

Support for People Sleeping Rough During Extreme Weather (Code Red)

Tuesday, 22 September 2026
Council

Strategic Alignment - Our Community
Public

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to respond to Council's decision on 23 June 2026 asking the Administration to prepare a report by September 2026, on 'ways in which the City of Adelaide could support rough sleepers when Code Red Tier 2 emergencies are called in the summer of 2026/27'.

The report follows Council's consideration of assistance to people sleeping rough during extreme winter weather. As previously reported to Council, the State Government is responsible for the provision of social housing and homelessness services in South Australia.

The Rough Sleeper Extreme Weather Response is led by the Department of Human Services and was reviewed in 2025/26. Further background information was presented to the City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee on 7 April 2026 ([Link 1](#)), including information on supporting opportunities and measures.

This report provides further advice on the opportunities and measures which could be explored and/or implemented by the City of Adelaide and proposes:

- Expansion of care packages provided through the libraries (subject to budget reallocation).
- Development of an Extreme Weather Response Protocol for the City of Adelaide.
- Promotion of the City of Adelaide Cool Wayfinding tool.
- Continued advocacy to the State Government for permanent supportive housing and transitional accommodation as the primary and long-term response to homelessness and people sleeping rough.

The City of Adelaide's Homelessness Strategy – Everyone's Business, recognises the importance of public toilets, drinking water, charging points and places of shelter across a range of key city locations. New and upgrade infrastructure could be considered as part of existing City of Adelaide projects, subject to budget review processes, including public toilets, drinking fountains, public BBQs, bench seats, picnic shelters, public bins, and tree canopy.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT COUNCIL

1. Notes the State Government is responsible for social housing and homelessness services.
2. Approves the following actions by the City of Adelaide to support the safety and wellbeing of people sleeping rough during the summer of 2026/27:
 - 2.1. Expansion of care packages provided through the libraries to also include a hat, sunscreen, reusable water bottle, electrolyte sachets, muesli bars, instant cool pack and cooling neck scarf (subject to 2026/27 budget review process).
 - 2.2. Development of an Extreme Weather Response Protocol for the City of Adelaide.
3. Notes the following actions by the City of Adelaide to support people sleeping rough:
 - 3.1. Promotion of the City of Adelaide Cool Wayfinding Tool.
 - 3.2. Continued advocacy to the State Government for permanent supportive housing and transitional accommodation as the primary response to homelessness and people sleeping rough.

IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	Strategic Alignment – Our Community Our Objective is to: Support our communities to thrive Key Action: Work with partners to identify new and innovative ways to reduce rough sleeping and homelessness.
Policy	The City of Adelaide's Homelessness Strategy – Everyone's Business, includes a bold move in relation to Emergency Shelter which states: • <i>City of Adelaide managed public amenities including public toilets, drinking water, charging points and places of shelter are available to the public 24 hours a day, seven days a week and located across a range of key city locations.</i> • <i>In partnership with the South Australian Homelessness Alliance, investigate whether the City of Adelaide community infrastructure is made available in response to extreme heat and cold weather such as State Government announcements of Code Red and Code Blue.</i>
Consultation	Administration has engaged with the following agencies and organisations to inform this report: • Department of Human Services (DHS) • Baptist Care SA (WestCare) • Hutt Street Centre • SA Housing Trust • Independent Community Homelessness Advisory Group (ICHAG) chaired by the Adelaide Day Centre • Services to Youth Council.
Resource	Not as a result of this report
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Not as a result of this report
Opportunities	The following opportunities could be considered: • Expansion of care packages provided through the libraries. • Consideration of extending and/or adjusting the opening hours for libraries and community centres, subject to the outcomes of the current libraries review. • Development of an Extreme Weather Response Protocol for the City of Adelaide. • New and upgrade infrastructure through projects such as public toilets, public drinking fountains, public BBQs, bench seats, picnic shelters, public bins, and tree canopy.
26/27 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Proposed 27/28 Budget Allocation	Identification of priority locations for additional supporting public infrastructure in the city and Adelaide Park Lands and preparation of supporting budget bids for consideration through the 2027/28 Annual Business Plan and Budget.
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	Subject to a service change approval within the 2027/28 Annual Business Plan and Budget process, the expansion of the care packages for summer and winter could be provided on an ongoing basis.
26/27 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	An allocation of \$2,500 to expand the care packages for summer of 2026/27 could be reallocated from within existing operational budgets.
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	To be reviewed for 2027/28 Annual Business Plan and Budget process.
Other Funding Sources	Not as a result of this report

DISCUSSION

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to respond to Council's decision of 23 June 2026 seeking a report by the end of September 2026, 'on ways in which the City of Adelaide could support rough sleepers when Code Red Tier 2 emergencies are called in the summer of 2026/27'.

Background

2. On 10 March 2026 Council requested a report to 'assist the Council in ensuring that no rough sleeper in the City of Adelaide seeking safety from extreme weather will be denied shelter in the winter of 2026'.
3. The report was presented to the City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee on 7 April 2026 ([Link 1](#)), and included information and recommendations on opportunities and measures which could be explored and/or implemented, by the City of Adelaide.
4. Further background information was presented to Council on 28 April 2026 and 23 June 2026.
5. This report outlines revised opportunities and measures that the City of Adelaide could explore and/or implement to support people sleeping rough during Code Red Tier 2 emergencies in the summer of 2026/27.

State Government responsibilities

6. The State Government is responsible for homelessness services which are primarily delivered through an Alliance model. The City of Adelaide is within the geographic area covered by the Toward Home Alliance, which services the Adelaide CBD, North Adelaide, inner and outer southern metro area and the Adelaide Hills.
7. The State Government is responsible for social housing which encompasses both community housing and public housing. The City of Adelaide is proactively participating in advocacy to increase permanent supportive and transitional housing options for people in the CBD and North Adelaide.
8. The Rough Sleeper Extreme Weather Response is led by the Department of Human Services (DHS) and was reviewed in 2025/26. Administration participated in the review as a member of the project Steering Committee. The outcomes of the review were released in July 2026 ([Link 2](#)). Key findings from the review include:
 - 8.1. People sleeping rough are at a greater health risk compared to the general population in severe-to-extreme weather.
 - 8.2. Current activation thresholds are not consistently aligned to the health risks of people sleeping rough and require some adjustment.
 - 8.3. Climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of extreme weather events.
 - 8.4. A more proactive, coordinated and risk-informed statewide response is required.
9. The Rough Sleeper Extreme Weather Response review recommends four priority reforms, as follows:
 - 9.1. Strengthen a dedicated statewide team to oversee and coordinate the response.
 - 9.2. Introduce a simpler and more risk-informed activation model.
 - 9.3. Improve communication and planning before each extreme weather season.
 - 9.4. Strengthening local place-based coordination and integration across the homelessness system.
10. The DHS is in the process of convening an implementation group to deliver program reforms, including important changes ahead of the Code Red season 2026 including:
 - 10.1. Aligning activation thresholds to health risks, climate risks and the needs of people sleeping rough.
 - 10.2. Simplifying activations including improving communication for people sleeping rough, and the services that support them.
 - 10.3. Strengthen place-based responses for during extreme weather conditions, including support for pre-season preparations.

City of Adelaide opportunities and measures

11. This report provides further advice on the opportunities and measures which could be explored and/or implemented by the City of Adelaide under the following headings:
 - 11.1. Libraries and community centres

- 11.2. Community buildings in the Adelaide Park Lands
- 11.3. Extreme Weather Response Protocol
- 11.4. Cool Wayfinding Tool
- 11.5. Advocacy to the State Government on Homelessness
- 11.6. New and upgrade public infrastructure.

Libraries and community centres

- 12. The City of Adelaide could improve access to safe, climate-controlled daytime spaces that provide relief and respite during periods of extreme heat or severe weather, including through extending and/or adjusting operating hours of libraries and community centres as places of refuge, comfort, and support, subject to the outcomes of the current library and community centre delivery model review.
- 13. During winter 2026, expanded care packages were trialled in the City of Adelaide's library facilities. These packages were available to people sleeping rough and included tea, coffee and sugar sachets, cup-of-soup packets, gloves, socks, a beanie, a rain poncho, and hand and toe warmers.
- 14. Feedback received from the Community Connections Officers in libraries indicate that the care packages have been well received and are valued by customers.
- 15. Further expansion of the care packages for summer could be instituted, and communicated, to include a hat, sunscreen, reusable water bottle, electrolyte sachets, muesli bars, instant cold pack, and cooling neck scarf.

Community buildings in the Adelaide Park Lands

- 16. Administration proposes engaging with community groups and sports clubs who may consider providing access to community buildings in the Adelaide Park Lands as places of refuge during extreme heat or severe weather events through the implementation of the Community Wellbeing Strategy and 2026/27 Implementation Plan.
- 17. In this context, the use of existing community buildings during the day would still need careful planning, clear protocols, and an assessment of the resourcing required to support the safety and wellbeing of the community, support workers and volunteers.

Extreme Weather Response Protocol

- 18. Improve community preparedness, awareness and communication of the extreme weather response across stakeholders via the development of a City of Adelaide Extreme Weather Response Protocol for people sleeping rough in partnership with DHS, Toward Home Alliance and other partners.

Cool Wayfinding Tool

- 19. Promote the City of Adelaide's Cool Wayfinding Tool ([Link 3](#)) which is an online map to assist people in finding the most comfortable walking routes in the city on hot summer days, including information on public drinking fountains and bench seat locations.

Advocacy to the State Government on Homelessness

- 20. The City of Adelaide has a proactive advocacy agenda in support of its Homelessness Strategy and Housing Strategy, including:
 - 20.1. On 24 February 2026, Council resolved to advocate to the State Government for an increased homelessness response ([Link 4](#)).
 - 20.2. On 27 February 2026, Administration raised Council's decision at a meeting of the Specialist Homelessness Services and Department of Human Services administrative update which discussed the State Government's Homelessness Services Review.
 - 20.3. On 22 April 2026, the Lord Mayor sent a letter ([Link 5](#)) to the Premier of South Australia, with the Minister for Housing and Urban Development and Minister for Human Services copied, responding to each of the seven requests in the Council resolution.
 - 20.4. On 14 July 2026, Council resolved for the Lord Mayor to write to the State Government on behalf of Council requesting urgent support for a coordinated response to homelessness and rough sleeping in the City of Adelaide ([Link 6](#)).
 - 20.5. On 6 August 2026, the Lord Mayor's Homelessness Roundtable – 'Action to End Rough Sleeping' was held with senior State Government leaders from the Department of Human Services, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Health and Wellbeing, and the South Australian Housing Trust

focused on joined-up approaches towards ending rough sleeping. Key outcomes of the Homelessness Roundtable are provided in [Link 7](#).

- 20.6. In September 2026, the Lord Mayor sent a letter ([Link 8](#)) to the State Government responding to each of the six requests in the Council resolution on 14 July 2026.

New and upgrade public infrastructure

21. The City of Adelaide's Homelessness Strategy – Everyone's Business, recognises the importance of public toilets, drinking water, charging points and places of shelter across a range of key city locations.
22. Additional supporting public infrastructure could be considered from 2027/28 through the Annual Business Plan and Budget process such as:
 - 22.1. Expanding the network and availability of accessible 24/7 public toilets in line with the City of Adelaide Homelessness Strategy and Public Toilet Assessment and prioritised through Community Facilities and Asset Management planning.
 - 22.2. Investigating options to provide additional public drinking fountains, bench seats, picnic shelters, public BBQ facilities, and public bins.
 - 22.3. Increasing the provision of tree canopy across the city and Adelaide Park Lands in line with the City of Adelaide Strategic Plan 2024-2028, Integrated Climate Strategy 2030 and Greening programs.
 - 22.4. Investigating options to provide showers and lockers as outlined in the City of Adelaide's Homelessness Strategy and Community Facilities investigations.
 - 22.5. Investigating public misting/fogging infrastructure in key locations to help reduce ambient temperature.

Next steps

23. Pending Council decision, next steps may include:
 - 23.1. Expansion of care packages provided through the libraries for summer 2026/27.
 - 23.2. Development of an Extreme Weather Response Protocol to improve communication of the extreme weather response in the City of Adelaide.
 - 23.3. Promotion of the City of Adelaide Cool Wayfinding Tool.
 - 23.4. Identification of priority locations for additional supporting public infrastructure in the city and Adelaide Park Lands and preparation of supporting budget bids for consideration through the 2027/28 Annual Business Plan and Budget.
 - 23.5. Continued advocacy to the State Government for permanent supportive housing and transitional accommodation as the primary and long-term response to homelessness and people sleeping rough.
 - 23.6. Supporting DHS in its implementation of recommendations from the Rough Sleeper Extreme Weather Response review, including strengthened communication and pre-season preparation.

DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 – [Extreme Weather Support for People Sleeping Rough – 7 April 2026](#)

Link 2 – [Review: Rough Sleeper Extreme Weather Response – July 2026](#)

Link 3 – [City of Adelaide Cool Wayfinding Tool](#)

Link 4 – [Advocacy to State Government for increased homelessness response – 24 February 2026](#)

Link 5 – [Letter from Lord Mayor to the Premier of South Australia](#)

Link 6 – [State Government Immediate Action Support – 14 July 2026](#)

Link 7 – [Homelessness Roundtable Outcomes Summary](#)

Link 8 – [Advocacy Letter from Lord Mayor to Peter Malinauskas August 2026](#)

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

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