-funded services to help them. The following assistance is available in inner metropolitan Melbourne:

- **HomeGround** (Transitional Housing and Housing Information & Referral)
1A/68 Oxford Street Collingwood
Tel: 9417 2500 or toll free 1800 509 387
- **St Kilda Crisis Centre** (24-hour emergency housing response)
29 Grey Street St Kilda
Tel: 9536 7777 or toll free 1800 627 727
- **Melbourne Youth Support Service** (7-days a week service providing information, support and referral for young people aged 15-25 years old)
19 King Street Melbourne
Tel: 9614 3688 or toll free 1800 800 531
- **Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service** (24-hour family violence referral service for women)
Tel: 9373 0123 or toll free 1800 015 188

Interpreting service assistance is available through VITS LanguageLink, tel: 9280 1955

You can:

- contact services directly on behalf of the person/s;
- provide advice or information including location of available services;
- provide a contact point that the person who is homeless can either call or go to for further advice or help.

Endorsing Agencies:

Office of Commonwealth Games Coordination; Department of Human Services; Victoria Police; City of Melbourne; City of Port Phillip; City of Stonnington; City of Yarra; Council to Homeless Persons; Community Housing Federation of Victoria; Domestic Violence Victoria.