

Attachment A

**Correspondence from Property Industry
Foundation – Request for Support for
EverySQM Platform – 30 June 2025**



30 June 2025

Council of the City of Sydney
Town Hall House
456 Kent St
Sydney, NSW, 2000

Attention: Monica Barone, CEO of the Council of the City of Sydney

Dear Monica,

Proposal to develop a Meanwhile Use Database to connect owners of vacant property with homeless charities and community housing providers for short-term use for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

I am writing to request support for a **Meanwhile Use Database** in line with a recent Council resolution on 17 February 2025 to support the use of vacant properties for short-term housing.

Meanwhile Use is a pragmatic, short-term response to increase affordable housing supply and sector capacity using existing resources.

There is an increased understanding of what Meanwhile Use is, and how it is used as a short-term solution for vulnerable cohorts facing homelessness. Charities and community housing providers can use these properties as an opportunity for homeless people to stabilize their situation while they find longer-term housing solutions.

Successful examples of Meanwhile Use

Addison Road: TOGA bought a hotel in 2016 on Addison Road to develop. Realising that the development pathway would take a few years, TOGA leased the hotel to youth community housing provider - My Foundations Youth Housing - for 3 years. This gave My Foundations 42 fully furnished rooms to use for young people. During this time, the residents were able to stabilise, finish education and connect with employment. In the end, My Foundations had use of the hotel for five years, and every youth resident was connected with longer-term housing options over this period.

Beecroft House: Twilight Aged Care owns the property in Beecroft and has it earmarked for development in the future. In the meantime, since 2019, the property is being used to provide accommodation for up to twenty women who are fifty-five or older. Link Wentworth is the community housing provider which acts as the tenancy manager and Women's Community Shelters refers women to Beecroft House and provides case management. Residents can have tenancy for up to two years, and during that time they are connected to a network of housing providers to find a longer-term solution to their housing needs.

No central platform for Meanwhile Use

NSW & VIC (pls send mail to):
Suite 5, Level 2, Grafton Bond Building
201 Kent Street
Sydney NSW 2000

QLD
Level 10, 95 North Quay
Brisbane QLD 4000

Ph: 1800 313 116
E: enquiries@pif.com.au
W: www.pif.com.au
ABN: 67 641 455 709

Despite the growth of Meanwhile Use, there is no central platform that connects property owners that are open to Meanwhile Use with charities and community housing providers that could use these properties.

The Foundation is developing a central platform – the Meanwhile Use Database - to connect property owners with vacant properties to charities, community housing providers, and other organisations that can activate these spaces to provide temporary accommodation for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Following constructive discussions with City of Sydney representatives, this request for support is a direct outcome of those meetings. We look forward to working together to ensure this platform becomes a practical, effective tool in addressing homelessness across Sydney.

The Property Industry Foundation's expertise with property and homelessness

The Property Industry Foundation has a 29-year history of providing support to homeless youth in New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria. The Foundation seeks to increase the supply of accommodation available to youth charities and community housing providers. It sees the development of a Meanwhile Use Database as part of its mission. While the Foundation is focused on youth homelessness, it will promote the use of the database across all homelessness and housing agencies, and it will not be restricted to the youth cohort.

The Foundation is uniquely placed through its deep connections with the property industry to work with asset owners to identify properties that might be suitable and guide them through the meanwhile use process. It is currently engaging with owners who are open to Meanwhile Use arrangements, helping to increase the supply of housing through short- to medium-term activation of otherwise unused spaces.

The Foundation has led a period of consultation with charities, community housing providers and asset owners over the last 8 months, including two roundtables, to establish the level of support for the proposed database. This period of consultation has established a strong level of support as well as a strong understanding of the concerns that property owners want to see addressed on the platform.

Launch of Meanwhile Use Platform – EverySQM (Square Meter)

The Foundation is currently building the Meanwhile Use Database which will be called EverySQM and expects to do a 'soft launch' of the database in October 2025, with a full launch expected in February 2026.

The Meanwhile Use Database will function as a platform whereby:

- Asset owners can list potential properties and connect with suitable charities and community housing providers who can use those properties for short-term use. We expect this to be for a minimum of 12 months but understand that in certain cases this could be for a shorter period.
- Users can also find advice and guidance about the legal and regulatory aspects of Meanwhile Use on the platform. This was a key concern for property owners, who wanted a one-stop shop where they could get guidance and legal templates for meanwhile use arrangements.
- Asset owners can look at successful case studies and connect with asset owners who are experienced in Meanwhile Use to assuage any concerns. This was another key concern for property owners, who wanted to know that tenants would successfully transfer to longer-term housing solutions prior to the owner reclaiming the property and wanted to talk to owners that had done it already. At both round tables community housing providers were able to re-assure asset owners about using the time residents are in a meanwhile use facility to connect them with longer-term housing solutions.

- The platform will promote and demystify Meanwhile Use with asset owners and with the broader community.

Request for support

The Property Industry Foundation is looking for support from the City of Sydney Council – both financial support and advocacy for the platform.

The key elements required for the platform are:

- A senior resource to establish and run the platform, liaising with parties etc. (\$95k/year).
- Ongoing development and maintenance of the platform (\$30k/year).
- Marketing strategy and implementation (\$25k/year).

Any further incidental costs will be covered by the Foundation. The senior resource will be employed by the Foundation, the platform will be supported by the Foundation, and will be promoted on the Foundation's website, etc.

The Foundation is committed to funding the platform for two years to establish it and is seeking co-funding of \$70k/year from the City of Sydney for a two-year period to support the establishment of the platform.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kate Mills', with a horizontal line underneath.

Kate Mills
Chief Executive Officer
Property Industry Foundation