

Councillor Martin - MoN - Declaration of Homelessness Emergency

Tuesday, 22 September 2026
Council

Council Member
Councillor Phillip Martin

Public

Contact Officer:
Ilia Houridis, Director City Shaping

MOTION ON NOTICE

Councillor Phillip Martin will move a motion and seek a seconder for the matter shown below to facilitate consideration by the Council:

'That Council;

Declares that a Homelessness Emergency is being experienced across the CBD and North Adelaide with unacceptable levels of homelessness, including rough sleeping. Consistent with the seriousness of the declaration, Council;

1. Will collate the most accurate information it can assemble to understand the extent and severity of the problem
2. Ensure that all policies, strategies and budgets are aligned to address the emergency through every reasonable means available, including being open to consider new ideas
3. Lead a community wide approach to reducing homelessness and rough sleeping by demonstrating leadership and collaboration with sector providers and State and Federal agencies to ensure there is adequate crisis accommodation in the City
4. Use the emergency declaration as a tool to encourage State and Federal Governments to provide sufficient resources for long term social housing
5. Encourage other local government areas to declare a homelessness emergency to address the housing and rough sleeping crisis and to encourage all levels of government to develop policies to help Australians to avoid homelessness.'

ADMINISTRATION COMMENT

1. The number of people sleeping rough remains at between 200 and 240 people. This measure is reported by the Adelaide Zero Project and is used to determine progress towards Council's target of Functional Zero Homelessness, in which the number of people sleeping rough is below the system's capacity to house them.
2. With the number remaining relatively static for several years, there is no evidence of sustained progress towards Functional Zero or a reduction in the underlying level of rough sleeping.
3. Achieving Functional Zero requires an integrated and systemic response leading with a Housing First approach, prioritising access to permanent housing as the first response, followed by the tailored health, social and other supports needed to sustain housing and address the underlying causes of homelessness.
4. On this basis, the interpretation of the motion by Administration to declare a 'Homelessness Emergency' is to mean that Council is seeking an exceptional and accelerated improvement to the system led by the State Government to address homelessness.

5. On 14 July 2026, Council requested that the Lord Mayor, on behalf of Council, write to the Premier of South Australia seeking urgent State Government support for a coordinated response to rough sleeping in the City of Adelaide. The correspondence was to reflect the outcomes of the Lord Mayor's 2026 Homelessness Roundtable.
6. The Lord Mayor's 4th Homelessness Roundtable held on 6 August 2026 brought together senior political, government and sector leaders, as well as city business and city resident groups, to discuss the joined-up government response required to end rough sleeping.
7. The State Government has also released its Report of the *Review of the South Australian SHS-Funded Homelessness System* (the Review) on Friday, 11 September 2026. Administration is currently reviewing this document for the opportunities and actions it identifies to address the issues raised at the Lord Mayor's Roundtable.
8. As committed to in July 2026 a letter to the Premier has been prepared, copied to all relevant Ministers with portfolio responsibilities, outlining Council's concern that existing partnerships and responses are only managing immediate crisis-need, rather than addressing the underlying drivers of homelessness or adequately resourcing prevention.
9. The letter emphasises the need for stronger State Government leadership, with the Lord Mayor's Homelessness Roundtable priority action being for the State Government to establish a Premier's Taskforce, single Ministerial portfolio and/or a Commissioner for Ending Rough Sleeping, supported by cross-portfolio governance [Link 1](#).
10. With the release of the Review, the State Government has committed to a further period of engagement and co-design of system changes commencing with roundtables on 23 September 2026.
11. Administration will participate in these processes and seek engagement opportunities for Council Members in this process. Administration will contribute the other key outcomes from the Lord Mayor's Roundtable to the process including:
 - 11.1. Reorienting homelessness prevention and responses around individuals, particularly at critical transitions across health, corrections and housing
 - 11.2. Significantly increasing safe, accessible and low-barrier crisis and transitional accommodation
 - 11.3. Increasing permanent supportive housing and sustained post-housing support
 - 11.4. Establishing a coordinated inner-city alcohol and other drug response across health, housing and homelessness
 - 11.5. Expanding specialist assertive outreach, including after-hours and weekend responses
 - 11.6. Matching homelessness system funding and service delivery to the level of need, with greater funding certainty.
12. When briefing the homelessness sector on the release of the Review, the Minister noted that there continues to be a strong role for local government in partnering to end homelessness and that there are some shining stars within local government already.
13. The City of Adelaide has a reputation locally and nationally as a leader in its response and role in partnering with the sector.
14. Should Council resolve to support the proposed motion, the Administration will write to the Local Government Association, encouraging them and other local governments to actively participate in the State Government's homelessness system co-design.

Should the proposed motion be supported by Council, the following implications of this motion should be considered. Note any costs provided are estimates only – no quotes or prices have been obtained:	
Public consultation	Not applicable
External consultant advice	Not applicable
Legal advice / litigation (eg contract breach)	Not applicable
Impacts on existing projects	Administration already actively participates in partnership discussions through the Australian Alliance to End Homelessness and directly with the Department for Human Services

Budget reallocation	Not applicable
Capital investment	Not applicable
Staff time in preparing the workshop / report requested in the motion	Administration already actively participates in partnership discussions through the Australian Alliance to End Homelessness and directly with the Department for Human Services and will do so through the upcoming consultation on the Review.
Other	Nil
Staff time in receiving and preparing this administration comment	To prepare this administration comment in response to the motion on notice took approximately 4.5 hours.

- END OF REPORT -