



Media release – 20 August 2017

Sydney's move-on laws fail to reduce rough sleeping levels, new survey shows, prompting calls to abandon Melbourne proposal

A Sydney homeless street count has found that the number of rough sleepers in the city has remained unchanged, despite harsh new move-on laws fast-tracked by the NSW Government.

Victoria's peak body for homelessness says the failure of Sydney's new move-on powers to impact rough sleeping numbers is yet further evidence that the City of Melbourne must abandon similar proposed bylaws.

"The Sydney laws have just pushed the rough sleepers to other places, where they're less visible and less safe. Laws have failed to solve homelessness there, and they'll fail here, because they don't tackle the underlying lack of housing," said Jenny Smith, CEO, Council to Homeless Persons.

Sydney's bi-annual [homeless count](#) conducted on Tuesday 15 August, just days after harsh new move-on laws were introduced, counted 386 rough sleepers in the Sydney CBD, compared to 394 the year before when the laws were not in place.

"Rough sleeping in Sydney is at historic highs, despite these heavy handed tactics, and we caution Melbourne not to repeat the same mistakes and sacrifice vulnerable people in the process.

"Melbourne City Council has shown willingness to work with agencies that are at the coal face of this humanitarian crisis, to find solutions that don't involve punishing people who are homeless, and we want them to continue this compassionate path."

"It is vital that Melbourne councillors do not adopt these bylaws, and instead join the chorus of voices urging greater investment in public and community housing. Homes fix homelessness, not laws.

"Until there is sufficient, low-cost, housing for people who are very poor, we will continue to see homelessness. It is distressing to see, but sweeping it out of sight helps no-one."

Earlier in the month, in response to a homeless camp in Martin Place, NSW passed laws that allow the government to move people on and take property on crown land, where it is being used in an unauthorised way.

In April, CHP, [joined with 54 welfare organizations](#) to make an alternative proposal to the Council outlining 14 steps the Council could take instead of introducing laws that punish rough sleepers.

Melbourne Councilors will consider the recommendations of the submissions committee in September before voting. The date of the vote has been postponed a number of times since April. A public submissions process received 2,556 with 86% opposed to the new bylaws.

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