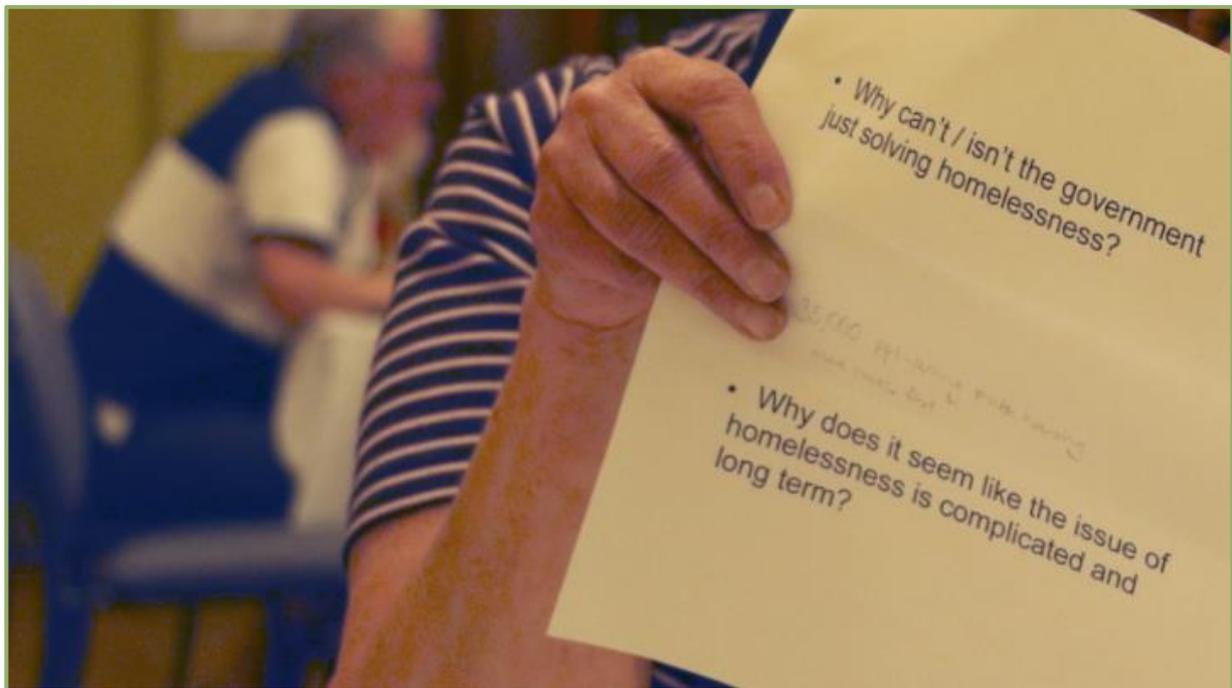

Report

A Community Conversation about Homelessness - *A Home in Moreland?*



A Home in Moreland Community Conversation project and report was created in the lands of the Kulin Nations, and we pay respects to the First Nations Elders, past, present and future.



Acknowledgements:
Mike Collins. Coordinator Social Planning, Moreland City Council
The Moreland Homelessness Working Group

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SUMMARY

In October 2017 a group of forty or so people gathered in Brunswick Town Hall to have a conversation about homelessness. This report aims to capture their deliberation and the collective wisdom that emerged. This is set within the broad context of the increase in homelessness in many places, including the locality of the City of Moreland. With a broad acceptance that the issue of homelessness is complex and a single entity such as a local council has limited scope to respond, this report recommends that the Moreland Homelessness Working Group (MHWG) – established by Moreland Council as a forum for its staff, service providers, community members and those with lived experience to share and connect – should take the lead.

Taking the community conversation process and outcomes into account, there are four recommendations made to the MHWG to continue to address the homelessness crisis.

1. Build the capacity of people with a lived experience to tell their stories for specific public education MHWG-led projects and homelessness campaigns.
2. Continue to develop the MHWG and coordinate area consultations to include all community health and social service providers. Into the future, look to jointly developing a framework for these agencies to plan and work collaboratively in the provision of homelessness related services to people experiencing homelessness and insecure housing issues in the community.
3. Work together with other councils and interested community and commercial stakeholders to develop a campaign aimed at State Government to provide additional resources to Local Governments to aid the homelessness crisis.
4. Continue to have further Community Conversations with a broad community membership to continue the community engagement processes, ensuring that community members have the opportunity to share their aspirations, concerns and values in relation to Homelessness in Moreland. Furthermore, that there are opportunities for these conversations to be included in the plans and decisions made about homelessness in the community.



INTRODUCTION

Homelessness is increasing in urban areas across the world. The shortage of safe affordable shelter is now recognised as a critical issue from the United Nations offices in New York to the halls of the Australian Parliament to the pages of our national newspapers, to the conversations in our local town halls. Internationally and within Australia, effort is being undertaken to develop policies and programs to address short and long-term housing solutions. Moreland City Council (MCC) has taken steps to explore ways to address these issues by coordinating the Moreland Homelessness Working Group (MHWG), and the most recent action taken by MCC was to engage Moreland locals in a 'community conversation'. The aim of the community conversation was to develop some insight into the issues of homelessness and for the community to participate in making sense of the stories, conversations and knowledge it holds. This report outlines the process used to facilitate the community conversation, the themes used to prompt the conversations, and the data points collected. The report provides some recommendations for next steps based on the information collected.

BACKGROUND

A widely accepted approach to defining homelessness has been the relative cultural definition of primary, secondary and tertiary homelessness developed by Chamberlain & MacKenzie (2003) and which informed the first Australian Bureau of Statistics Census enumerations undertaken from 1996-2006. Within this framework primary homelessness included sleeping 'rough' in public places and squatting; secondary forms include moving between temporary accommodation, such as emergency or transitional accommodation and couch-surfing; and tertiary homelessness includes medium to long-term accommodation that still falls below a culturally defined minimum standard (Chamberlain & MacKenzie, 2003).

More recently, the ABS (2012) have extended the Chamberlain and MacKenzie framework to incorporate other dimensions including the adequacy of the dwelling, security of tenure, and control/accessibility of space for social relations – or a measure of overcrowding (ABS, 2012). Whilst the precise measurement and conceptualisation of homelessness continues to be debated there is a general consensus that homelessness is more than the absence of a 'house' to live in and encompasses experiences where both access to and security of tenure is absent or threatened.

The ABS statistical definition states that when a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or
- does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

People who are experiencing homelessness are usually staying in the following areas:

- Improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out
- Supported accommodation for the homeless
- Temporarily with other households
- "Severely" overcrowded dwellings.
- Boarding houses and other temporary lodging

Homelessness as a Human Right

The Australian Human Rights Commission states that “People experiencing homelessness face violations of a wide range of human rights. Access to safe and secure housing is one of the most basic human rights. However, homelessness is not just about housing. A person who is homeless may be facing violations of the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to education, the right to liberty and security of the person, the right to privacy, the right to social security, the right to freedom from discrimination, the right to vote and many more. These human rights are protected by a number of international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)”

A Snapshot of homelessness

It is understood that there is a crisis of homelessness and insecure housing, and certainly the media including the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (2017) is using words such as “tsunami” to describe the rise of people experiencing homelessness. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2017) have published the specialist homelessness services 2015–16 web report, which is the fifth annual report from the Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (SHSC). The report describes the characteristics of clients of specialist homelessness services, the services requested, outcomes achieved, and unmet requests for services during 2015–16. According to this report, in Victoria during this time frame, 105,287 clients were assisted, representing 38% of the national specialist homelessness services (SHS) population (279,196 total clients), with an average of 100 requests for assistance went unmet each day. This report highlights a 4.1% increase in people accessing specialist homelessness services in Victoria over the last 5 years as well as the client groups of interest in Victoria;

- 1 in 130 people in Victoria received homelessness services due to domestic and family violence; this is higher than the national rate (1 in 225).
- People in Victoria with disability accounted for around 1 in 1,639 people who received homelessness assistance in this state; this is higher than the national rate (1 in 2,439).
- Around 1 in 219 people in Victoria who received homelessness assistance had experienced mental health issues; this is higher than the national rate (1 in 329).

HOMELESSNESS IN MORELAND

The Moreland Homelessness Working Group (MHWG) was convened in October 2016, and has met three times since November 2016. Participants in the MHWG include Council officers, representatives from state organisations, and workers from community organisations and NFP’s which work to address homelessness in the Moreland Area. Also included in this working group are people with a lived experience of homelessness, representing the Council of Homeless Persons, Launch Housing’s consumer participation program, and the Homeless Person’s Union of Victoria.

The MHWG attendees have contributed information and ideas to three facilitated “discussion tables”. The accumulation of the work was an internal document “Wish List” which included the following ideas / proposals:

<i>Affordable Housing</i>	<i>Increased emphasis on early intervention & prevention w. a focus on parenting, respectful relationships & mental health</i>	<i>Co-ordinated support services</i>
<i>Protocol for responding effectively to people experiencing homelessness</i>	<i>Prevention focus - preventative financial; support package of support & brokerage</i>	<i>Work with non-traditional partners including businesses</i>
<i>Free public transport</i>	<i>No more unfriendly architecture</i>	<i>Helping out guide. List of services, contact numbers, and how they can help</i>
<i>Model similar to the one at City of Port Philip</i>	<i>Increased education increased understanding People with lived experience teaching</i>	<i>Better tenant protections Rent control Longer leases</i>
<i>Vacant Govt land (all levels) Property should be utilised for housing</i>	<i>Tax the rich (top 10%) Give directly to affordable housing stock & services</i>	<i>Compassion not contempt or fear</i>
<i>High priority item on Council's agenda</i>		<i>Immediate & resourced worker</i>

Understanding that there is a crisis in terms of homeless and insecure housing, which is being noticed and felt within the City of Moreland, there is an urgency to ask the question, What do we do? Acknowledging the importance of the most impacted needing to be heard and understood, but also operating within a larger community engagement framework, there was a emphasis to come up with a way to hear individual stories, the community stories and make sense of the stories of homelessness and insecure housing to answer the question- What do we do? The outcomes that were being sort in this process include, meaningful community conversations, the collection of information that can be documented to inform Council policy, resources, and creating a precedent for future community conversations.



A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Conversation as methodology in collaborative action research is not new, and researchers including Feldman (1998) have reiterated this time and again. Narrative is inherently multidisciplinary, and is an extension of the interpretive approaches in social sciences. Narrative lends itself to a qualitative enquiry in order to capture the rich data within stories. Surveys, questionnaires and quantitative analyses of behaviour are not sufficient to capture the complexity of meaning embodied within stories. Narrative analysis takes the story itself as the object of study. Thus the focus is on how individuals or groups make sense of events and actions through examining the stories they share and hear. This community conversation was developed with this in mind. Working with the quantitative data that already exists on the rising crisis of homelessness, and knowing that there's rich quantitative data in the community to be captured on issues of homelessness and insecure housing that could be fed into the Moreland City Council future policy and resources, we engaged the community with specific questions to consider. There was need to develop a list of themes directly related to the crisis of homelessness and insecure housing, as a relevant prompt for the participating community members so that we could focus the information received to utilise it in a practical manner. The themes were sourced from the working documents of the MHWG and four themes were chosen.



How?

- How can we respond to the issues of experiencing homelessness?
- How can we effectively respond to people experiencing homelessness?
- How can we make a positive impact to the issue of homelessness
- How can we better support people who experience homelessness?
- What ways are unhelpful?
- How can we respond to people in ways that are sympathetic and helpful?
 - As a citizen?
 - As a fellow service user?
 - As a service provider?
 - As a worker (eg, in Woolworths as a check out operator)
 - What interactions are helpful?
 - What kinds of interactions are unhelpful?

Connection

- How do we interact with people experiencing homelessness
 - As a citizen?
 - As a fellow service user?
 - As a service provider?
 - As a worker (eg, in Woolworths as a check out operator)
- What interactions are helpful?
- What kinds of interactions are unhelpful?
- How can we connect more closely to the issues of homelessness?

Communication

- How can we communicate the reality of homelessness?
- What myths exist about homelessness?
- What myths need to be busted?
- What exactly is it that needs to be communicated?
- How do we have community conversations about homelessness? What do they look like?
- What kind of conversations are useful and thoughtful?
- What kinds of conversations are unhelpful or mean spirited?

Why?

- Why do we have people experiencing homelessness in Moreland?
- Why does it seem like there are more people sleeping rough?
- Why does it seem like the issue of homelessness is complicated and long term?
- Why can't / isn't the government just solving homelessness?
- Why are events like these important?

The method we agreed upon to utilise the method of 'Community Conversations' were story work methods based on Participatory Narrative Inquiry, Talanoa & Fanango story work and the World Cafe Process.



Talanoa

A story work method that was used connects with the Talanoa storytelling traditions of the Pacific Islands including Fiji. In describing the Kakala Research Framework Seu'ula Johansson Fua suggests that Talanoa is "not an interview, but a shift in thinking from semi-structured interview; it is seen as the loosest type of data gathering tool. Talanoa approaches the participant with an idea that the participant is asked to muse, to reflect upon, to talk about, to critique, to argue, to confirm and express their conceptualisation in accordance with their beliefs and experiences". According to Seu'ula Johansson Fua conducting successful Talanoa "requires Fanongo or deep listening and feeling/sensing" by the researchers, "not only to the words being spoken but also to the silences, to the implied meanings, and the shared understandings".

Participatory Narrative Inquiry

Participatory Narrative Inquiry (PNI) is an approach in which groups of people participate in gathering and working with raw stories of personal experience in order to make sense of complex situations for better decision making. PNI focuses on the profound consideration of values, beliefs, feelings, and perspectives through the recounting and interpretation of lived experience. Elements of fact, truth, evidence, opinion, argument, and proof may be used as material for sense-making in PNI, but they are always used *from* a perspective and to *gain* perspective. This focus defines, shapes, and limits the approach.

The process

Our first step was to create inclusive environment to ensure that there would be a diverse range of participation in the event. The physical spaces as accessed and modelled after a café. We had round tables covered with a tablecloth, butcher paper, coloured pens, flowers, water, glasses and snacks. There was room for six people at each table, and there was a total of six tables. People were to register for the free event so that we could have an estimation of the number of people participating, and so we could communicate with them through email.

People were invited in a variety of ways including, Facebook event invitation, email, the event was advertised on the council website and through a range of community organisations.

A Home in Moreland was held on Wednesday 18th October 2017 from 6.30pm to 9.30pm. Each person who attended was directed to a registration desk, where they received a name tag, the option of a coloured sticker on their tag to signify that they didn't want to be photographed, they were given an agenda, along with a pre and post evaluation form. They were asked to fill in the pre-evaluation form as soon as possible.

The event was hosted by a trained facilitator and the evening started with a welcome from the Mayor, Helen Davidson. The facilitator then introduced the process and context of the evening and asking all participants to complete the pre-evaluation forms. The facilitator highlighted the aspects important to making the space welcoming and inclusive for all participants including making mention of the safer space document provided at each table.

The process began with the first of four 20 minute rounds of conversation based on the one of the above themes for each small group seated around each table. During the conversations, each table was asked to write notes based on the conversations on the paper provided. The notes would help the participants during the larger group discussion, and also provide some documentation for this report. At the end of the twenty minutes, each table received another of the four themes with additional prompting questions. With each new theme for conversation, the questions were able to be built upon to focus the conversation or guide its direction.



Theme 1: Why?

When collating the notes from the conversation tables based on the question and prompts connected to the theme 'Why?' There were some common understandings that were highlighted.

On a very fundamental level, people discussed the rising of homelessness and the visibility of people sleeping rough due to the reality that these things were indeed increasing. People spoke about the impact of gentrification in Moreland on homelessness and insecure housing, but also in the possible drift of people experiencing homelessness to the area due to the access of specific support services. Participants spoke about intersecting issues including, family violence (FV), alcohol and other drugs (AOD) and people experiencing mental health issues. They spoke about systemic issues such as neo-liberal policies, lack of affordable housing, and lack of security in private rentals. The specific issues of vulnerable communities was discussed, including the rise of women over the age of 50 and young people experiencing rising rates of homelessness. Discriminatory stereotypes and negative community perceptions of people experiencing homelessness was also discussed in depth.

Theme 2: Communicate

The prompt questions that were given to each table for the theme of communicate were;

- How can we communicate the reality of homelessness?
- What myths exist about homelessness?
- What myths need to be busted?
- What exactly is it that needs to be communicated?
- How do we have community conversations about homelessness? What do they look like?
- What kind of conversations are useful and thoughtful?
- What kinds of conversations are unhelpful or mean spirited?

The number one emerging theme based on the prompts given were the perpetuation of false myths about homelessness. Within the tables conversations, many of the myths were detailed and shared, including the myth that it is generally 'drunk men' that experience homelessness, and the myth busting stories of mature women and young people who are increasingly homeless. Participants didn't just tell stories about the myths that exist, but also strategies for busting the

myths and the alternative stories that should be communicated to the wider community. People shared story strategies for who to target with the myth busting. An example given was, targeting the Country Women's Association for support around public education on the rise of mature women experiencing homelessness. Other strategies discussed included large campaigns, connecting with specifically themed weeks for public education (homelessness week) targeting systemic institutions for education and training (police services, university, psychology, school, trade associations, rotary service clubs) commercial and community media, and developing connection between services provides to share experiences, resource, data & solve. Central to all of the stories collected, was the importance of the lived experience stories to be front and centre of all communications.



Theme 3: How?

When exploring the theme How? Each table was given the following prompt questions.

- How can we respond to the issues of experiencing homelessness?
- How can we effectively respond to people experiencing homelessness?
- How can we make a positive impact to the issue of homelessness
- How can we better support people who experience homelessness?
- What ways are unhelpful?
- How can we respond to people in ways that are sympathetic and helpful?
 - As a citizen?
 - As a fellow service user?
 - As a service provider?
 - As a worker (e.g, a check out operator)
 - What interactions are helpful?

Within the discussions and associated notes, each table has a variety of responses to the theme. The three main area of conversation were

1. The development of more housing.
2. Reforms in policy, legislation and the practice of supporting people experiencing homelessness, or insecure housing, and a political shift needed for these things to happen.

-
3. The community interactions and communications about the issues of homelessness and the people experiencing homelessness, including community engagement, public education and myth busting at a society level.

Theme 4: Connection

The final theme for the participants to explore was the theme of connection. The prompt questions that were developed are;

- How do we interact with people experiencing homelessness
 - As a citizen?
 - As a fellow service user?
 - As a service provider?
 - As a worker (e.g, as a checkout operator)
- What interactions are helpful?
- What kinds of interactions are unhelpful?
- How can we connect more closely to the issues of homelessness?

The conversations and storytellings at each of the tables resulted in three main topics emerging.

1. How to communicate with people experiencing homelessness.

This specific topic includes two different parts. The first part is how to communicate compassionately to people experiencing homelessness, especially with offers of help or support. The second part concerns how to find opportunities to hear the stories of people's lived experience of homelessness as a means to understanding and increasing relevant community knowledge. With this topic, the conversations lead to developing / using skills based around empathy, compassion and kind heartedness.

2. The connections between people experiencing homelessness and the services that are there to support them.

3. The connection between support services and also between support services and other services such as real estate agencies.

The last two connection topics were ones that were raised, however, there was no substantive problem solving ideas at the stage of the conversations. This however does change when we analyse the larger group sense making process.



Community sense-making

Making sense of the stories and highlighting the ones that resonate is an important part of strategically using story work. Within the process, it was important to create opportunities for participants to tell raw stories of personal experience; to have a diversity of perspectives and experiences; for opportunity for interpretation of stories by those who told them; creating space for pattern exploration; and narrative group sense-making. This was all built into the process of the night, and the final hour was specifically designed to explore the patterns of the stories between the tables, for the participants to bounce of each other in relation to building steps forward to addressing homelessness and to all make sense of the crisis of homelessness and insecure housing in Moreland.

The emerging data points that came out of this process are;

Data point 1.

There is a crisis in lack of resources, lack of compassion and lack of addressing the human rights aspect of people experiencing homelessness.

The lack of resources for people experiencing homelessness include a lack of external resources available including housing and financial support. The lack of internal resources are cited as due to the intersecting associated issues such as mental health issues, joblessness, and family violence.

The lack of compassion is directly related to the inability of the governing bodies and society as a whole to make large scale systemic changes, and the reinforcement of media and then by virtue citizens in reinforcing negative stereotypes about people experiencing homelessness that reinforces stigma and discrimination.

Data Point 2.

Stories are an important part of the crisis of homelessness crisis and are connected in ways that are both positive and negative, however, stories are seen as integral in moving forward on this issue. Stories of lived experience for research and public education, campaign stories for systemic changes to legislation, policy and service delivery. Stories used by individuals and by councils and government to understand and tackle the issues at hand.

Data Point 3.

Council can play a large role in addressing homelessness. This includes development and access to public education programs, staff training, people being able to access to local government services like pool and libraries, and changes in local regulations, for example parking laws. This discussion point also involved the need to ensure that the laws are based on the Declaration of Human Rights. There was lots of support for councils to work alongside community services as a pivotal point to break down service silos. Working alongside commercial businesses was also discussed to ensure greater support for people experiencing homelessness. Lastly, the theme of council working alongside developers to ensure more adequate and affordable housing is created was discussed at length.

NEXT STEPS

Taking the community conversation process and outcomes into account, there are four recommendations made to the MHWG to continue to address the homelessness crisis.

1. Build the capacity of people with a lived experience to tell their stories for specific public education MHWG led projects and homelessness campaigns.
2. Continue to develop the MHWG and coordinate area consultations to include all community health and social service providers in a longer-term goal of developing a Moreland Collaborative. A jointly developed charter can provide a framework for these agencies to plan and work collaboratively in the provision of homelessness related services to people experiencing homelessness and insecure housing issues in the community.
3. Work together with other councils and interested community and commercial stakeholders to develop a campaign aimed at State Government to provide additional resources to Local Governments to aid the homelessness crisis.
4. Continue to have six monthly Community Conversations with a broad community membership to continue the community engagement processes, ensuring that community members have the opportunity to share their aspirations, concerns and values in relation to Homelessness in Moreland. Furthermore, that there are opportunities for these conversations to be included in the plans and decisions made about homelessness in their community.

APPENDIX – EVALUATION

The purpose of the A Home in Moreland evaluation is two-fold.

1. We are interested in the evaluation of the community conversations, with a particular emphasis on evaluation the process and method for connecting, communicating and co-creating outcomes that can be fed into the objective of the event - to collect knowledge for the expressed purpose of meaningful community conversations, the collection of information that can be documented to inform MCC policy, resources, and creating a precedent for future community conversations.
2. We are also deeply invested in the continued improvement of the community engagement strategies, particularly but not limited to the development of further community conversations.

The pre and post evaluation forms were not completed by everyone, however, we did manage to collect in part evaluations from twenty five people, with a total of twenty two mostly completed.

Pre-evaluation

There were 21 pre-evaluation forms collected by participants. The pre-evaluation form questions (aside from personal details) were;

- How did you find out about this event?
- Why did you decide to participate in this event?
- What outcomes do you want to see from this event?
- What will make you feel like this event was worth attending?

Detailed below are some of the answers that represent both the diversity of the answers received, and also ones that are variations of 'typical' answers received.

How did you find out about this event?

"Homelessness working group (Moreland City)"

"Receive email from team leader council to homeless persons - PESP Team"

"Council website"

"Yarra Housing and Homelessness Network"

"Moreland Council Facebook page"

"Local Newspaper"

"A friend's Facebook feed. They had an interest in the event."

"Moreland Housing Advisory Group"

Why did you decide to participate in this event?

“To gather knowledge about current and potential strategies for dealing with homelessness, civically in order to provide better services and information for our City of Moreland clients”

“Very interested plus I’m homeless”

“Interest in social justice”

“Housing and homelessness is a personal / professional interest of mine. I like to participate in council activities, if I can. I believe housing & homelessness is an issue for Moreland.”

“I have been concerned about increasing homelessness in my community for many years, + would like to support the council in any initiatives to alleviate homelessness.”

“Local homeowner in Brunswick concerned about the plight of homeless people. Previously worked in the state mental health service and know link between Mental illness + homelessness”

What outcomes do you want to see from this event?

“A co-operative framework for assisting homeless citizens, across all of the various categories of being homelessness, that will lead to SAFE and sustainable outcomes”

“Mutual understanding”

“Affirmation by council as the problem (extend / acuteness) & Commitment to some resources / capacity to invest - Advocacy Plan”

“Create solutions. Community enabling ways to step up and address the issue”

“Greater understanding of homeless people’s issues from their stories and experiences. Know what actions council & community & organisations can take to better the situation.”

“I would like to be more aware of what the council is doing to support homelessness + I would like to know what can done as a member of this community to reduce the impact of homelessness.”

“Some principals for action based on charter of HR & acknowledgement of structural basis for homelessness through strategies to address local drivers”

“A clearer picture of what Moreland Council’s role is in addressing homelessness + housing issues in the municipality.”

“Ideas for ongoing collaboration between councils, agencies and the community”

“Better idea of services available in Moreland, and what are the general community attitudes to homelessness”

What will make you feel like this event was worth attending?

“At least the potential promise of hope for better outcomes”

“Mutual outcome”

“Not sure”

“Knowing outcomes were implemented / tested. Actively communicating the issues / growth/ change re, homelessness. Developing relationships between concerned homeless people / citizens / agencies / council...”

“A large attendance from different people”

“Respectful participation and tangible outcomes that show how council. Community & industry can work together to help those most vulnerable.”

“If I gain insights into why there is a growing homelessness population & understand what the council is currently doing to assist & what gaps there are that need to be addressed to fix the issue”

“Feeling like there is hope.”

“Great participation for networking & information sharing; input from people with lived experience”

“Action steps. Feedback on this evaluation process.”

“Genuine dialogue - Group Interconnectivity”

“Some clear communication points & decisions round actions / plans + including community engagement ideas and models”

“Coming away with some skills to help act and understand the issues further”

Mapping the responses from the pre-evaluation some common themes emerged.

1. Community members want to gain more knowledge about the issues of homelessness
2. Community members want to participate in creating action plans for tackling the issue of homelessness
3. Community members want to find out how they can participate as a community member to help elevate the crisis of homelessness
4. Community members want to have conversations and connect as community members around this particular issue

Post-evaluation

The data in the post evaluation surveys were based on the following questions.

- Do you think the event achieved what it set out to do?
- What outcomes do you feel were achieved by participating in the event?

- What the event worth attending? Why?

There was also space to write a testimonial which many people chose not to do.

Overall the sentiments that were shared were very positive. There was less of a sense of people feeling assured that concrete outcomes would be achieved by the community conversation, and more a general enthusiasm for the conversations had on the night, the inspiration developed, and the hope for future action. A snapshot of the post conversation evaluations are below.

Do you think the event achieved what it set out to do?	
“Yes- engaging conversation were had that were guided by 4 important questions - all tables were talking the whole time - understanding problems and brainstorming solutions”	“To a degree. The diversity of approach, while entirely interesting and engaging may have been too broad a canvas to create specific focus with regard to practicalities.”
“Yes - to discuss the issues in and around homelessness”	“I had to leave at 8.30pm. Kind of, reaffirmed some things that I had known & enhanced some of those perceptions. Having people who work in the sector of mental health gave our table richness that I otherwise wouldn’t have been exposed to.”
“Yes to exploring the themes but hard to actually find answers”	“Yes, very rich and interesting conversation. Came up with a range of constructive ideas and actions.”
“Not sure yet, need to see your follow up”	“It was a great way to start working out how council can being to address this issue”
“Yes, both small group and forum discussions were valuable as an open space for ideas”	“Not entirely sure on the group goal. A statement at the beginning of the agenda may have assisted me.”
“I think so, hoping that some of the ideas will go further up the chain in Moreland Council.”	
“Yes, I think the range of conversation points were very pertinent + useful + all got pulled together logically and holistically.”	

What outcomes of you feel where achieved by participating in this project?	
“Shared learning. A few repeated points that I hope will become apparent and acted upon after the report is drafted”	“Clear themes emerged, with achievable outcomes with the right strategies in place”
“Educated by other council’s, lot’s of differing opinions but generally all have same aim.”	“Provide a road map to council”
“Giving people ideas for approaching homelessness and how to campaign for solutions”	“Made some connections with people, we’ll take action ourselves. Would love it if this forum reconvened in 6/12 months - to join Moreland City to continue to take responsibility / action.”
“Personal outcomes in terms of awareness & understanding/ Emphasised importance of agency & importance of lived experience.”	“I’ve learnt more and feel engaged to help”
“Understanding about different dialogues and personal views about expectations of all levels of government to results”	“Expanded my thinking and through inclusion of people with lived experience”
“A good collection of thoughts offered up towards the discussion that will be shared with council. They otherwise might not have had opportunity to gather such a broad opinion.”	“It was great to have the whole room contribute to the final discussion”
“Awareness. Hopefully - A continuation of a conversation around this issue.”	“I think it connected ideas + tells me we’re on the right track; also good to have a mixture of people ; people = lived experiences, people fresh to topic; people from services + people just genuinely wanting to participate.”

The themes that emerged from the post evaluations that are worth taking note of are;

- The deeper community engagement created by the community conversation process.
- The gaining of knowledge of on all areas of homelessness including projects that other councils and governments are participating in, the social and economic intersections that adversely interconnect with the experience of homelessness.
- The deeper understanding of the experiences of homelessness due to the stories shared and conversations with people who have a lived experience of homelessness.
- The need for more clearly articulated goals and outcome measures for community conversations.

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