

DOMESTIC SQUALOR AND HOARDING POLICY

May 2024

PREPARED BY:

ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH & BUILDING UNIT



4-20 Eton Street,
Sutherland NSW 2232
T 02 9710 0333
sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au

SUTHERLANDSHIRE

1. PURPOSE

This policy outlines Council's commitment to the fair and transparent handling of identified domestic squalor and hoarding cases within the Sutherland Shire community.

Hoarding disorder is defined as difficulty discarding material possessions, accompanied by the frequent accumulation of possessions and cluttered disorganised living space. Hoarding is its own specified mental illness and Council officers should approach cases of domestic squalor and hoarding in a professional and compassionate way, in line with Council's social responsibilities to our community.

Sutherland Shire Council is committed to being a key stakeholder in cases of domestic squalor and hoarding. Council is committed to working with specialist Community providers in the service provision of assistance to those members of the community who are struggling with domestic squalor and hoarding. Council will only become involved and issue orders where there is a risk to public health and safety being created, an adjoining property owner's amenity is being impacted upon, or where a premises is unsightly from a public place. This includes assisting in finalising long-term and / or complex squalor / hoarding issues.

2. APPLICATION

This Policy applies to all members of the public, and staff employed by Council in any capacity. It is however recognised that this Policy will have the greatest impact on the work of Council's Environment Health & Building and Community Connections Units.

3. PRINCIPLES

3.1 Application of Principles

No one principle should be applied to the detriment of another. Principles must be collectively considered and applied to the extent that is reasonable and practicable in the circumstances.

3.2 Residents Rights to Store Possessions

All residents, including those with hoarding tendencies, have the right to store possessions on their own property in a manner that does not impact either themselves or others outside of the property.

3.3 Impact of Stored Possessions

Should possessions be stored on a property in a manner that impacts the health and / or safety of an occupant, others outside of that property, or if the stored possessions are unsightly from a public place, Council may use regulatory / enforcement actions to resolve the situation.



3.4 Access to Assistance

Those experiencing domestic squalor or hoarding have a right to access assistance. Assistance may be in the form of access to appropriate resources and contact with appropriate community providers. Council officers are not the direct service providers and cannot provide ongoing care and case management to people experiencing domestic squalor and hoarding.

3.5 Reviews or Appeals

People experiencing domestic squalor and hoarding are community members and should have access to the right of reply, appeals and procedural fairness.

3.6 Residents Rights to Respectful Treatment

All people should be treated with respect and not discriminated against based on their situation.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Responsible Officer

The Senior Manager, Health & Building Regulation is the Responsible Officer for this policy and is responsible for developing and reviewing any supporting documents.

4.2 Chief Executive Officer

Council has delegated the Chief Executive Officer the authority to exercise the responsibilities detailed in this Policy.

4.3 Directors

Directors are responsible for ensuring their Directorate adheres to the requirements of this Policy and provide guidance in respect of applying the principles, within their Directorate and the Organisation.

4.4 Employees

Employees must adhere to the requirements of this Policy and operate within its authorities.

5. POLICY COMPLIANCE

Council shall carry out review and monitoring of reported cases of domestic squalor and hoarding in line with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993* and *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*.

DOMESTIC SQUALOR AND HOARDING POLICY



6. RECORD KEEPING, CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

Council adheres to and complies with the *NSW State Records Act 1998* and *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* through its Access to Information Policy and Privacy Management Plan.

7. BREACHES OF POLICY

Breaches of this Policy will be dealt with in accordance with normal disciplinary procedures and will be advised to the Chief Executive Officer and / or Director Planning and Growth, via the Senior Manager, Health and Building Regulation where appropriate.

8. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Compliance and Enforcement Policy

9. RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

- *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*
- *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*

10. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Term	Meaning
Domestic Squalor	Somewhere that is cluttered, filthy or unclean through neglect.
Hoarding	Acquiring and having trouble discarding a large volume of possessions which others would consider useless or of limited value
Household Neglect	The failure to remove household waste and other rubbish including papers, wrapping, food, cooking waste, containers and discarded household items.
Capacity	Refers to an individual's ability to make decisions about things that affect daily life.

End of Document

UNCONTROLLED COPY WHEN PRINTED - For up to date copy please refer to Sutherland Shire Council Intranet / Website			
Document Name: Domestic Squalor and Hoarding Policy		Policy Accountability Manager Environment Health & Building	
Version: 1.0	Approved by: Council (PLN013-24)	Minute No: 86	Date approved: 20/05/2024
Original: January 2011	Last Revision: January 2015	Next Revision: April 2027	