Stonnington Community Inter-Agency Hoarding and Squalor Protocol

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City of Stonnington
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The Protocol was developed in 2014 to:

• Further streamline and formalise current inter-agency processes, whilst outlining the functions and responsibilities of all stakeholders and the way in which they will work together.

• Facilitate an aligned approach to the coordination and management of compliance activities and support services, and

• Ultimately ensure that those people affected by hoarding and squalor are handled appropriately and effectively, resulting in their receiving timely access to a range of targeted support services.
Definitions

**Hoardings**

Hoardings behaviour is the persistent accumulation of, and lack of ability to relinquish, large numbers of objects or living animals, resulting in extreme clutter in or around premises. This behaviour compromises the intended use of premises and threatens the health and safety of people concerned, animals and neighbours.

**Animal Hoarding**

The accumulation of large numbers of animals that overwhelms the person’s ability to provide a minimum standard of nutrition, sanitation and veterinary care.

**Squalor**

Squalor describes an unsanitary living environment that has arisen from extreme and/or prolonged neglect, and poses substantial health and safety risks to people or animals residing in the affected premises, as well as others in the community.
# Contributing Agencies

## People Services
- Access Care Southern
- Aged Care Assessment Services
- City of Stonnington: Aged Services - Home and Community Care
- Caulfield Community Health Service
- City of Stonnington: Children and Family Services
- Inner South Community Health
- City of Stonnington: Municipal Recovery
- Prahran Mission
- Room 2 Improve
- Skeletons in the Closet
- State Trustees
- STC Services

## Risk and Safety
- City of Stonnington: Building Control
- City of Stonnington: Building and Local Law Services
- City of Stonnington: Environmental Health
- City of Stonnington: Municipal Fire Prevention
- City of Stonnington: Planning Enforcement

## Clinical Services
- Aged Psychiatry Services – Caulfield Hospital
- Crisis Assessment and Treatment Service
- Swinburne Psychology Clinic
- The Anxiety Clinic

## Fire and Emergency Services
- Ambulance Victoria
- Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board – Community Resilience Department
- Victoria Police

## Housing Services
- Department of Human Services
- Launch Housing

## Animal Services
- City of Stonnington: Animal Management
- The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
How it Works

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Initial Contact</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Handover or Case Closure</th>
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<td>The first agency, i.e. the ‘first responder’, that is aware of a hoarding and/or squalor issue will take responsibility, by agreement for its progress. Emergency Services are not expected to progress these cases - they are referral points.</td>
<td>First responders, with the support of other professionals, gather information and engage the most relevant agencies and/or programs as required.</td>
<td>When necessary, a relevant handover can be made and/or collaborative arrangements organised, unless the case is closed.</td>
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Priority risks:
- Child safety
- Older person/s
- Animal welfare
- Sanitation
- Housing/building/property
- Fire safety
- Mental health
- Utilities
- Financial
Memorandum of Understanding

- Success of the Protocol is dependent upon agreement of a shared responsibility for hoarding and squalor situations.
- All parties have therefore signed a MOU.
- MOU refers to the principles of the Protocol and obligations of both Council and each agency.
- Any party can ‘sign-up’ for inclusion at any time and/or cease their inclusion at any time.
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Internal Responsibilities

• Development of Council guidelines in conjunction with all internal stakeholders.
• Development of a training package for Council staff.
• Establishing funding criteria for high-risk hoarding and/or squalor cases.
Difficulties

• Keeping the Protocol alive.
• Remembering to engage and not falling into old habits of going it alone.
• Maintaining real connections with stakeholders.
Looking Forward

This resource is a ‘living’ document that needs to be reviewed and updated to reflect best current practice and changing circumstances.

Proposed initiatives:

• Council having future and ongoing coordination responsibility for the Protocol.
• Promotion of the Protocol across the community and more broadly across other associations and networks.
• Developing a range of technology solutions to ensure efficient access and ongoing maintenance of data, information and resources.
• Annual Forum to review Protocol and update as required.
• Increase awareness of treatment programs and training.