

SUNBURY

Push for homeless action

Barry Kennedy

Groups look at seeking more cash support following spike in those sleeping rough

Sunbury every night, the issue of how to deal with helping the homeless continued to be more widely considered.

SUNBURY welfare groups are looking into seeking philanthropic support to fund a local housing support worker.

The move comes as one welfare group, CareWorks SunRanges, has seen a sudden spike in people reported to be sleeping rough.

CareWorks SunRanges manager Michael Austin told

the *Leader* there had been 16 people who revealed to volunteers at the food parcel agency they were sleeping rough in the calendar year to date.

"These are people in the most insecure of situations from camping to sleeping on the street or under trees," he said.

"It's difficult to get a handle definitively if there is a common reason for this, but usually we'd see someone in this type of position once or twice every six months."

Mr Austin said the issue of establishing a housing worker in Sunbury had been discussed by the Sunbury Relief Assistance Providers Net-

work which brings together several providers.

Sunbury Relief Assistance Providers Network chair Bernadette Hetherington said the network was investigating approaching philanthropic organisations in a bid to fund a dedicated housing intake worker, to be based in Sunbury.

"Homelessness seems to be a growing problem and there is a feeling a housing worker based in Sunbury would speed up the process for referral to support agencies," she said.

The Salvation Army's Andrew Frie told the *Leader* last month that with an estimated 200 people sleeping rough in

Last month, the Sunbury Baptist Church hosted dozens of people to hear about the impact of the Yarra Valley based Stable One in which a coalition of churches banded together to offer winter crisis accommodation last year.



Rochelle Morris is part of Sunbury Local Businesses, set up to help strengthen the Sunbury business environment. Picture: ROB LEESON

GETTING TRADERS TO EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY

SUNBURY traders are adding contemporary video and social media skills to their marketing. A new brand, Sunbury Local Businesses, is making short videos for seven businesses, tagged and shared on several social media channels.

Founder Rochelle Morris said Sunbury was full of mum-and-dad businesses, born before social media and more fundamental computer skills became paramount. "Baby Boomers are a group which still don't inherently

think of social media as a marketing tool," she said. "They are small businesses who have to do everything themselves. We are getting them to tell their stories and empower how they want to market themselves."

A resident in Sunbury since 1991, Ms Morris said she wanted to help support small Sunbury businesses continue to carve out a niche. Under the same short film format, Sunbury Local Businesses is set to make short

videos for the likes of Sunbury Community Health, Distinctive Options and Goonawarra Neighbourhood House. Details: facebook.com/sunburylocalbusinesses/

Have your say

This week is your last chance to vote for your favourite community project in the Leader Local Grants program. Schools, community groups and more have put their hands up for a \$1000 grant and you can help decide where the money goes. Voting closes this Friday, June 8, so visit leaderlocalgrants.com.au to take part. Leader thanks sponsors Channel 9 News, Smooth FM and The Langham Melbourne for supporting the program, which is presented by Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation.



Pop-up help

A free pop-up volunteering information session will be held at Sunbury Visitor Information Centre in Macedon St from 10am on Wednesday. Details: 9205 2200.

Eco projects

Grants of up to \$5000 are available for projects that boost biodiversity for Victoria's native plants and animals. The Junior Landcare and Biodiversity Grants are open to schools, kindergartens, childcare centres and youth groups. Details: environment.vic.gov.au.



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