



5 November 2012

Dear Councillor,

Shelter SA is writing to you again about voting for time-limits to be imposed on people who stay in the Park Lands.

Shelter SA wishes to clarify that there are two 'groups' of people using the parklands. The first group is made up of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people who stay there for longer periods of time and the second, Aboriginal people who gather to drink.

The Council by-laws are those around 'cease camping', painting a picture of people who are simply on holidays choosing to sleep rough as a pleasurable, recreational pursuit. The individuals involved however, are our most vulnerable South Australians with serious, chronic mental health, health and substance misuse issues who simply fall through the cracks of service provision in these areas.

The Exceptional Needs Unit was formed after the Coroner wanted the same issue addressed and these people are well known to these and various other homelessness services workers.

One of the principles of behaviour change theory and community development is to accurately identify and engage all stakeholders to produce change – this is a community issue and stakeholders should include health, mental health, housing, alcohol and other drug services, SAPOL, ratepayers but especially Aboriginal Elders, the community and THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES.

Neville Highfold, Nicci Butler and myself met with Stephen Yarwood this morning and Stephen admitted that the cease camping time limits "will impact on Aboriginal people" – Australia has a long and embarrassing history of enshrining discrimination in legislation and these cease camping laws should be removed entirely, rather than making them even more punitive. Responding to the complaints of ratepayers means that Councillors are well aware of the underlying issues and it is unclear what the Council itself is doing to address this issue. The United Nations has established the rights of Indigenous peoples and there are federal and state anti-discrimination laws to protect people from such practices.

Some questions for you to consider:

- If people are removed where will they be taken
- How will they be removed
- What will happen to their belongings
- Will Councillors accept responsibility for the safety and well-being of those involved
- What lessons have been learned from the past
- What will be different for these vulnerable people when they are removed

The Council has a reconciliation plan and they need to adhere to this and consult properly with the Aboriginal community over this issue.

We seek reassurance from you that you will consider removing the cease camping by-laws altogether and that you will not vote for time-limits to take effect.

Please contact us if you require further information.



Neville Highfold

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We acknowledge and respect the Kaurna people as the traditional custodians of the ancestral lands we live and work on and their deep feelings of attachment and relationship to country