

Storage Lockers for People Experiencing Homelessness

FEASIBILITY STUDY | 2019



**PORT PHILLIP
COMMUNITY
GROUP** // *Working for
Social Justice*



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Brief

The purpose of this project was to complete a feasibility study regarding the creation of storage lockers for people experiencing homelessness in the City of Port Phillip. The study was commissioned by the Manager of Diversity and Inclusion at the City of Port Phillip and was funded by the Council. The project was undertaken by the Port Phillip Community Group over a three month period, concluding in November 2019.

1.2 Scope

Port Phillip Community Group explored projects managed by community organisations and Councils both in Australia and abroad in order to provide a comprehensive overview of models.

1.3 Summary

The City of Port Phillip's *Homelessness Action Strategy 2015-2020* sets out one of their key visions as reducing the risks associated with homelessness. Whilst building storage lockers will not replace the need for a home, there is a clear sentiment from local organisations, workers, community members, and individuals with a lived experience of homelessness that there is a need for this service in the City of Port Phillip. Reducing vulnerability to theft and associated violence; reducing the burden of carrying heavy luggage; increasing social mobility and participation; giving a sense of security; and reducing the stigma associated with homelessness, are just some of the potential benefits of investing in storage solutions.



Whilst Port Phillip faces challenges in having one of the highest rates of homelessness, it also harnesses opportunity in the large number of community organisations delivering diverse and robust supports to people experiencing homelessness. This report recommends that it is with these community organisations that investment should be made so that storage lockers can become a part of service provision across multiple sites in the council area. The challenge is working closely with organisations to overcome key barriers that have prevented them from offering lockers, or have caused them to close down such services in the past. The inherent risks, associated costs of installation, ongoing costs of staffing and maintenance; and the problem of space are common concerns and challenges faced by organisations. Any sustainable plans for service provision needs to meet these concerns and provide adequate funding and support to overcome them.

This report has taken key learnings from services providing storage both in Australia and abroad, as well as the views and concerns of key stakeholder groups in order to provide recommendations on the types of models that might work best in the City of Port Phillip context, as well as key policies and processes that organisations could tailor to their own unique service models.

The report recommends Option 1: Inside and accessible during operation hours (section 5.6.1, p.22) as the preferred option, principally because of low projected costs and associated risks, but also because it has the flexibility to integrate easily into existing infrastructure (where space allows). For those organisations lacking indoor space, Option 2: Outside and accessible during operation hours, is the recommended option. This model comes with higher associated costs for purchase, installation and maintenance, as well as with higher potential risks than Option 1, but this study recommends it as the most appropriate outdoor option.

Going forward, it is important that any planning heeds the experiences of those projects that have ceased or never officially began. Providing storage services with no formal process and policies; models where there is no supervision by staff; or clustering too many lockers in the one service are some of the key learnings to take from organisations who have attempted to provide this important service in the past. There is no doubt that providing storage lockers for people experiencing homelessness will be labour intensive, will cost money, and has the potential to cause problems and conflict. But this is also true of the provision of emergency relief, counselling, case management and other invaluable services provided by organisations working with people experiencing homelessness. However, as with these services, providing storage has the potential to provide freedom, dignity, choice and safety to those people living life without a home. Whilst organisations and council continue to battle with the structural issues that are trapping people into poverty and homelessness, there exists the opportunity to reduce at least some of the associated risks by providing the ability to safely and securely store an individual's possessions.

2

SITUATION OVERVIEW

2.1 Homelessness in the City of Port Phillip

The City of Port Phillip currently has one of the highest rates of homelessness in Melbourne, with 1,562 being counted as homeless on Census night 2011. (<http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/homelessness.htm>). Of this number around 50% were identified as experiencing **tertiary homelessness** - living in a Boarding or Rooming House, 40% as experiencing **secondary homelessness** - living in crisis or temporary accommodation, and 10% as experiencing **primary homelessness** - sleeping rough with no form of shelter. The City of Port Phillip keeps an active count of people sleeping rough in the Council area. On October 19th, 2019 this figure was at 113.

Given that people experiencing tertiary homelessness have a relatively stable form of shelter, this report recommends that storage lockers in the community setting are used to service people experiencing primary and secondary homelessness only. Throughout the study, reference made to 'people experiencing homelessness' will refer primarily to people in these two groups.

2.2 Issues for People without Storage

Throughout this study, meetings and conversations were had with workers in the community sector and with people with a lived experience of homelessness. Some of the main barriers they highlighted for people without storage options include:

- Vulnerability of individuals sleeping rough: theft of property, assault and violence;
- Loss of personal documents and associated barriers;
- Loss of bedding, clothing and other basic living essentials;
- Loss of personal heirlooms and associated effects;
- Physical health problems involved in carrying heavy items;
- Limited mobility and associated isolation and barriers;
- Stigma associated with visible characteristic of homelessness;
- The social, physical and emotional effects on individuals that result from the above issues.

It is important to note that many of the issues faced by individuals without storage can pose a direct negative affect on their ability to move out of homelessness. Difficulties retaining necessary identification documents needed to apply for housing or the Public Housing Register; limited mobility and challenges of attending appointments, court or job interviews with luggage; high cost of replacing lost, removed or stolen items; and the visible stigma associated with homelessness can pose serious challenges to securing a home.

"I have to travel to the city if I want to store my stuff".



2.3 Issues for the Community

The lack of storage in Port Phillip for people facing homelessness also poses a strain on the wider community and its local services. Some of the main issues include:

- Cost to community of removing and disposing of abandoned items;
- Cost of replacing lost items to local organisations providing material aid;
- Risk to community posed by abandoned and potentially hazardous items;
- Risk to community posed by potential conflict involved in theft.

2.4 Service Provision in the City of Port Phillip

Though the City of Port Phillip has one of the highest rates of homelessness, it also boasts a large number of organisations providing support for people experiencing diverse forms of disadvantage. Whilst many services – such as provision of material aid, meals, information and support, and crisis accommodation – are duplicated across the council area, the provision of storage lockers has not been a service traditionally offered.

This study found that only the St Kilda Gatehouse has a formal storage system for people experiencing homelessness, with some other organisations such as the Sacred Heart Mission's Women's House and Launch Housing offering informal options (such as the ability to leave a bag for a few hours between appointments). Other organisations, such as the Port Phillip Community Group and the Sacred Heart Mission, have managed storage in the past, but ceased operations due to ongoing risks and costs.

Conversations with key services including Launch Housing, Sacred Heart Mission, Star Health, the St Kilda Gatehouse and Port Phillip Community Group, as well as survey responses from people working in the homeless sector, show general consensus that there is a real need for storage options for the homeless community. But whilst there is general support for the idea, there is a gap in the actual service provision of storage lockers – a point which leads one to question the main barriers that have prevented services from undertaking such a project. These will be further explored in the Findings section.



3

RESEARCH

3.1 Review of Services in Australia

Site visits, email and phone meetings were had with ten organisations within Australia that have previously, or are currently managing a storage service.



SALVOS 614, MELBOURNE CBD

ST KILDA GATEHOUSE, ST KILDA, MELBOURNE



St Kilda
Gatehouse
belong connect respect



THE LIVING ROOM, MELBOURNE CBD

SACRED HEART MISSION, ST KILDA, MELBOURNE



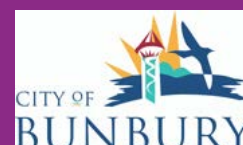
LAUNCH HOUSING, ST KILDA, MELBOURNE

PORT PHILLIP COMMUNITY GROUP, ST KILDA, MELBOURNE



HEADSPACE, BROKEN HILL, NSW

CITY OF BUNBURY, WA



SALVOS STREET LEVEL MISSION, SYDNEY, NSW

CITY OF SYDNEY, NSW



3.2 Review of Services Internationally

Many models exist in the international context. This study chose three examples which offer diverse options, as well as key learnings. Research was via desktop review only.



**LISBON CITY COUNCIL,
PORTUGAL**



**DENVER CITY COUNCIL,
USA**



**THINK DIGNITY,
SAN DIEGO, USA**

3.3 Stakeholder Engagement

Three main stakeholder groups were invited to share their views for this study. These included **community members**, **workers in the homelessness sector**, and **people with a lived experience of homelessness**. Views were collected in a variety of forums over the three month period.

Firstly, a survey was circulated to community organisations in the City of Port Phillip that could be completed by staff and clients. This survey was also taken to pop-up events, free lunches and other places regularly frequented by people experiencing homelessness. A total of 100 people completed the survey; 46 of whom work in the community sector, 20 community members and 34 people with a lived experience of homelessness.

Figure 3.3.1 Sites and events attended to conduct surveys

Homelessness Week Pop-up event, 7th August
161 Chapel St, St Kilda

Temple Beth Israel Free Lunch, 28th August & 19th September
163 Chapel St, St Kilda

Open House Saints Peter & Paul's Church Free Lunch, 20th September
Cnr Montague & Dorcas St, South Melbourne

Fresh Food Collection, 9th October
163 Chapel St, St Kilda

Anti-Poverty Week Event, 16th October
161 Chapel St, St Kilda

101 Engagement Hub, Free Lunch, 22nd October
101 Carlisle St, St Kilda



Figure 3.3.2 Survey



We would like your opinion about having Storage Lockers in the City of Port Phillip for people sleeping rough.

1. Which best describes you?

- ☐ Currently or previously homeless ☐ Worker in Community Sector
- ☐ Community Member

2. Do you think that Storage Lockers should be:

- ☐ Small (documents only) ☐ Large (for belongings) ☐ Mix of small and large

3. Do you think that Storage Lockers should be located:

- ☐ Inside or close to a community organisation that assists people sleeping rough
- ☐ Close to where people might be sleeping rough
- ☐ Other: _____

4. Do you think that Storage Lockers should be:

- ☐ Accessible 24/7 ☐ Accessible only during day time hours, secured at night.

5. Do you think that people should have access to lockers for:

- ☐ Weeks ☐ Months ☐ One year ☐ More than one year

6. Do you think that people using the lockers should be required to engage with Community or Housing services?

☐ Yes

☐ Neutral

☐ No

7. What do you think is the best way to access and secure the lockers?

☐ Key

☐ Code pinpad

☐ App connected to mobile phone

☐ Other (please specify)

8. What are some of the key concerns, challenges or barriers you think might be involved with this project?

9. What are some of the key benefits that this project might have for people sleeping rough?

10. Would you be happy to be contacted to participate in a small focus group about this project?

☐ Yes, here are my details:

☐ No thanks (remain anonymous)

Name:

Phone:

Email:

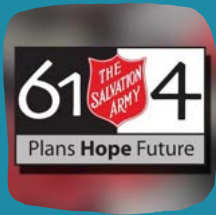
THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION



4

FINDINGS

4.1 Models in the Australian context

SALVOS 614, MELBOURNE CBD

150 plastic storage tubs located in secured room.

Large - bedding & suitcases.

Available during opening hours. Staff required to access.

Must be accessed at least once per week for continued use.

171 personal mailboxes also on site.

COST: \$50, 000 to build room for lockers (funding from City of Melbourne and Collingwood Football Club).

\$15, 000 for mail boxes (donated by Australia Post).

Ongoing staff and cleaning costs.

Disposal of items supported by City of Melbourne.

ST KILDA GATEHOUSE, ST KILDA, MELBOURNE

32 metal lockers located inside drop in space.

Medium size - clothing, toiletries, personal items.

Staff required to access.

Accessible during opening hours.

Can be used for one month at a time, then reviewed.

COST: Lockers were donated.

Ongoing staff and cleaning costs.



St Kilda
Gatehouse
belong connect respect

THE LIVING ROOM, MELBOURNE CBD

36 custom built lockers, located inside drop in space.

Medium size - clothing, toiletries, personal items.

Staff required to access.

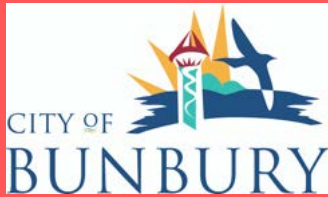
Accessible during opening hours.

Can be used for up to 3 months.

COST: No record of exact costs. Lockers were custom built by a staff member.

Ongoing staffing and cleaning costs.

CITY OF BUNBURY, WA



30 metal lockers located outside and accessible 24/7.
 Mix of small & medium size lockers.
 Close to hotspot for rough sleepers.
 Self-service system, no interaction with Council required.
 Must be accessed at least every 12 hours or lockers automatically open.
 No long-term limit on use.
COST: \$20, 000 for lockers.
 Cost of CCTV.
 Ongoing cleaning costs (absorbed into Council's current cleaning program).
 No reports of damage or vandalism as yet.

SALVOS STREET LEVEL MISSION, SYDNEY, NSW

20 lockers, large enough for two suitcases.
 Custom built and located inside the service.
 Staff required to open the lockers.
 One month use followed by review to ascertain need.
 Lockers must be accessed at least twice weekly to continue using them.
COST: No record of cost. Not clear whether the cupboards were purpose built or already part of infrastructure.
 Ongoing staff and cleaning costs.



HEADSPACE, BROKEN HILL, NSW



3 lockers, located outside the service and accessible 24/7.
 Custom built and made of heavy steel. Under tin roof.
 Large enough for bedding and suitcase.
 Code access, clients must change code every week to continue using the locker.
 No long-term limit on use.
COST: \$3, 600 for lockers and install.
 Ongoing staffing and cleaning costs.
 No reports of damage or vandalism as yet.

CITY OF SYDNEY, NSW

15 large storage bins located at three hotspots in council area.

Self-managed by people sleeping rough.

Bins do not lock.

Non-valuable items such as bedding are stored there.

COST: Bins were donated. Council purchased chains and locks to fix them in place.

Costs of removal of items absorbed by council's regular cleaning program.



4.2 Models in the international context

LISBON CITY COUNCIL, PORTUGAL



48 large lockers in total, grouped in sets of 12 around the city.

Accessible 24/7.

Large enough for clothing, bedding and personal items, also has slot for mail.

Lockers can be rented for up to one year.

Local charity manages the lockers and provides homeless supports to each locker user.

Each set of 12 lockers cost 11,700 euros (AUD \$18,850); Lisbon City funds 60% with the rest coming from public donations.

DENVER CITY COUNCIL, USA

10 storage lockers built as part of pilot program..

Large lockers (4ft x 6ft).

For 30 day use, with option of extra 30 days.

Cost US\$3,000 (AUD \$4,470) per locker .

After 16 months the project was cancelled due to a range of factors:

- People sleeping in the lockers;
- Reports of prostitution and drug use inside lockers;
- Police and non-profit organisations reported that congregation of homeless people around lockers on busy thoroughfare wasn't working;
- Half of the units damaged by vandalism and break-ins.



THINK DIGNITY, SAN DIEGO, USA



304 lockers and 130 storage bins in a large storage facility. Space is owned by the San Diego Housing Commission and managed by local organisation 'Think Dignity'.

Project was a response to a class action by homeless people who had their belongings removed by the City Council.

Facility stores about 13,500kg of belongings that they believe would otherwise be on the street.

Pest control is reported as the biggest issue.

Operating costs are roughly USD\$80,000 - \$100,000 annually (AUD\$119,000 - \$149,000).

4.3 Models that have ceased (City of Port Phillip)

SACRED HEART MISSION, ST KILDA MELBOURNE



50-60 metal lockers of medium size were located in the main dining hall. They were accessible during operation hours (8:30am - 1:30pm) and clients had their own key or code to access freely during this time. After some years the SHM ceased providing this service based on ongoing problems with locker users, and the amount of staff time was required to manage issues. Main issues cited were:

- People lending storage space and associated conflict about who owned the property inside;
- Lockers being broken into and items stolen;
- Clients forgetting codes and keys. Assistance was required almost daily by staff to support locker access;
- Client storing animals (cats and rabbits) in the lockers;
- Client using lockers to store and deal illicit substances;
- Police arriving regularly to search lockers looking for stolen goods and weapons. In one instance a gun was stored in the locker (turned out to be a replica);
- Clients storing weapons, especially knives in lockers;
- Clients using multiple lockers for hoarding issues;
- Perishable food being stored in lockers and being left to rot.



PORT PHILLIP COMMUNITY GROUP, ST KILDA, MELBOURNE

Informal storage was offered in crisis situations on a case by case basis determined by support workers. No formal system was implemented or advertised, rather it was an ad-hoc response to need. The service was stopped due to a range of reasons including space constraints; issues with friends or others trying to access a person's luggage; people wanted to access luggage several times per day and the effect this had on staff, volunteers and other service users.

LAUNCH HOUSING, ST KILDA, MELBOURNE

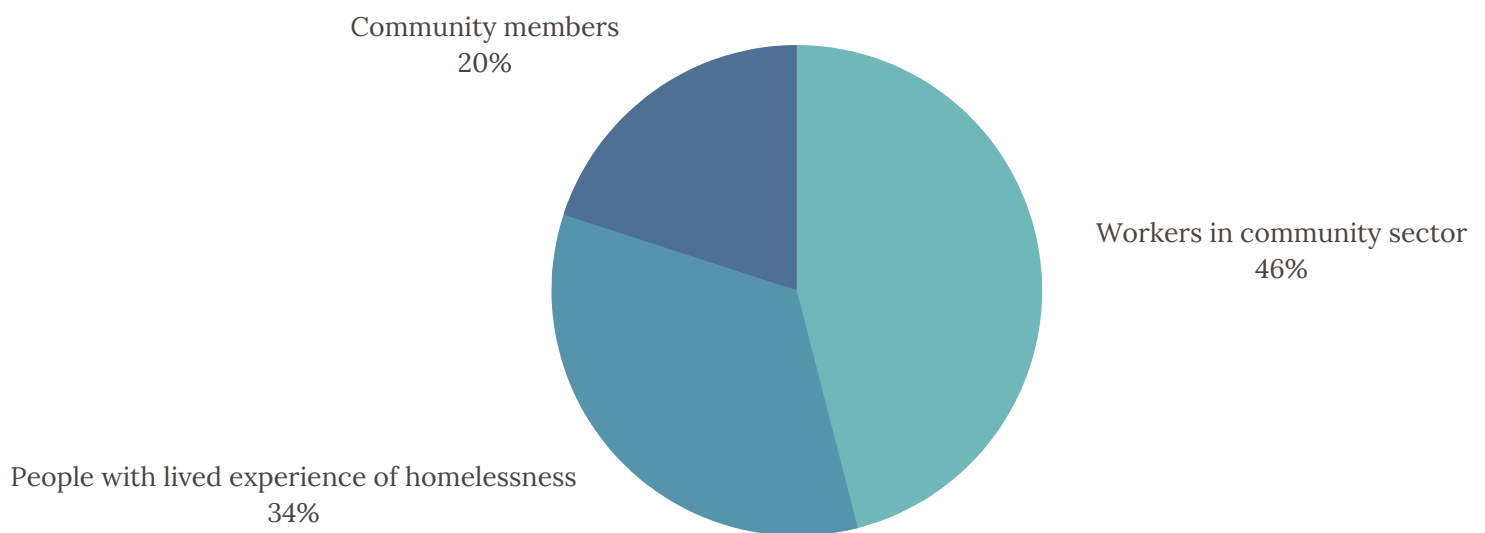
System for storage was trialed by which identification was written on bags and names were put on whiteboard to assist staff in identifying bags. Process was not formalised, and eventually it was abandoned due to issues including; wrong bags given to clients; OH&S issues faced by staff in lifting and handling luggage and conflict between clients or with staff.



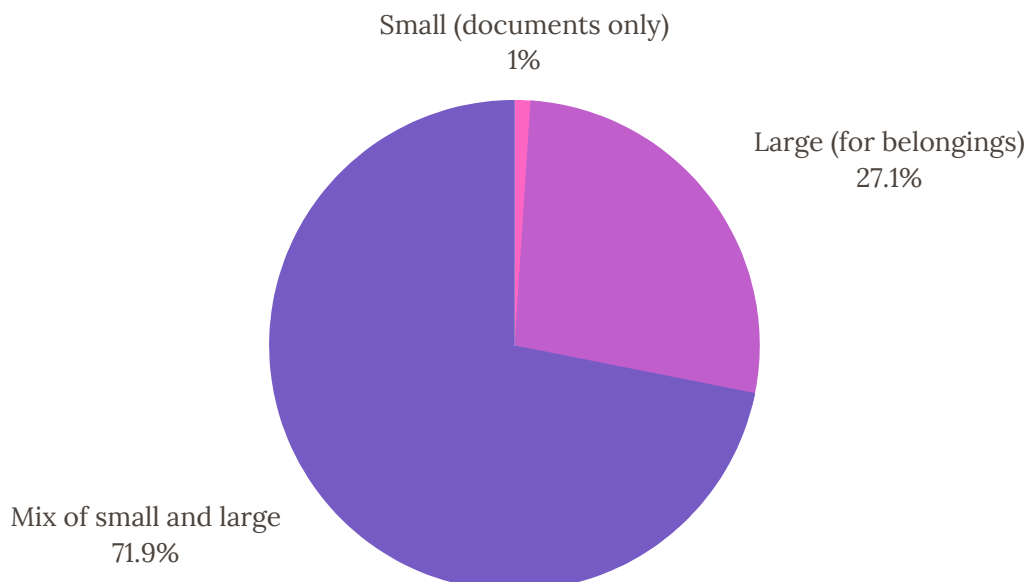
4.4 Survey Results

Responses to key questions about size, location, availability, accessibility, potential risks and benefits of proposed lockers are summarised below. Attempts were made to secure a higher percentage of responses from people with a lived experience of homelessness, however this proved more difficult than reaching workers. Organisations were encouraged to complete the surveys with their clients, however less than a handful were completed with individuals with a lived experience of homelessness outside of direct attempts made by PPCG staff and volunteers in the St Kilda, South Melbourne and Port Melbourne areas. A total of 100 respondents participated in the survey.

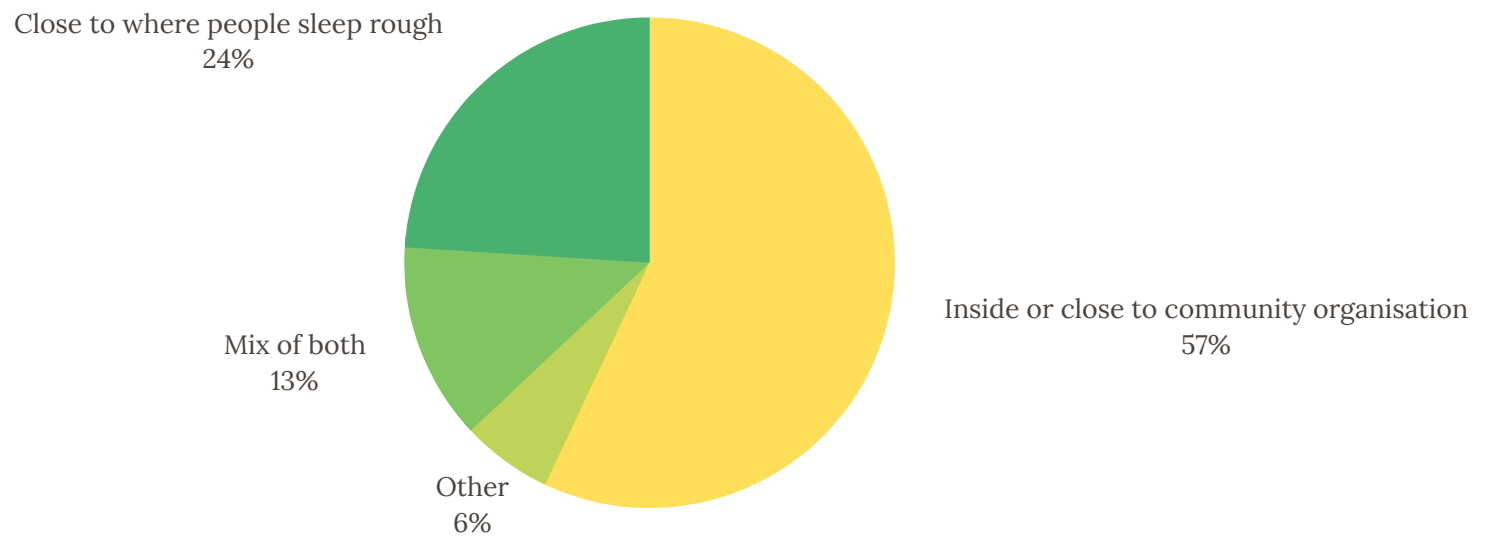
Respondents:



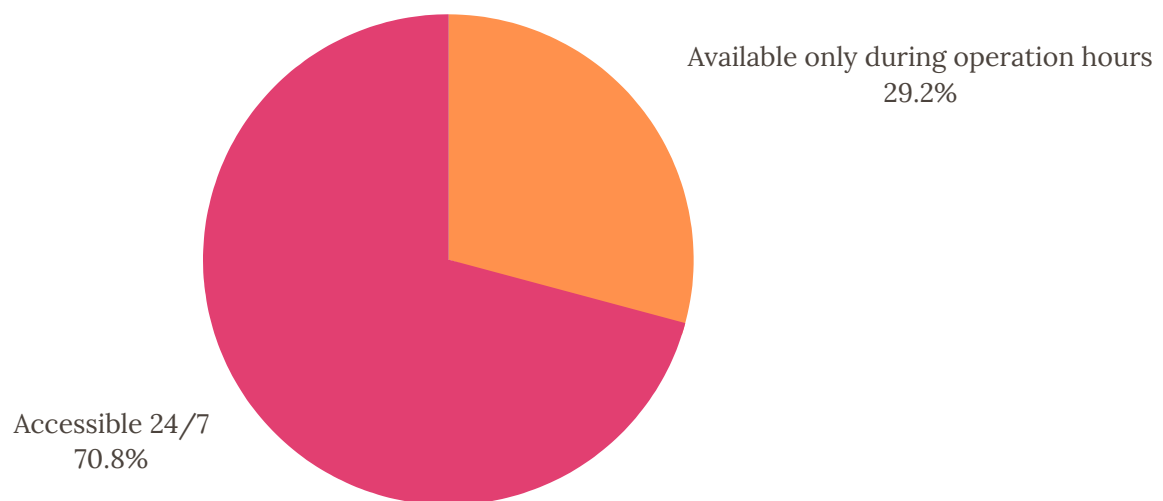
Size of lockers:



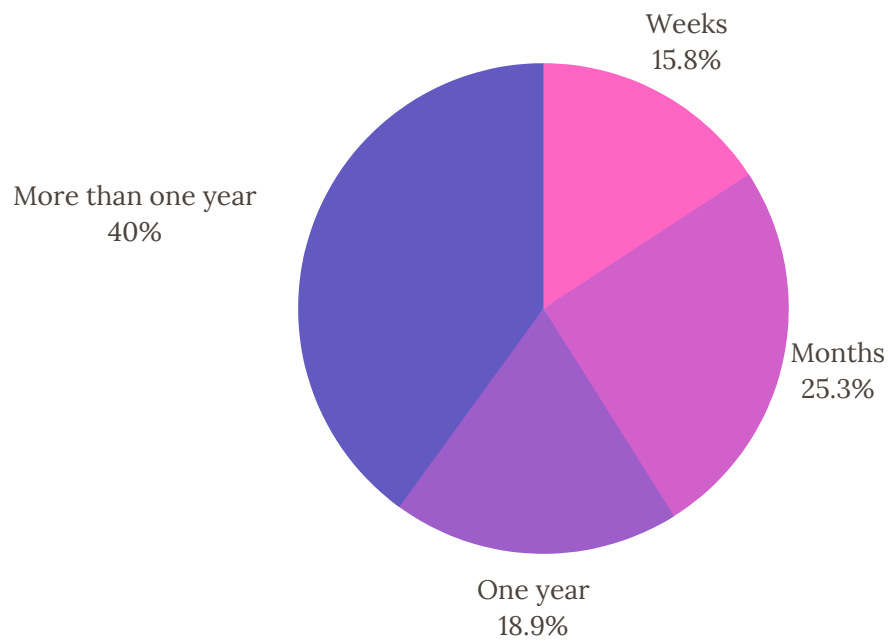
Location:



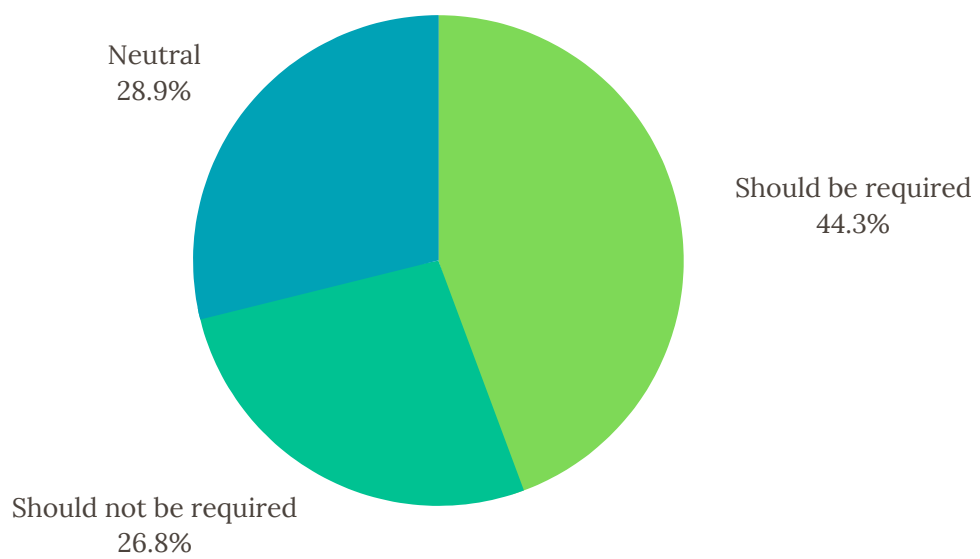
Availability:



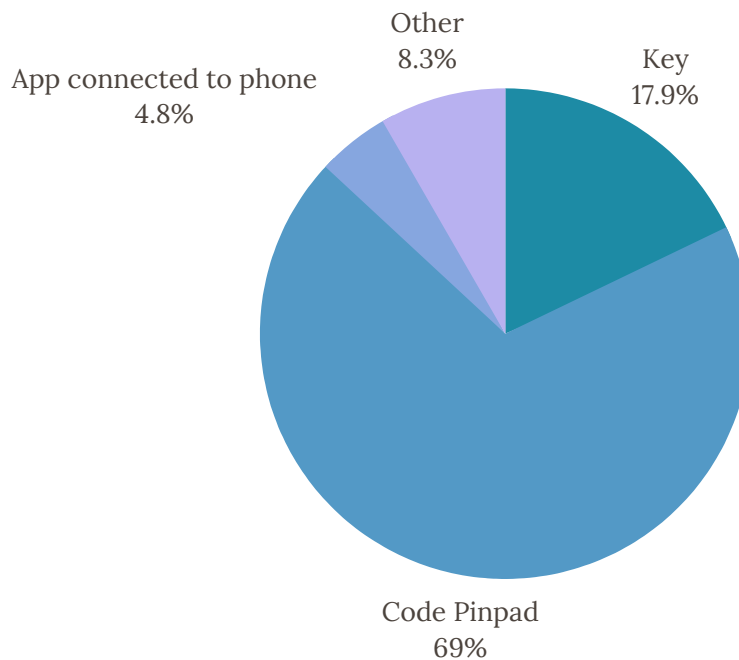
Length of usage:



Engagement with services:



Method of access:



Key concerns, challenges, barriers:

Listed in order of most common responses:

1. Lost keys/codes and other access problems;
2. Safety of lockers users - risk of violence, threats, harassment, assault;
3. Security of belongings - theft and damage;
4. Inappropriate use of lockers - storage of drugs, hoarding, long term storage;
5. Managing the need for lockers fairly;
6. Damage, maintenance and cleaning;
7. Negative community response;
8. Cost;
9. Location.

Key benefits for people experiencing homelessness:

Listed in order of most common responses:

1. Keeping belongings safe and dry;
2. Reducing the burden and health effects of needing to carry heavy items;
3. Safety for people from theft and assault;
4. Keeping important documents safe;
5. Increased mobility and social participation as a result of not carrying belongings;
6. Emotional benefits including less stress and worry, sense of safety and security, sense of dignity;
7. Opportunity or pathway to engagement with services;
8. Reducing the visible stigma of homelessness;
9. Reducing instances of having items removed by Council or others.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Service delivery is managed by community organisations

This study recommends that community organisations would be best equipped to manage service delivery of storage lockers, rather than the Council or a private entity. Lack of storage is only one of a multitude of issues faced by people living without housing. Setting up service provision to address only a single surface need risks missing an opportunity to provide support to the underlying issues that might have caused an individual to become homeless in the first place.

Survey results showed that 57% of respondents agreed that lockers should be located either inside or near a community organisation offering homelessness supports (24% preferred them to be close to where people might be sleeping rough, and the rest of responses were mixed). Additionally, survey comments pointed to a sentiment that lockers users should have access to holistic services to assist them to move out of homelessness, rather than just having locker use as a stand alone service.

5.2 Service delivery is spread across multiple organisations

Given the high number of community organisations in the Port Phillip area, as well as the high number of people experiencing homelessness, it makes sense that service delivery of storage lockers be spread out among multiple services, as is the case with emergency relief, case management, and other homelessness services. Given the space requirements, the investment in staffing and the potential risks associated with crowding, it is not possible for one organisation to take on the enormous task of storage for everyone, unless significant funding and investment is made into resourcing, renovating or potentially restructuring service delivery. The Salvos in Melbourne's CBD required significant renovation to enable them to supply 150 storage tubs and cost around \$50, 000. Additionally, it is evident from the experience of the Sacred Heart Mission - who provided around 60 lockers from the one site - that it was too difficult and resource intensive for a single organisation to manage the entire need of the community. If storage lockers are going to be integrated into current service delivery without over burdening any single organisation, then it is recommended that the task is shared by multiple organisations already providing services to people experiencing homelessness.

5.3 Lockers are large enough to store bedding

Survey results showed that 72% of respondents wanted a mix of lockers sizes to be made available to support people with different storage needs. This could prove beneficial for efficiency with space and cost, and to enable organisations to service a higher number of people. However, discussions with organisations providing storage services, such as the Salvos in Melbourne and Sydney, revealed a need for large storage options for people that are sleeping rough to be able to store bedding. Keeping bedding safe and dry is a daily concern for people sleeping rough, and soiled and wet bedding is often dumped. In the colder months wet bedding and blankets can prove a serious health risk for people trying to keep warm. In order to prioritise the most vulnerable individuals - those who experience primary homelessness - and to achieve the aims of reducing the amount of abandoned items, priority should be given to building large lockers which can store bedding. However, in cases where space or layout does not allow large locker options, survey results do indicate that there is a desire for smaller sizes also.

5.4 Lockers are accessible during operation hours only

Survey results showed that 71% of respondents preferred lockers to be accessible 24/7 (though this figure is lower at 61% when looking at respondents with a lived experience of homelessness only). Though there is a clear sentiment that items should be accessible at all times, comments show that safety of locker users and security of items is one of the most common concerns. Though there are models that are operating on a 24/7 model with no reports of damage or theft (Headspace in Broken Hill and Bunbury Council), there is no feedback available on whether locker users are experiencing any forms of manipulation, bullying, violence or other types of coercion by others to access their lockers. One survey comment about key concerns reads: *"people bashing you when you go get your things from your locker"*, whilst another person commented: *"I may feel vulnerable sometimes and disclose the code, or exchange the code for practical things like food or to get drugs"*.

Another significant risk of the 24/7 model is that of dangerous, illegal or inappropriate items being stored in lockers. The Salvos in Melbourne and Sydney and the Sacred Heart Mission all reported incidents of illicit substances being stored in lockers, with the Sacred Heart Mission reporting that weapons and even animals were also stored in lockers at times. All of these models are inside and overseen by a community organisation, but incidents still occurred, suggesting it would only be worsened in a model with no supervision. The Bunbury Council, who manage a 24/7 model reported that before the project police expressed concerns that the lockers may act as a drop off area for drugs, but there has thus far been no indication of this. However, it is evident that drug use occurs around the lockers as cleaners are often clearing away syringes.

5.5 Clear and consistent policies

A common theme for all community organisations managing locker services in line with Option 1 and 2 (discussed in section 5.6 on p.22) is that each has a clear set of policies and procedures relating to registration, access, disposal, privacy and risk management. A list of common policies from each organisation will be presented below and it is recommended that each organisation adapt them to fit their unique service provision.

FREQUENCY OF ACCESS:

In order to prevent hoarding or passive, long term storage, many organisations require individuals to access lockers a minimum number of times per week/month. The Salvos in Melbourne require individuals to access at least once per week; the Salvos in Sydney at least twice per week; and the St Kilda Gatehouse at least once per month in order to continue using the lockers. If clients do not meet these requirements they are contacted to discuss ongoing need for locker use. When no contact can be made lockers are reallocated and organisations follow their policy for storing or disposing of items.

MAXIMUM STORAGE TIME:

If organisations do not have set rules around frequency of access, then they will generally set a maximum length of time that individuals can use lockers for. Some organisations, such as Youth Projects, will ask individuals to remove their items after that maximum time, whilst others, such as the St Kilda Gatehouse will conduct a review once the maximum usage time is reached to determine continued need for locker usage. Generally, usage times are set at months at a time. Survey results showed mixed responses when asked about maximum storage time, and the majority (40%) believed that it should be for more than one year. This study does not make a recommendation on what is the most advantageous maximum storage time, but rather recommends that each organisation make this decision based on their unique service and client base.

ACCESS IS FACILITATED BY STAFF

To best manage potential risks of storing dangerous, illegal or inappropriate items; use of stolen keys or codes; vandalism or dumping items, it is recommended that a level of staff interaction is required to facilitate access to lockers. This might look like front desk staff signing people in or distributing keys to the registered locker user, or staff in a drop in space present to sign in locker users. For the Salvos in the CBD a staff member is required to open the locked room and remains there whilst the individual accesses their locker, and for the St Kilda Gatehouse, drop in staff distribute keys to the locker user. Though it is human resource intensive, the experience of the Sacred Heart Mission shows that where there are not enough staff present to the number of lockers, serious issues can arise that will affect the long term sustainability of the program.

PROHIBITED ITEMS:

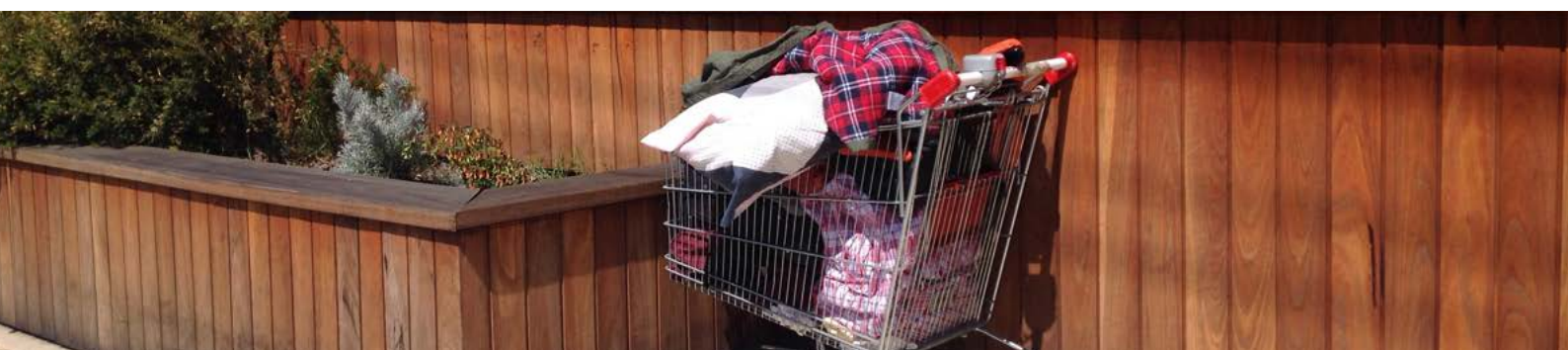
All organisations providing a storage service have clear policies around prohibited items, and these are made available to individuals using lockers. Illicit items, dangerous items and perishable items are the most common things prohibited. It is also important that organisations have clear guidelines made available to clients that stipulate how a breach of the policy will be responded to. Most common breaches reported are related to food items, however illicit items have also been found by some organisations. It is important for organisations to think about and plan how they will respond to such issues - balancing their need for risk management with the privacy, health and safety of the client.

REGISTRATION AND ACCESS:

It is recommended that registration with the organisation be required for locker use, and that access be allowed only to the person registered to the locker. The Salvos in Sydney described situations where couples were sharing a locker and later broke up or experienced conflict, and a person's personal possessions were put at risk. It also poses potential problems for people experiencing domestic violence. Lack of ID is a common problem for people experiencing homelessness (one primarily caused by lack of storage), so this should be respectfully considered when creating process for registration.

DISPOSAL OF ITEMS:

In the case that lockers are abandoned, it is important to have clear policies and procedures for disposing of items. Common among organisations interviewed for this study that are currently operating model 1 or 2 (discussed in the next section) are that; attempts to contact client is made before disposal; organisations are flexible in extreme circumstances such as hospitalisation or incarceration; and organisations will not dispose of important items such as Birth Certificates or ID. The Salvos in Melbourne have developed a relationship with Local Council to assist with the disposal of items as a part of the Council's regular street cleaning mandate. This works for the Salvos because they are operating such a high number of storage lockers, and because of the vast numbers of clients that they interact with daily. However, services offering fewer locker numbers, such as Youth Projects and St Kilda Gatehouse, report that incidents of disposing items are low and don't generate a significant cost to the organisation.



5.6 Options for Service Models

Three main models for service delivery emerged from the research, which will be discussed below with associated benefits, risks and costs. Because of the lowest associated costs and risks, Option 1 is recommended as the preferred option, followed by Option 2. Option 3 is not recommended for the City of Port Phillip, as the risks and costs would likely outweigh potential benefits for locker users.

5.6.1 OPTION 1: Inside and accessible during operation hours

EXAMPLES OF THIS MODEL:

- Salvos 614, Melbourne
- St Kilda Gatehouse, St Kilda
- Youth Projects, The Living Room, Melbourne
- Salvos Street Level, Sydney
- Think Dignity, San Diego

OVERVIEW:

- Lockers are managed by a community service that supports people experiencing homelessness;
- Lockers are located inside the service;
- Lockers are accessible during hours of operation only and securely locked inside the building after hours;
- Require some level of staff interaction to facilitate access (either by checking ID or handing over the key).

BENEFITS:

- Opportunity to engage people that may otherwise not be connected to services;
- Lost keys/codes can be efficiently responded to;
- Provides level of privacy from the general public;
- Easier to ensure lockers are being accessed frequently, rather than being used for passive, long term storage or hoarding;
- Safety of items at night time;
- Low risk of violence, theft, bullying and manipulation for locker users;
- Low risk of damage and vandalism;
- Low risk of storage or transaction of illegal, dangerous or inappropriate items;
- Low risk to community of potential violence, conflict or anti-social behaviour;
- Low potential push-back from community;
- Low risk of dumping items or rubbish near lockers;
- Opportunity to use cheap or donated lockers.

RISKS, CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS:

- Increased risk to staff of agitation, violence and conflict;
- Potential OH&S risks to staff if they are exposed to lifting and handling heavy items;
- Potential OH&S risks to staff if they are exposed to soiled or dirty items in lockers;
- Requires indoor space, which many services in the City of Port Phillip lack;
- Restricts the hours that locker users can access their items;
- Could cause potential crowding inside service which could have a negative impact on staff and fellow service users;
- Attachment of lockers to a community service and the requirement to interact with staff may dissuade some from using the lockers;
- May encourage rough sleeping close to the organisation.

PROJECTED COSTS:

- ***LOW purchase and installation costs:***

Because the lockers are located inside, are under supervision and are secured at night, there is potential to source cheap or free locker options and potentially have them free standing.

- ***LOW maintenance and repairs costs:***

Due to higher levels of supervision and security of the lockers, there is a low risk of damage and theft and subsequently low projected costs for maintenance and repair.

- ***LOW cost of removal of rubbish and abandoned items:***

Again due to security and supervision of lockers, there is a low risk that unwanted items will be dumped by the lockers. There is potential for items to be abandoned, however because of high level of staff interaction there is ample opportunity to mitigate against this.

- ***HIGH staffing costs:***

The largest associated cost with this particular model is that of staff hours. Due to the need for staff to facilitate registration and access, respond to problems and complaints, and potentially deal with cleaning and maintenance of lockers, there is a need for investment in human resources. Other organisations interviewed that are delivering this model have communicated that tasks were absorbed into existing staff members roles (such as reception or security staff), and that significant time was invested into providing the service.

5.6.2 OPTION 2: Outside and accessible during operation hours

EXAMPLES OF THIS MODEL:

No examples of this model found in the research.

OVERVIEW:

The model is the same as Option 1 in all areas except for the location of the lockers. In this model, the lockers are located outside of the service, but securely locked outside of operation hours, either behind a gate or inside a cage or similar structure. Staff interaction is still required to facilitate access.

BENEFITS:

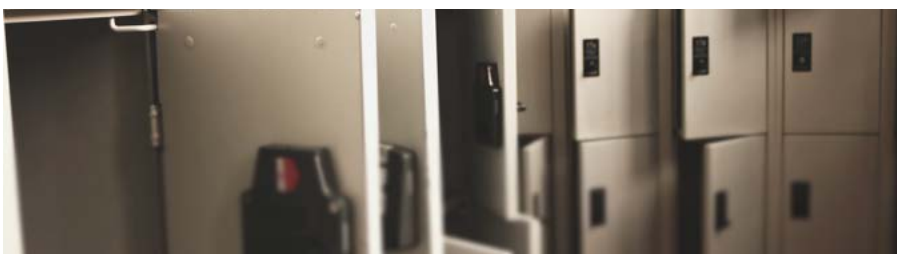
Benefits are similar to those listed in Option 1, with a few important changes.

- There is an added benefit of not requiring indoor space. This option would be suitable for organisations whose internal layout does not support the provision of lockers, or who simply lack indoor space, but have appropriate space outdoors;

RISKS, CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS:

The risks, challenges and barriers are similar to Option 1, with a few important changes.

- A greater risks of vandalism, damage and potentially theft due to the location of lockers outside;
- Depending on level of staff supervision, there may be higher risk of dumping unwanted items;
- Depending on policies around access, this model may pose higher risks of anti-social behaviour, conflict, bullying, and storage and transaction of dangerous or illegal items;
- The benefit of being able to use cheap or donated lockers would not apply in this model. Investment in strong, weather proof lockers is required;
- This model may not provide the same level of privacy from the general public.



"I've had to pay for storage sheds on and off for years".

PROJECTED COSTS:

- **HIGH purchase and installation costs:**

For outdoor lockers to be safe against weather and attempts at theft and vandalism, they will need to be made of strong material and potentially installed under cover. Additionally, this model requires the lockers to be secured behind or inside a lockable structure, which will add an extra cost if infrastructure is not already on site.

- **LOW to MODERATE maintenance and repair costs:**

Because of the location outdoors it is projected that maintenance and repair costs may be low to moderate, as the lockers will be more vulnerable to weather and damage than if they were inside. However, having them behind a lockable structure outside of operation hours will ensure extra protection. Reports from Headspace in Broken Hill use heavy steel lockers and reported no vandalism in the 18 months since it begun.

- **LOW to MODERATE cost of removal of rubbish and abandoned items:**

The location of lockers outside and out of view of staff could pose challenges for dumping items and rubbish, if access is not supervised by staff. As discussed in the previous section, policy recommendations for this model are that there is some level of staff interaction and supervision involved in accessing the lockers to mitigate against a range of potential risks and costs. For this model, it would likely look like a staff member opening the gate or cage when people want to access their locker.

- **HIGH staffing costs:**

As in Option 1, one of the largest associated cost with this particular model is that of staff hours. As above, staff hours would be required to facilitate registration and access, respond to problems and complaints, and deal with cleaning and maintenance of lockers.

- **HIGH security costs:**

Due to the added vulnerability of lockers to damage and theft, it is likely that organisations would want to include CCTV as part of risk management.

"I had to give away all of things that I couldn't carry".



5.6.3 OPTION 3: Outside and accessible 24/7

NOT RECOMMENDED:

As highlighted above, this option is not recommended as a model to be used within the City of Port Phillip context. The projected risks and costs associated would likely pose significant barriers to organisations managing the service, and would potentially outweigh benefits to locker users and the community.

EXAMPLES OF THIS MODEL:

- Bunbury Council
- Headspace, Broken Hill
- Sydney Council
- Lisbon City Portugal
- Denver City, USA

OVERVIEW:

- Lockers are managed either by City Council, or by a community service that supports people experiencing homelessness;
- Lockers are located outside, either close to a service or in a suitable spot for access by people sleeping rough;
- Lockers are accessible 24/7 and do not require any form of interaction with staff in order to access;
- Can either be self-service, or can require formal registration.

BENEFITS:

- Available 24/7, allowing more freedom of access to locker users;
- Could allow anonymous access and support those individuals who, for whatever reason, are disengaged from services;
- Does not take up limited indoor space;
- Offers more potential options for location;
- Could provide scope for locating lockers close to where people are sleeping rough;
- Could offer the opportunity to spread lockers into smaller clusters in order to reduce crowding, conflict and anti-social behaviour;
- Does not require much investment in staffing to operate this model.



RISKS, CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS:

- More vulnerable to damage and theft than Options 1 and 2;
- Higher risk of vandalism;
- Higher risk of storage of inappropriate, prohibited, illegal and dangerous items;
- Higher risk of lockers being used for storage and transaction of illegal items;
- Higher risks of conflict, violence, bullying and control of locker users;
- Higher risks of dumping rubbish and abandoned items around lockers;
- Depending on management arrangement, lost keys/codes or other problems might not be promptly responded to;
- Higher risks of hoarding or passive long-term storage (though this could be mitigated by strong policies and process);
- Could have negative affects on the visibility and associated stigma of homelessness;
- Risk of exposing the community to anti-social behaviour, conflict and violence near lockers;
- Potential risk of encouraging rough sleeping close to lockers.

PROJECTED COSTS:

- ***HIGH purchase and installation costs:***

As with Option 2, any lockers installed outside would need to be secured against weather, theft and damage, and this would subsequently necessitate higher set up costs.

- ***MODERATE to HIGH maintenance and repair costs:***

Higher risk of damage, theft and vandalism lead to higher projected costs for repair and maintenance. It is important to note that the City of Bunbury and Headspace in Broken Hill both report no vandalism or damage to their lockers, though lockers are outside and accessible 24/7. However, the City of Bunbury does report cleaning costs, which have been absorbed by the Councils regular cleaning program. Though this experience is promising, it needs to be considered that the higher concentration of homelessness and different demographic may lead to a very different experience in the City of Port Phillip.

- ***HIGH cost of removal of rubbish and abandoned items:***

It is projected that there will be high associated costs for removal of dumped items around lockers. Removal of dumped items is already a function of Council, however it could pose problems for organisations managing this type of model. A solution, as undertaken by the Salvos in Melbourne's CBD, is to partner with Council to remove dumped items as a part of their existing service structure.

- **LOW staffing costs:**

Projected staffing costs depend on whether the lockers operate on a self-registration system, or whether locker users would be required to register with the managing organisation. However, because this model does not require staff to facilitate access, projected hours would be low.

- **HIGH security costs:**

As with Option 2, the exposure of lockers to potential damage and theft, would likely necessitate the use of CCTV at each site. Security and safety and the use of CCTV was a common theme that arose from survey responses across all three stakeholder groups.

*"The ability to keep
my things safe. To
keep my dignity".*



APPENDIX

ORGANISATIONS CONSULTED

City of Bunbury	www.bunbury.wa.gov.au/
City of Port Phillip	www.portphillip.vic.gov.au
City of Sydney	www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/
Headspace	www.headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/broken-hill/
Launch Housing	www.launchhousing.org.au/
Port Phillip Community Group	www.ppcg.org.au
Sacred Heart Mission	www.sacredheartmission.org/
Salvos 614	www.salvationarmy.org.au/melbourne614/
Salvos Street Level Mission	www.salvationarmy.org.au/sydneystreetlevel/
St Kilda Gatehouse	www.stkildagatehouse.org.au/
STAR Health	www.starhealth.org.au/
Youth Projects	www.youthprojects.org.au/

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