

Appendix R – Supporting people during large public events



James sleeps in the same place every night and often leaves his gear there so he doesn't have to carry it around with him all day. He is familiar with the area, feels safe, and knows where the amenities are. However, he returned to his place of rest one night and it was surrounded by fencing and security guards who wouldn't let him collect his belongings. As the evening moves on, James relocates to another area but he cannot relax or sleep because the sound is too loud from the event and he is in a new and unknown surrounding.

Each person has their own unique experience and needs. It is important to understand the intersectionality between a person's gender, race, sexual identity, culture, experiences and circumstances. Workers may refer to multiple appendices to assist their understanding, engagement and support to each person they engage.

Overview

Major public events are an important part of community life, creating culture, employment and providing economic benefits for local communities. However, it is important to recognise these benefits may only be experienced by a limited proportion of the community. Major events can also negatively impact members of a community in particular people experiencing homelessness. These negative impacts may be environmental, economic or social.

The extraordinary disturbances associated with public events (such as increased light, noise and crowds) may be viewed by a person experiencing homelessness as a disruption to the place they call home. People experiencing homelessness are also at greater risk of being displaced during large public events. This occurred in NSW during the 2000 Sydney Summer Olympics and 2008 World Youth Day. Displacement can be a traumatic experience and result in a person feeling angry, confused, overwhelmed, or misunderstood.

There may be limited options for people experiencing homelessness who are willing to relocate during a major event. They may face additional risks to their safety and wellbeing due to being in areas or around people they are unfamiliar with and unexpected financial burdens.

It is important for workers and local businesses to respectfully and empathetically engage with a person experiencing homelessness, increasing flexibility and discretion where possible in these circumstances.

A person experiencing homelessness may not be aware that a public event is taking place or the potential risks associated with an event in the area. Public events attract large crowds of people which can place people experiencing homelessness at higher risk of physical harm and/or having their personal belongings damaged or stolen. It is therefore critical that clear and accessible information is provided and events are inclusive. Early preparation can help people experiencing homelessness understand their options and prevent further disadvantage, segregation, isolation and mistrust.

Engagement strategy

Things to consider before engaging:

- Event organisers are encouraged to contact local council and specialist homelessness services in the area to help prepare people who are known to be in public spaces.
- Where possible, respect a person's right to remain in their location rather than relocate them from the area or to temporary/crisis accommodation.
- Consult the event organisers, and/or local councils to identify contingency plans for people experiencing homelessness.
- Use a trauma informed response acknowledging that a person may have travelled to feel safe and may feel disoriented or have experienced trauma as a result.

Strategies for engagement:

- Introduce yourself in a friendly manner, stating your name and the agency/organisation that you work for.
- Discuss the potential risks for the person during the event and work through potential strategies together to maintain their physical and mental safety and wellbeing.
- If a person chooses to relocate, support them to connect with culturally appropriate and accessible services/supports that take into consideration the person's connection to the local area and community.
- Refer the person to additional services for support as requested.

RESOURCES

CRISIS SUPPORT

Name	Service	Contact Details
Ask Izzy	A website directory that connects people who are in need with nearby services such as housing, food, health care and legal services in their local area.	Website: https://askizzy.org.au
Link2Home	A statewide telephone service providing information, assessment and referral to specialist homelessness services, temporary accommodation and other appropriate services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week every day of the year.	Phone: 1800 152 152 Website: https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/help/ways/are-you-homeless

OTHER SUPPORT

Name	Service	Contact Details
Local Government Directory	Local councils across NSW represent the interests of their communities and deliver local services and infrastructure.	Website: https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/local-government-directory

