

# Mobile Free Food Services Policy

Resolution of Council: 29 October 2007



Responsibility:  
Community Living

*city of villages*

# **WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP: MOBILE FREE FOOD SERVICES & THE CITY OF SYDNEY**

## **CITY OF SYDNEY & MOBILE FREE FOOD SERVICES POLICY**

### **1. BACKGROUND**

The City of Sydney has a commitment to addressing the needs of people who experience homelessness within the Local Government Area. To that end the City adopted the Homelessness Strategy 2007 – 2012 in August 2007.

The City's 5 year Homelessness Strategy identified four key priorities and four key actions. These are:

#### ***Key Priorities***

- *Vulnerable and complex chronically homeless rough sleepers.*
- *Compassionate and balanced public space management.*
- *Supporting innovative, evidence based new models of service provision.*
- *Establishing target results and measuring outcomes.*

#### ***Key Actions***

- *Homelessness Services*
- *Project and Policy Development*
- *Homelessness Sector Development and Co-ordination*
- *Research, Advocacy, Evaluation and Accountability*

The development of a Mobile Free Food Services Policy is specifically identified within the key action Homelessness Sector Development and Co-ordination.

This action is described within the Homelessness Strategy 2007 – 2012 in the following way:

“The aim is to improve the co-ordination between mobile food services and improve service users' access to long term exits from homelessness. It is also intended to foster collaboration and a strategic approach that also considers factors such as managing issues around amenity and relationships with the local community.”

The intended outcome of this action is:

“To increase co-ordination amongst volunteer based food services; improve relationships between the City’s services and food vans to improve responses to homeless people as well as improved public space management.”

## **1. 1 Definition of Mobile Free Food Service**

The definition of mobile free food services, used in the context of this policy and the City’s Homelessness Strategy is those services, usually provided by volunteers, which provide meals, snacks and/or other refreshments to homeless and disadvantaged people free of charge.

Mobile food services refers to the fact that these services are not provided from a building or other fixed place but are provided from vans or similar types of vehicles. By definition, these free mobile services can be provided within any public space or road where it may be permitted to park such vehicles for short periods.

## **1.2 Mobile Food Services Group**

Food services are an essential element within the spectrum of services provided to people who are homeless and other disadvantaged groups within the City of Sydney. The mobile food services, in particular, provide services at a time when many other services are unavailable, i.e. after hours and on weekends; they offer social contact, access to spiritual support and represent a unique opportunity to engage with disadvantaged people and to assist them to link up with appropriate supports for meeting their needs.

There are approximately nine different organisations providing mobile food services within the City of Sydney LGA. Historically, these services have tended to operate in isolation and also tend to be concentrated within a relatively small geographic area of the LGA.

Staff in the City of Sydney’s Homelessness Unit have convened a mobile free food services working group meeting since late 2005. Through initial phone contact, information about this planned meeting was provided to all known free mobile food services which then operated in the City of Sydney. Not all mobile food services may have been identified and not all services chose to seek further information or participate in these meetings.

Representatives from Mobile Free Food Services who have participated in meetings since 2005 include the following:

- Jesus Cares
- Presbyterian Women’s Association
- Coptic Orthodox Community Outreach Service (COCOS)
- St Vincent De Paul Night Service
- Care for Street Kids Australia
- St Paul’s Mission
- Youth Off the Streets

This group has continued to meet on a bi-monthly basis for almost 2 years. The group shares information and details about service provision and discusses goals and the ways

in which they might collectively reach those goals. Another important aspect has been to try to articulate the ways in which the City of Sydney might play a more active role in assisting these groups to achieve their goals and to improve assistance to disadvantaged and homeless people within the inner city.

In addition, group participants have been involved in several other homelessness initiatives, such as participation in piloting the draft Volunteer On-line Homelessness Information Kit being developed by the City of Sydney; the identification and mapping of free mobile food services provided in the inner city and the initial drafting of a Mobile Food Services Accord.

Most importantly, this group has formed the core consultative component of the development of a draft Mobile Food Services Policy.

It is intended that this group will continue to meet four times a year to ensure good communication between food services and other services for people who are homeless, as well as other services and facilities provided by the City of Sydney.

## **2. MOBILE FREE FOOD SERVICES POLICY**

### **2.1 Principles**

- The City recognises the significant commitment and contribution to addressing homelessness and social disadvantage made by mobile free food services within the inner city.
- The City recognises that services for the homeless and socially disadvantaged are best provided and strengthened when services work together in partnership, using a comprehensive and collaborative strategy.
- The City commits to working in partnership and collaboration with volunteer based free mobile food services.
- Working in partnership can increase the capacity for organisations to collectively advocate on behalf of the homeless and socially disadvantaged.

### **2.2 Objectives**

- To support the work of mobile free food services with homeless and disadvantaged people within the inner city.
- To improve referrals and access to information and services for people experiencing homelessness in inner Sydney.
- To develop and implement sustainable exits for people who are homeless and thereby reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in inner Sydney.
- To promote equitable access to services for people who are homeless and disadvantaged throughout the City of Sydney LGA.

- To improve operational and safety issues identified by the mobile food services and the City of Sydney.

### **2.3 Key Actions**

- Identify all mobile free food services operating in the City of Sydney LGA and keep an up-to-date resource list of locations, operating hours and key contacts for those services. This is intended to foster improved and ongoing communication with relevant City of Sydney staff and other organisations that assist people who are homeless in the inner city.
- Ensure that the mobile free food services resource list is widely disseminated and available through relevant services and information centres.
- Ensure all mobile free food services operating in the City of Sydney LGA are invited to participate in the Mobile Free Food Services Partnership Group (previously known as the Mobile free Food Services Working Group), currently convened four times a year by the Homelessness Unit of the City of Sydney.
- In collaboration with the Mobile Food Services Partnership Group, review the locations and operating times of all mobile free food services operating in the City of Sydney LGA to ensure equitable access to these services across the LGA. As a result of this review process, negotiate with identified mobile free food services about local amenity issues and where appropriate, assist those services to identify and re-locate to more suitable and accessible locations.
- In collaboration with the Mobile Food Services Partnership Group, develop a Mobile Free Food Services Accord between the City of Sydney and mobile free food services. The purpose of this Accord is to clarify roles and responsibilities of relevant Units of the City of Sydney as well as agreed on standards, roles and responsibilities expected of mobile free food services.
- Through quarterly meetings and ongoing phone and email contact, continue to identify issues of mutual concern to mobile free food services, people who are homeless, other members of the community and staff of the City of Sydney. The intent of this communication is to improve services and address problems in a timely manner.

### **2.4 Mobile Free Food Services Accord**

The Accord will include the following elements:

- Background – Principles and Objectives.
- Roles and responsibilities of Council Units (eg. Cleansing, Traffic management, Homelessness unit).
- Roles and responsibilities of mobile free food services.

- Guidelines and standards for service provision.
- Use of public space and liaison with the City of Sydney.
- Up-skilling volunteers on key issues (eg. Safe food handling; volunteer's code of conduct; information about other homelessness, health and community services).
- Terms of reference for Mobile Free Food Services Partnership Group.
- Accord Review Process.

The Accord is voluntary and will be reviewed annually. All organisations who want to assist homeless or socially disadvantaged people cannot and will not be prevented from doing so if they choose not to participate in the partnership agreement. The Accord is intended to formalise existing good relations between services and enhance collaborative work with the City of Sydney.

**ACCORD BETWEEN THE CITY OF SYDNEY AND  
MOBILE FREE FOOD SERVICES**

# ACCORD BETWEEN THE CITY OF SYDNEY AND MOBILE FREE FOOD SERVICES

## PRINCIPLES

- i. The City recognises the significant commitment and contribution to addressing homelessness and social disadvantage made by mobile free food services within the inner city.
- ii. The City recognises that services for the homeless and socially disadvantaged are best provided and strengthened when services work together in partnership, using a comprehensive and collaborative strategy.
- iii. The City commits to working in partnership and collaboration with volunteer based free mobile food services.
- iv. Working in partnership can increase the capacity for organisations to collectively advocate on behalf of the homeless and socially disadvantaged.

## 2 OBJECTIVES

- i. To support the work of mobile free food services with homeless and disadvantaged people within the inner city.
- ii. To improve referrals and access to information and services for people experiencing homelessness in inner Sydney.
- iii. To develop and implement sustainable exits for people who are homeless and thereby reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in inner Sydney.
- iv. To promote equitable access to services for people who are homeless and disadvantaged throughout the City of Sydney LGA.
- v. To improve operational and safety issues identified by the mobile food services and the City of Sydney.

### 3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CITY OF SYDNEY

The City's roles and responsibilities are:

- i. Cleansing Services within the public domain.
- ii. Encouraging the Inner City Homelessness Outreach Service (ICHOSS) to engage with users of the mobile food vans services.
- iii. Parking permits, access and identification for vehicles.
- iv. Administration and facilitation of bi-monthly meetings.
- v. Development of the Accord and consultation.
- vi. Clear communication to members of the working group outside of meetings.
- vii. Responding to identified needs for information on issues that face volunteers in their work. This is to be addressed through the organisation of speakers with expertise in the relevant field, eg. Mental Health Workers to provide information on understanding people living with a mental illness.
- viii. Identification of appropriate locations for food services.
- ix. Maintaining an up-to-date contact list of mobile food service providers and register of signatories to the Accord.
- x. Informing new mobile free food services that they can participate in this register and be linked in with the food van network.
- xi. Responding to complaints from residents and business regarding mobile free food service's operations and address these complaints through the Accord.
- xii. Establishing an accessible liaison staff member within the City for free food services to raise and resolve issues as soon as they are identified. This contact will respond and aim to resolve issues to do with safety, road rules, cleansing and developing links for

referral to the Inner City Homelessness Street Outreach and Support Service (ICHOSS).

#### **4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MOBILE FREE FOOD SERVICES**

All service providers who become members of the Accord must fulfil a number of responsibilities in their role as volunteers. Service Providers will, by agreeing to these responsibilities, maintain the respect and dignity of our client group; as well as respecting the urban environment in which we operate.

These roles and responsibilities are:

- i Maintaining consistent communication between volunteers and their organisation/s; as well as communication between free food service providers.
- ii Regularly addressing amenity issues, provide waste management facilities to users of the service/s and in doing so, take responsibility for the waste generated by their service provision.
- iii Co-operating with City cleansing services by negotiating an appropriate waste collection agreement.
- iv Providing consistent representation at Accord meetings. Proxy representatives will be sufficiently briefed prior to their attendance, ensuring an active participatory role.

#### **5. GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS FOR SERVICE PROVISION**

Signatories to the Accord will:

- i Maintain a duty of care to volunteers and to service clients.
- ii Comply with Occupational Health and Safety Legislation
- iii Comply with relevant food standards and safety legislation.

## **6. USE OF PUBLIC SPACE AND LIAISON WITH THE CITY OF SYDNEY**

Signatories to the Accord will:

- i Seek permission from the City for use of public space through the venue management booking process.
- ii Provide services at the times and in the locations specified in a consistent manner. Any change to operations require notification in advance to clients and the City.
- iii Notify the City of any incidents regarding antisocial behaviour.
- iv Contact the City to resolve cleansing and other issues as they arise.

## **7. UP-SKILLING VOLUNTEERS ON KEY ISSUES**

- i The City will establish an online orientation program about homelessness, health and welfare services in the city LGA to improve information about and referral to appropriate services.
- ii Food services will ensure access to the internet for volunteers to access this online program.
- iii Food services will provide other relevant training to volunteers as appropriate (eg. safe food handling, manual handling, first aid).

## **8. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR MOBILE FREE FOOD SERVICES PARTNERSHIP GROUP**

- i The group will meet four times a year to discuss homelessness trends and responses related to the provision of services to food van clients and operational issues arising from those services.
- ii The group will keep in regular contact throughout the year by email to help resolve issues as they arise.

## 9. ACCORD REVIEW PROCESS

The Accord will be reviewed every six months. Amendments to the Accord will occur annually.

## 10. KEY CITY OF SYDNEY CONTACTS

Liz Giles, Homelessness Project Co-ordinator

Phone: 9246 7676

[egiles@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:egiles@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)

Felicity Reynolds, Manager Community Support and Access

Phone: 9265 9667

[freynold@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:freynold@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)

**MEMBERSHIP TO THE ACCORD**

I, \_\_\_\_\_

Of, \_\_\_\_\_

Located at, \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

(registered name of business)

Agree to participate in the Accord etc etc and abide by etc etc

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

(Signature of service Manager / CEO / Chairman / other)

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

(Signature of Accord representative)

Contact details of Accord representative

First name: \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_