

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting

Team Name: Homelessness Stakeholder Advocacy Group

Date: 1 October 2025

Time: 12:30- 2:30pm

Venue: Port Stephens Council Admin Building

Chairperson: Mayor Anderson

Minutes: Jessica McDonald

Purpose of Meeting: To support a coordinated approach to addressing the impacts of homelessness in Port Stephens.

File: PSC2023-00263

Attendance

Ann Fletcher Port Stephens Family and Neighbourhood Services (PSFANS)	Nicole Grgas Hunter Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service	Jenna Nadiotis Hume Housing	Karley Culpin Department of Communities and Justice
Cr Le Mottee Port Stephens Council	Emma - Jane Scott The Office of Kate Washington	Mel Burge Salvation Army	Amber Herrmann Port Stephens Council Officer
Jessica McDonald Port Stephens Council	Phillipa Lewis Salvation Army	Leanna Mann NSW Police	Mayor Leah Anderson Port Stephens Council
Clare Saunders Tomaree Neighbourhood Centre	Wendy Sharpe Hope Cottage	Stephen McAlister Port Stephens Council	

The following guests are invited to attend:

Elizabeth Lamb Port Stephens Council	Anna Finter Street Side Medics		
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Apologies

Sarah Masters Dept of Communities and Justice	Jennifer Underwood Port Stephens Council	Cr Errington Port Stephens Council	Meryl Swanson Member for Paterson
Kate Washington Member for Port Stephens	Rosa Grine The Office of Meryl Swanson	Sue Ware Community Representative	Lucinda Rigby Port Stephens Council
Janelle Gardner Port Stephens Council	Cameron Barrack Salvation Army	Lee – Ann Gibson Yacaaba Centre	Andrew Smith Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council
Cr Armstrong Port Stephens Council	Mattea McIntosh Hume Housing	Katrina Ridley Community Representative	Di Ball Wahroonga Aboriginal Corporation
Leigh Williamson Dept of Communities and Justice	Steven Peart Port Stephens Council		

Item	Topic	Time Required	Responsible Officer	Action	Status/Date to be Completed
1.0	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES				
1.1	Acknowledgement of country	2mins	Chairperson	Record: Completed by Mayor Anderson	
1.2	Chair Welcome	10mins	Chairperson	Record: Mayor Anderson provided an update on completed actions since previous meeting. Action: Share information with members about The Place is Yours program - youth workshops and place activations projects funded by NSW Government.	

1.3	Outstanding actions from previous minutes	5mins	Chairperson	Record: Amber provided an update on outstanding actions from previous minutes	
2.0	BUSINESS ITEMS				
2.1	HSAG Members Update <i>Current Challenges, New Opportunities and General Update</i>	25mins	Members	<u>Lee-Ann - Yacaaba Centre:</u> Continuing to see a strong demand for crisis and transitional accommodation. Recent challenges include longer wait times for housing allocations and increased financial stress, particularly single parents and women leaving domestic and family violence. (sent through via email). <u>Anne – PSFANS:</u> Triple the amount of incoming cases, with inadequate funding to support. Largest cohort is women and children fleeing domestic and family violence. Seeing an increase in long term homelessness. <u>Jenna – Hume Housing:</u> Raised concerns regarding NDIS issues - incorrect use of funds, resulting in systematic issues and staff burden. Looking at new sites to build transitional accommodation if funding is available. <u>Karley - DCJ:</u> Advised member of planning for Street Count in February 2026.	

				Upcoming events: - Hunter Mental Health Housing Forum, 13 October. - Homelessness NSW workshops “a place to call home” campaign workshops in Newcastle, 9 October <u>Cr Le Mottee – West Ward:</u> Highlighted housing market pressures associated with increase in Australian population, resulting in homelessness. <u>EJ – The Office of Kate Washington:</u> Core and Cluster - Philips Street development will start construction in the coming months. <u>Phillipa – Salvation Army:</u> Currently don't have funding or enough staff to service the Port Stephens area. Plan for 5 new staff to help services the Hunter and Port Stephens to help sustain tenancy. <u>Leanna - NSW Police:</u> Noticing a growing number of Port Stephens youth are disengaging in school. Lack of education around social and basic living skills in young people attributing to the number of homelessness.	
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				<u>Nicole - Hunter Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service:</u> Receiving complaints of mould in houses. Education is the key and providing resources. Seeing more people in marginal housing having little protection <u>Clare – Tomaree Neighbourhood Centre:</u> Increase number of people needing emergency relief. People are now relying on weekly food hampers. Increase in material aid and housing referrals. <u>Wendy – Hope Cottage:</u> Increased hardship, particularly youth homelessness. They continue to work closely with other services, and strengthen collaboration. Looking to open for an additional day to support the increased demand.	
2.3	Street Side Medics	10mins	Anne Finter	Record: Street Side Medics, clinic coordinator Anna, presented an overview of the program. Announced they will be expanding into the Hunter New England area. First clinic will start in November in Hamilton. Action: Amber to email the group Street Side medics video.	

NEXT MEETING

Date: TBC

Time: TBC

Venue: TBC

2.4	Hunter Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service	10mins	Nicole Grgas	Record: Nicole presented updates surrounding the termination and share housing. Action: Amber to share Nicole's presentation with the group.	
2.5	Council Housing Update •	10mins	PSC Strategic Planner	Record: Elizabeth Lamb presented updates on the 3 key actions; • Annual report • Tiny homes overview • Affordable Housing Action Plan Action: Send Council's Tiny Homes website link to the group.	
3.0	DISCUSSION				
3.1	Review Action Plan	15 mins	Amber Herrmann	Record: Amber ran through the action plan, many were covered off throughout the meeting already. Action: Amber to send out any outstanding actions to the group	
4.0	OTHER MATTERS				

MEETING CODE OF COOPERATION

We start on time and finish on time.

Respect for diversity of group and views.

No inappropriate language.

Chair has to maintain control.

Decisions will be ratified at the next meeting.

We will not threaten or intimidate each other.

Agenda is put out before meeting and followed.	Everyone has a voice.
Agreement by majority consensus.	Lateral thinking is encouraged.
No hidden agendas.	Do not speak over others.
Minutes distributed in 7 days by email.	Secret ballots can be called.
Share knowledge.	Publicly support the decisions of the Panel.
Actions will be completed on time.	Maintain our focus on the agenda item.
We will leave our personal conflicts at the door.	Stay within the boundary of our Purpose Statement.
Commit to attendance as a delegate.	Deputies will be briefed.
Meetings will be scheduled.	Minutes will have an "Action" sheet.
Meeting will not proceed with less than 4 Worimi community representatives.	Respect the decision of the Chair.
Panel members will be trained in cultural awareness.	Practice good listening – PLUS we will have fun

Homelessness Stakeholder Advocacy Group Actions

Item	Topic	Action/Decision	Responsible Officer	Date to be Completed	Status
1 OCTOBER 2025					
1.2	Chair Welcome	Action: Share information with the group about the 25 youth workshops and place activations projects as part of The Place is Yours.	Amber Herrmann	15 Oct	
2.3	Street Side Medics	Action: Amber to email the group Anna video about the service.	Amber Herrmann	15 Oct	
2.4	Hunter Tenants	Action: Amber to share Nicole's presentation with the group	Amber Herrmann	15 Oct	
2.5	Council Housing Update	Action: Send council's Tiny Homes website link to the group	Amber Herrmann	15 Oct	
3.1	Review Actions Plan	Action: Amber to send out any outstanding actions to the group	Amber Herrmann	15 Oct	