

Support for People Sleeping Rough during Tier 2 Code Blue Activations

Tuesday, 26 May 2026
Council

Strategic Alignment - Our Community

Public

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to respond to Council's decision on 28 April 2026 where Council resolved to:

1. *Requests the administration take up the ICHAG's invitation to attend a meeting of the organisation with a view to reflecting the March 10 2026 resolution of Council and reporting back to Council by the end of May 2026.*

The 10 March 2026 resolution of Council states:

'Consistent with the commentary at para 12 of Item 17.3 on February 10th (and noting the resolution of Council at Item 17.1 at the meeting of February 24th, 2026) asks the Administration to assist Council in ensuring that no rough sleeper in the City of Adelaide seeking safety from extreme weather will be denied shelter in the winter of 2026 by preparing a report for Council consideration by the middle of next month that;

1. *Details which Council owned community and/or business properties could be turned into safe, temporary accommodation during the declaration of Code Blue Tier 2 Activations as a trial program between the beginning of June and the end of August, 2026*
2. *The report should:*
 - 2.1. *Detail optimum operating hours, assuming shelter and any necessary support service would be provided complementary to and in addition to the hours of operation of existing accommodation and/or service providers*
 - 2.2. *Quantify, through discussion with existing accommodation and service providers the likely number of rough sleepers not accommodated by current rough sleeper venues and services for whom shelter could be provided*
 - 2.3. *Scope the nature of the shelter to be provided by Council and any desirable accompanying services*
 - 2.4. *Identify potential sources of State Government and homelessness sector support, including the provision of funding and/or personnel*
 - 2.5. *Calculate the likely cost of the initiative to City of Adelaide through any required reconsideration of the 25/26 Budget associated with the QF3 report to Council and for the 26/27 budget deliberations, including costings for staff resourcing, security and specialist expertise required, and*
 - 2.6. *Advise of any other relevant issues to assist in the successful completion of the trial.*

Administration has previously reported to Council on 7 April 2026 ([Link 1](#)) and 28 April 2026 ([Link 2](#)) in response to Council's decision of 10 March 2026 asking the Administration to prepare a report to 'assist the Council in ensuring that no rough sleeper in the City of Adelaide seeking safety from extreme weather will be denied shelter in the winter of 2026'.

Administration met with the Independent Community Homelessness Advisory Group (ICHAG) chaired by the Adelaide Day Centre to understand its capacity and capability to provide a suitable service and staffing delivery model. ICHAG proposes to provide staff and all necessary infrastructure to operate the service. The Department of Human Services advises that the Adelaide Day Centre would not be eligible for funding for a pilot program.

The assessment undertaken against the requirements for set up, operation and pack down of overnight accommodation consistent with what is provided by Alliance and non-Alliance providers and considered against the uses of existing City of Adelaide buildings, whether they are community, leased or commercial, has resulted in no council buildings being deemed suitable.

Through our discussions, the Adelaide Day Centre shared that they operate from a State Government leased venue in the CBD that aligns with the service offering at WestCare (as reported in paragraph 12 of the Council report on 28 April 2026 ([Link 2](#))). The Adelaide Day Centre has indicated that it has considered providing accommodation from the Adelaide Day Centre, but its existing lease with the State Government prevents after-hours use and overnight accommodation.

As previously reported to Council, in preparing advice on options to support people sleeping rough in extreme weather events Administration met with representatives from the Department of Human Services, existing and past providers of overnight accommodation and the South Australia Housing Trust. The conclusion from DHS and extreme weather service delivery partners is that within the CBD, overnight accommodation has sufficient capacity to meet the needs of adult men and women, though considerations remain around individual preferences and specific cohort needs.

ICHAG accepts the advice that there are adequate beds available at WestCare but wishes to provide an alternative for people sleeping rough in the city who, for various reasons, choose not to access that accommodation.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT COUNCIL

1. Notes the findings of the further report to Council on the use of Council owned community and/or business properties for safe, temporary accommodation as contained in Item 14.1 on the Agenda for the meeting of Council held on 26 May 2026.
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IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	<p>Strategic Alignment – Our Community</p> <p>Our Objective is to: Support our communities to thrive</p> <p>Key Action: Work with partners to identify new and innovative ways to reduce rough sleeping and homelessness.</p>
Policy	<p>The City of Adelaide’s Homelessness Strategy – Everyone’s Business, includes a bold move in relation to Emergency Shelter which states:</p> <p><i>In partnership with the South Australian Homelessness Alliance, investigate whether the City of Adelaide community infrastructure is made available in response to extreme heat and cold weather such as State Government announcements of Code Red and Code Blue.</i></p>
Consultation	<p>Administration engaged with the following agencies and organisations to inform this report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Human Services (DHS) • Baptist Care SA (WestCare) • Hutt Street Centre • SA Housing Trust • Independent Community Homelessness Advisory Group (ICHAG) chaired by the Adelaide Day Centre • Services to Youth Council (SYC).
Resource	Not as a result of this report
Risk / Legal / Legislative	<p>High-level risks have been identified per the report to Council on 28 April 2026.</p> <p>Administration has received preliminary advice from the Local Government Association Mutual Liability Scheme and Local Government Risk Services to determine insurance implications. This advice raises concerns in relation to asset management protection regarding a service which sits outside of core council functions, property damage, emergency evacuation and security presence.</p>
Opportunities	Not as a result of this report
25/26 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Proposed 26/27 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	Not as a result of this report
25/26 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Not as a result of this report
Other Funding Sources	Not as a result of this report

DISCUSSION

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to respond to Council's decision on 28 April 2026 asking the Administration to prepare a report by the end of May 2026, to
 - 1.1. *Take up the ICHAGs invitation to attend a meeting of the organisation with a view to reflecting the March 10 2026 resolution of Council and reporting back to Council by the end of May 2026.*
2. The 10 March 2026 resolution of Council states:
 - 2.1. *'Consistent with the commentary at para 12 of Item 17.3 on February 10th (and noting the resolution of Council at Item 17.1 at the meeting of February 24th, 2026) asks the Administration to assist Council in ensuring that no rough sleeper in the City of Adelaide seeking safety from extreme weather will be denied shelter in the winter of 2026 by preparing a report for Council consideration by the middle of next month that;*
 - 2.1.1. *Details which Council owned community and/or business properties could be turned into safe, temporary accommodation during the declaration of Code Blue Tier 2 Activations as a trial program between the beginning of June and the end of August, 2026*
 - 2.1.2. *The report should:*
 - 2.1.2.1. *Detail optimum operating hours, assuming shelter and any necessary support service would be provided complementary to and in addition to the hours of operation of existing accommodation and/or service providers*
 - 2.1.2.2. *Quantify, through discussion with existing accommodation and service providers the likely number of rough sleepers not accommodated by current rough sleeper venues and services for whom shelter could be provided*
 - 2.1.2.3. *Scope the nature of the shelter to be provided by Council and any desirable accompanying services*
 - 2.1.2.4. *Identify potential sources of State Government and homelessness sector support, including the provision of funding and/or personnel*
 - 2.1.2.5. *Calculate the likely cost of the initiative to City of Adelaide through any required reconsideration of the 25/26 Budget associated with the QF3 report to Council and for the 26/27 budget deliberations, including costings for staff resourcing, security and specialist expertise required, and*
 - 2.1.2.6. *Advise of any other relevant issues to assist in the successful completion of the trial.*

Background

3. Administration has previously reported to Council on 7 April 2026 ([Link 1](#)) and 28 April 2026 ([Link 2](#)) in response to Council's decision of 10 March 2026, which asked the Administration to prepare a report to 'assist the Council in ensuring that no rough sleeper in the City of Adelaide seeking safety from extreme weather will be denied shelter in the winter of 2026'.
4. As the lead for Extreme Weather Response, the State Government, through the Department of Human Services, is currently undertaking an *Extreme Weather Response Review*. The City of Adelaide is a member of the Steering Committee. The State Government's review and recommendations are due to be finalised by 30 June 2026.
5. The current position from DHS and the extreme weather service delivery partners it funds to deliver on their behalf is that within the CBD, overnight accommodation has sufficient capacity to meet the needs of adult men and women, though considerations remain around individual preferences and specific cohort needs.

Independent Community Homelessness Advisory Group (ICHAG)

6. The Independent Community Homelessness Advisory Group (ICHAG) is an information and advocacy network of existing homelessness service providers chaired by the Adelaide Day Centre that meets monthly.
7. Membership of the ICHAG is provided in [Link 3](#) and includes homelessness system Alliance members (funded by the Department of Human Services for extreme weather response), non-Alliance members, and associate members.
8. The ICHAG has a shared vision and agreement on the need to address homelessness, including a need for additional emergency, overnight and supported accommodation.

9. Views of individual members within the ICHAG relating to extreme weather response needs vary.
10. Administration met with several representatives from the ICHAG Action Group chaired by the Adelaide Day Centre, representing non-Alliance members of ICHAG, on 11 May 2026. Key points raised by attendees included:
 - 10.1. ICHAG is seeking additional accommodation options for people sleeping rough during extreme weather in the CBD.
 - 10.2. The ICHAG action group is seeking access to a suitable venue from which support services can be delivered to people sleeping rough during extreme weather events.
 - 10.3. The Adelaide Day Centre is based within a South Australian Housing Trust owned property. The terms of the lease preclude extended hours to provide the extreme weather accommodation from the purpose-run Moore Street premises.
 - 10.4. ICHAG does not receive State Government funding.
 - 10.5. ICHAG has indicated it could provide paid responsible officers and volunteers to support the operation of overnight accommodation services from 1 July 2026 until the end of 31 August 2026.
 - 10.6. ICHAG has requested the Council's support in relation to the provision of a suitable Council owned venue, security personnel, and cleaning services.
11. Following the meeting with ICHAG, Administration requested that the ICHAG Action Group provide a response in writing regarding proposed staffing, infrastructure and supports, opening hours, user groups, and insurance. Their response is as follows:
 - 11.1. Staffing would include:
 - 11.1.1. One paid supervisor (on duty from 6:00pm to 12:00am then on call from 12:00am to 6:00am)
 - 11.1.2. Two assistants (on duty alternate six hours shifts).
 - 11.1.3. Four experienced volunteers (on duty from 6:00pm to 10:00pm), then one additional volunteer (on duty from 10:00pm to 6:00am).
 - 11.2. ICHAG would be able to provide all necessary infrastructure including signs, seating, ground sheets, thin foam mattresses, blankets, pillows, water, food, kitchen supplies, and bathroom supplies.
 - 11.3. Opening hours would be from 6:00pm to 6:00am.
 - 11.4. User groups would include adult men and women with a venue facilitating up to 10 people for all night accommodation and an extra 10 people for half night respite.
 - 11.5. Insurance would be donated by the Adelaide Day Centre which includes public liability and volunteer insurance.

Advice from Agencies, councils and service providers

12. The report to Council on 7 April 2026 was based on the advice of Homelessness Alliance members involved in the current extreme weather response including the Department of Human Services, Baptist Care SA (Westcare), the Hutt Street Centre and the South Australian Housing Trust. Through the Council of Capital City Lord Mayor's network Administration sought and received information about the extreme weather responses of different Australian capital cities.
13. Advice from State Government Agencies and service providers indicates that doubling resources across multiple sites can be challenging to manage and staff effectively, often yielding minimal additional benefit or serving few, if any, extra clients.
14. Advice from the Department of Human Services and other service providers indicated that overnight accommodation during extreme weather cannot reliably rely on a volunteer workforce.
15. As part of its pre-election commitments, the Labour State Government announced in February 2026 an additional \$6 million to combat homelessness in the Adelaide CBD to be shared across Catherine House, Hutt Street Centre and St Vincent de Paul.
16. Following its meeting with the Hutt Street Centre in March 2026, the Administration met with the Hutt Street Centre on 29 April 2026. From its meeting, the Administration understands that:
 - 16.1. During a Tier 2 Code Red or Code Blue activation, the Hutt Street Centre extend their opening hours to provide support and services for people at risk or experiencing homelessness. Extended opening

hours can vary but are typically from 1:00pm to 4:30pm Monday to Friday and until 12:00pm on Saturday depending on staff availability and overall need.

- 16.2. The Hutt Street Centre is exploring opportunities to expand and strengthen the support it provides. However, without greater investment in social housing, tenancy sustainment, early intervention and homelessness services, organisations like Hutt Street Centre will struggle to meet rising demand.
- 16.3. Alongside delivering direct support, the Hutt St Centre remains committed to advocating for increased funding, system reform and stronger partnerships, while exploring new initiatives — including a dedicated wellbeing centre specifically for women at risk of or experiencing homelessness.
17. Since its earlier reports, Administration has been advised that the City of Port Adelaide and Enfield provided overnight accommodation in 2024 on two occasions in their Town Hall. Based on their advice:
 - 17.1. The initiative attracted limited numbers of people with most people sleeping rough preferring to stay in their locations in the public realm.
 - 17.2. The overnight response was supported by the Adelaide North West Homelessness Alliance (ANWHA) from a staffing perspective with additional security presence.
 - 17.3. The initiative was discontinued due to low use, venue limitations (such as no showers, washing facilities, etc), resourcing and financial factors.
 - 17.4. The ANWHA provide outreach during extreme weather events (per the Toward Home Alliance in the City of Adelaide) to refer people to respite and overnight accommodation options (which include CBD based organisations).

Capacity of the Tier 2 Response

18. To assist with the preparation of the report in the short time available, Administration met with relevant State Government Agencies and existing service providers and relied on their data and experience to determine if there is a shortfall and need for additional accommodation within the existing system.
19. In metropolitan Adelaide, WestCare (under Baptist Care SA) is funded by the DHS to provide overnight shelter during Tier 2 Code Red and Code Blue responses for people who don't have access to adequate shelter (and likely rough sleeping) during extreme or severe weather events.
20. The site at WestCare has the capacity to cater for up to 50 people overnight and includes two separate indoor spaces, a general area and a women-only area.
21. Since October 2024, there have been 10 Tier 2 Code Red or Cold Blue events activated by the DHS in the City of Adelaide.
22. Over this same period, the WestCare site has had an average usage of 60% or approximately 30 beds.
23. There has only been one Tier 2 Code Red where WestCare was at 100% capacity. This was associated with a heat wave that extended over multiple consecutive days and nights.
24. Homeless Connect SA is also available during an activation to consider other accommodation options (such as a motel or hotel) for people for whom WestCare may not be a suitable option.
25. Information from State Government Agencies and service providers indicates that securing motel or hotel accommodation can be challenging during periods when major events are taking place across the city.
26. During a Tier 2 Code Red or Code Blue, Hutt Street Centre extend their opening hours to provide support and services for people at risk or experiencing homelessness. Extended opening hours can vary but are typically from 1:00pm to 4:30pm Monday to Friday and until 12:00pm on Saturday depending on staff availability and overall need.

Advice on trial program

27. City of Adelaide facility options were previously reported to Council on 7 April 2026 ([Link 1](#)) and 28 April 2026 ([Link 2](#)).
28. The assessment undertaken against the requirements for set up, operation and pack down of overnight accommodation consistent with what is provided by Alliance and non-Alliance providers and the uses of existing City of Adelaide buildings, whether they are community, leased or commercial, has resulted in no council buildings being deemed suitable.
29. The level of staffing proposed by ICHAG is less than what was advised to be a minimum requirement by DHS and WestCare, i.e., two full-time staff plus security. The full-time staff member is currently working full-time for another CBD-based service delivery agency and would staff the overnight accommodation as well.

Reliance on a volunteer workforce has also been previously discussed as a risk, particularly when being called upon at very short notice, as is typically the case with extreme weather events.

30. The ICHAG action group proposed that if it is deemed that no City of Adelaide buildings are suitable, a temporary marquee or tent in the Adelaide Park Lands could be considered for the trial program, however, it is noted that previous advice to the State Government is that marquees in the Adelaide Park Lands are not a sustainable accommodation option resulting in a Council decision on 12 August 2025 ([Link 4](#)) to conclude the existing licence with the Department of Human Services for the Safer Places to Gather at Edwards Park on 30 June 2026. On that basis, a temporary marquee or tent is not considered a suitable option at this time.
31. High-level risks regarding the potential use of Council owned community and/ or business properties were reported to Council on 28 April 2026.
32. Based on previous advice and additional information from the Local Government Association Mutual Liability Scheme and Local Government Risk Services concerns were raised in relation to asset management protection and insurance regarding a service which sits outside of core council functions, property damage including total property loss, emergency evacuation and security presence.
33. The Adelaide Day Centre operates from a State Government-leased venue in the CBD that aligns with the service offering at WestCare (as reported in paragraph 12 of the Council report on 28 April 2026 ([Link 2](#))). The Adelaide Day Centre has indicated that its lease with the State Government prevents after-hours and overnight accommodation.

Next Steps

34. Administration will continue to raise the issues related to individual preferences and specific cohort needs to be addressed as part of the *Extreme Weather Response Review* being led by the Department of Human Services due to be finalised by 30 June 2026.

DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 – [Agenda – City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee – 7 April 2026](#)

Link 2 – [Agenda – Council – 28 April 2026](#)

Link 3 – [Independent Community-wide Homelessness Administrators Group Membership](#)

Link 4 – [Recommendations of the City Community Services and Culture Committee – 5 August 2025](#)

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

- END OF REPORT -