

Resolution of Council

21 September 2026

Item 13.9

Motion to Local Government NSW Annual Conference – Homelessness Support for People Seeking Asylum and Temporary Visa Holders

Moved by Councillor Ellsmore, seconded by Councillor Worling –

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note that:

- (i) the City, through its Homelessness Action Plan, acknowledges its commitment to all people in the city experiencing or at risk of homelessness
- (ii) the City's homelessness response is widely recognised as sector-leading, providing vital support to address service gaps and meet the needs of people who are excluded from other services, including on the basis of residency status
- (iii) the Plan compels the City to monitor issues facing at-risk groups and to advocate to other levels of government to address emerging needs
- (iv) in April 2026, Council unanimously supported a motion, calling on the NSW and federal government to provide support for non-resident rough sleepers, as part of Council's response to the sad and untimely death of Bikram Lama

(B) Council further note:

- (i) the Local Government NSW Conference will be held in Wollongong in November 2026
- (ii) while immigration is a federal responsibility and housing policy is set by the federal and state governments, councils are on the frontline of the effort to tackle homelessness, responding to people based on need not on visa status

- (iii) the NSW Homelessness Strategy (2025-2035) recognises asylum seekers, temporary visa holders, and undocumented people as a distinct group facing unique risks of homelessness, and barriers to assistance. However, non-residents are excluded from many of the state's housing products and services
 - (iv) that organisations such as the Refugee Council of Australia identify temporary visa holders, international students, people seeking asylum, and certain New Zealand citizens as cohorts that face distinct barriers and experience hidden homelessness
 - (v) that while the City of Sydney, along with other councils across the state, provides funding for support services for people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness regardless of visa or residency status, gaps in resourcing limit the ability of councils and other frontline services to adequately respond to the growing demand for these supports
- (C) Council endorse the submission of the following motion to the 2026 Local Government NSW Annual Conference:

That Local Government NSW advocates to the NSW and Australian Governments to:

- (a) expand Homes NSW eligibility for key housing products for temporary visa holders experiencing homelessness, including Rent Choice Start Safely, Rent Start Bond Loan and Rent Advance
- (b) request targeted funding for frontline homelessness and asylum agencies that support non-residents who are excluded from mainstream services due to their visa status
- (c) provide resourcing through the National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness to improve access to information, referrals, crisis assistance and appropriate homelessness and housing support for temporary visa holders experiencing homelessness
- (d) ensure people seeking asylum on temporary visas have the right to work, access to Medicare, and access to existing financial assistance in times of crisis, so they can support themselves and their families.

Carried unanimously.

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