



# an active future

knox leisure plan 2014-19



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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition for the purpose of this document</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition for the purpose of this document</b>
<b>Active leisure</b>	Leisure activities that involve physical activity	Active Lifestyle	Building activity into daily routine
<b>'Be Active'</b>	Be Active is a VicHealth and Sport and Recreation Victoria 3 year funded initiative which aims to strengthen physical activity outcomes in Knox.	KCC or Council	Knox City Council
<b>Leisure</b>	Activities that are generally less structured and have less emphasis on competition than does sport	Physical activity <sup>1</sup>	Physical activity for exercise, leisure or sport
<b>Sport</b>	Activities that are generally undertaken for the primary purpose of competition	Sport/leisure club <sup>1</sup>	An organisation that requires payment of membership, fees or registration
<b>Structured physical activity<sup>1</sup></b> <b>e. g. club sport</b>	Physical activity for exercise, recreation or sport that is organised (e. g. by clubs, fitness centres, schools) and requires membership and has 'rules'	Universal Design Principles	Guidelines to produce buildings, products and environments that are inherently accessible to older people, people without disabilities and people with disabilities.
<b>Unstructured physical activity<sup>1</sup></b>	Physical activity for exercise, recreation or sport that is not organised by a club or other organisation		

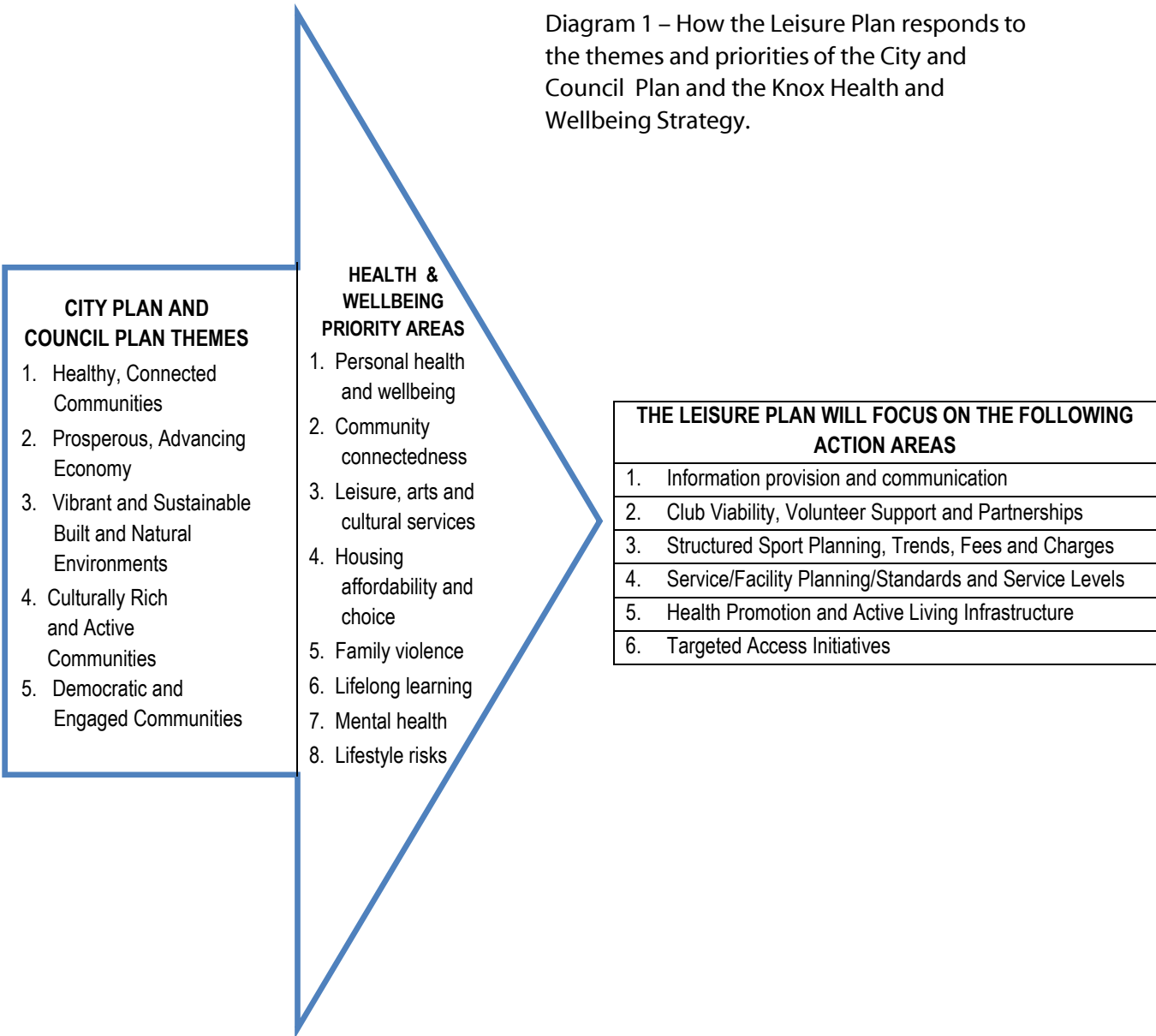
<sup>1</sup> The Participation in Exercise, Recreation and Sport Annual Report, (ERASS), 2010

# Executive Summary

The Leisure Plan has been developed to assist Council to achieve its long-term vision and respond to priorities established in the Knox City Plan 2013 -2017 and the Council Plan. The Leisure Plan provides a decision-making framework for Council and identifies how the delivery of leisure services by Council will assist Council to achieve its City Plan objectives relating to:

- A healthy, connected community
- A culturally rich and active community
- A prosperous and advancing economy
- Vibrant and sustainable built and natural environments
- A democratic and engaged community

Diagram 1 – How the Leisure Plan responds to the themes and priorities of the City and Council Plan and the Knox Health and Wellbeing Strategy.



The Leisure Plan builds on research carried out for the previous Recreation Plan 2004 - 2013<sup>2</sup> and for the City Plan and Council Plan as well as other associated Council planning documents such as the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Open Space Plan, and the Community Safety Plan. In addition, the preparation of the Leisure Plan has involved surveys, workshops and interviews with residents, government agencies, the not-for-profit sector, peak leisure and sporting associations, commercial providers, schools, surrounding Councils, Councillors, and Council staff.

The Leisure Plan recognises the vast range of leisure activities that residents choose to be involved with including activities such as walking and bike riding for exercise or relaxation; family play days and picnics in the park; participating in a local theatre production or choral group; playing competitive or social sport; playing card and other table games; or trekking or driving in the bush. The Leisure Plan also recognises that leisure and sport choices may change over time and may be influenced by cultural, physical ability, and financial considerations.

The Leisure Plan responds to Council's aim to find ways to encourage residents to be more physically active and socially connected, whether in their leisure time or as part of their daily work day or school day routine, and regardless of personal circumstances.

It is for these reasons that Council invests significantly in leisure and sport as a service and the infrastructure such as indoor recreation and aquatic centres, sporting pavilions and playing fields, play spaces, and walking and cycling trails.

It is also why Council invests in social infrastructure such as secure bicycle storage facilities, footpaths that are well connected to local facilities, safe road crossings, bus shelters, and on-road and off-road bicycle routes.

Council makes a significant investment in leisure and sport infrastructure. These assets are valued at over \$709 million. Council invests a further \$550,000 annually to maintain these facilities, and approximately \$2 million annually in upgrading or renewing these facilities. In addition Council invests in planning leisure services and facilities and providing support to community groups. This has resulted in an average of \$2 million per annum over the past 10 years being brought into Council through external grants.

The Leisure Plan identifies the following principles to guide the planning and development of leisure services and facilities:

1. Council will continue to support a wide range of leisure and sport activities and groups but will have an increased focus on 'active lifestyle' opportunities.
2. Council acknowledges that people get involved in sport and leisure for often-different reasons and are looking for different options to cater for their lifestyle demands.
3. Council recognises it can help minimise, but not necessarily remove, barriers that prevent people from being active.
4. Council plays a key role in the provision of leisure and sport facilities and environments but requires support from other organisations and agencies to do this.

5. Council recognises that well-integrated service planning is necessary in order to ensure all service requirements are identified and addressed, and service outcomes optimised.
6. Council recognises that urban and natural environments should be well integrated if the Council is to achieve the desired active lifestyle outcomes.
7. Council planning for facilities will:
  - consider construction, sustainable design, ongoing maintenance and operating costs
  - generally be planned, designed and managed in a way that optimises and encourages use by the whole community, and effectively integrates indoor and outdoor spaces
  - be planned and designed in accordance with defined service levels and the Council's Sporting Facility and Development Guidelines
  - generally focus on providing for 'local' and 'municipal' level needs over 'regional' level needs
  - be planned and developed in conjunction with adjoining Councils if this achieves favorable outcomes for Knox
8. Council resources allocated to leisure services and facilities will be in consideration of leisure and other community service needs, as well as non-Council funding opportunities.

The previous Leisure Plan delivered a significant number of key achievements including:

- completion of the Eastern Region Soccer Strategy in collaboration with adjoining Councils, which identified options to address growth in soccer participation
- the completion of the Knox Regional Sports Park that is home to local and regional basketball, the State Basketball Centre, Knox Regional Football (soccer) Centre (including football fives) and the Victorian Association of Radio Model Soaring
- the Knox Tennis Facilities Strategic Plan that proposes facility development and management options to improve opportunities for tennis
- the upgrading of pavilions/facilities to address/meet facility provision
- the conversion of 18 sports fields to warm season grass turf that improved the quality of sports fields and enabled greater community use.

Research for the Leisure Plan has been analysed in accordance with the Knox City Plan 2013-2017 five themes and a detailed implementation plan has been prepared to ensure findings are addressed over the five years of the Plan.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 What is the purpose of the Leisure Plan?

The Leisure Plan shows the steps Council aims to take in order to address the community's needs and priorities for leisure and sport. It establishes a five-year program and identifies the partnerships and resources needed to address these priorities.

The Leisure Plan provides information collected from research and consultation, which forms the basis for an implementation plan. It also provides the principles and criteria that will guide decision-making and priority setting for leisure services and facilities.

In particular, the Leisure Plan identifies:

- strategies that best respond to the leisure and active lifestyle needs of the City for the next five years
- the role Council plays in providing for the leisure and active lifestyle needs of the community
- priorities relating to leisure and sport facilities
- opportunities for the Leisure Plan recommendations to be integrated with recommendations from other Council service plans
- opportunities for partnerships with other providers including schools, the commercial sector and adjoining Councils
- existing recreation services and community facilities and their current and future role in providing for the recreation needs of Knox.

#### **The Focus of the Leisure Plan**

Research for the Leisure Plan indicates a need for a particular focus over the next five years on 'active leisure', and opportunities for residents to become more active as part of their daily routine.

The Leisure Plan includes two parts:

- Part 1 – Contains the principles that will guide the provision of leisure services, a discussion of key findings and the implementation plan
- Part 2 – Contains the background papers that provide the research undertaken to prepare the Leisure Plan.

## 2. How we prepared the Leisure Plan

The Leisure Plan was prepared following research and consultation, including a review of research undertaken for a number of other key Council planning projects.

The following provides a summary of the consultation and research undertaken specifically for the Leisure Plan:

- Telephone survey of 300 residents
- Survey of leisure and sport clubs
- Survey of five adjoining municipalities
- Survey of peak leisure and sport associations
- Survey of local schools
- Forums:
  - Sports club forum
  - Older People and Leisure Forum

- Young People and Leisure Forum
- Leisure Liaison Group
- Interviews with workers representing the needs of special interest groups
- Interviews with Councillors
- Council staff workshop
- Review of twenty-five documents prepared by Council, sporting associations and government agencies.

### **3. Leisure and active lifestyle**

#### **3.1 What we mean by the term 'leisure' and 'active leisure'**

The Leisure Plan defines the term leisure very broadly in recognition of the extensive range of leisure, sport and physical activities we are involved in.

This Plan acknowledges that leisure means different things to us depending on our stage of life, our family background, our ability to get involved, and the time we have available. Leisure can be:

- a long distance bike trek or a casual walk to the park and home again
- a vigorous workout in the gym or relaxing in the sauna
- camping in the wilderness or a hike along a bushland trail
- playing chasey in the park with friends, family or the pet dog
- competing at the local swimming carnival or having a game of soccer at the family picnic
- observing or photographing nature out in the wilderness
- taking part in a play, choral presentation or band recital
- visiting a museum or historic homestead, or writing about local history
- preparing a plot at the community garden or tending bush land along a creek
- attending a course at a Neighbourhood House or TAFE
- volunteering.

Council will continue to support a diverse range of leisure activities and groups because they encourage a vibrant and socially connected community.

The Leisure Plan recognises the benefits derived from other less physical activities, particularly in terms of the social, mental and relaxation opportunities they provide. These include activities such as photography, discussion groups, playing cards, bird watching, and writing stories. Council will continue to support and promote these activities because they add to the diversity of opportunities for different ages, abilities and interests.

Research for the Leisure Plan indicates a need for a particular focus over the next five years on 'active leisure', or opportunities to encourage residents to be more physically active in their leisure time.

This is based on the important health and wellbeing outcomes associated with 'active leisure' and the need to ensure Council's active leisure services and infrastructure are well planned for the future.

The Leisure Plan has a focus on leisure opportunities that can benefit the whole community. Where there is a need to provide additional services to cater for the needs of specific groups of residents, Council will work in an integrated way to address these service needs.



### 3.2 What we mean by the term ‘active lifestyles’

Research for the Leisure Plan indicates that residents are more likely to increase their level of physical activity if they can fit it into their daily routine (see table 1).

Council is committed to helping residents achieve this by thoughtful planning of leisure facilities and social infrastructure.

Footpaths and trails that lead to key community facilities; secure under cover bicycle storage at railway stations; bus shelters; bicycle lanes on roads; car parking for people with disabilities; and well located toilets are examples of urban infrastructure that will encourage people to incorporate physical activity into daily routines.

The requirement for active lifestyle infrastructure is well documented in many Council planning documents including the Integrated Traffic Transport Plan, the Liveable Streets Plan, and various precinct plans. These documents identify the type of infrastructure that will make it easier for us to be active during our work and school day. They also identify the type of infrastructure needed to achieve this.

Table 1 – Factors most likely to increase residents’ level of physical activity. Reference: Leisure Plan Household Survey, 2013.

Statement	Total Surveys (300)	% of Males	% of Females
I could measure/see the good it was doing me	88%/260	83%/110	92%/150
I was able to fit it in as part of my daily routine	84%/247	82%/108	85%/139
Felt unfit	59%/174	54%/71	63%/103
Found other people to walk/exercise with	49%/144	44%/58	53%/86
Friends/associates/family motivated or invited me	48%/143	43%/57	53%/86
Knowing it was setting a good example for my kids/family	45%/134	42%/55	48%/79

## 4. What's behind the Plan?

### 4.1 Demographic trends that have influenced the Leisure Plan

The Knox population is expected to grow from 154,909 in 2013 to 167,695 by 2021 and to 184,821 in 2036<sup>3</sup>. Most of the population growth is expected to occur in Wantirna South, Boronia, Scoresby and Bayswater and fluctuations will occur in the number of people in various age groups. Apart from the overall ageing of the community, a dramatic shift in these numbers is not expected from one suburb to another over the life of the Leisure Plan.

The most important implication for the planning and development of leisure and sport infrastructure is the overall growth in the population, which will increase the demand for access to indoor and outdoor facilities and associated programs.

Another important implication for the Leisure Plan is the demographic trends that impact on the health and wellbeing of the Knox community. Council data indicates that Knox residents<sup>4</sup>:

- are more likely to volunteer (Knox 33.5%, Metro Melbourne 28%)
- feel equally safe walking the streets during the day (Knox 98%, Metro Melbourne 98.4%)
- are more likely to perceive they have good access to leisure facilities (Knox 90.2% Metro Melbourne 83%)
- are more likely to be overweight or obese (Knox 55.5%, Victoria 49.8%<sup>5</sup>)
- are less likely to report they have very good or excellent health (Knox 42.7%, Victoria 46.6%)<sup>5</sup>
- are less likely to be restricted by a lack of transport (Knox 18.1%, Metro Melbourne 23.2%)
- similarly likely to meet physical activity guidelines (Knox 25.5%, Victoria 26.6%)<sup>5</sup>
- similarly likely to participate in organised sport (Knox 39.0%, Victoria 41%)<sup>5</sup>

The Leisure Plan also recognises the need to address specific demographic needs as they might relate to concessional entry or user fees for facilities, designing buildings and environments to ensure they encourage access by different ability groups, and in the marketing and promotion of leisure and sport opportunities.

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<sup>3</sup> id.com.au/knox

<sup>4</sup> Knox Health and Wellbeing Strategy, - Never Felt Better, 2013-2017, Attachment 2

<sup>5</sup> Information not available for the Melbourne Metropolitan area

## 4.2 The Leisure Plan and other Council Plans

The Leisure Plan has been developed to support the City Plan and Council Plan (2013 – 2017) and Council's associated strategic plans, particularly the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. These plans articulate the community's aspirations for the City and the key actions Council will take in partnership with the community to achieve these aspirations. These documents establish the planning framework for all Council services, including leisure services.

Other documents particularly important to the Leisure Plan include Council's Open Space Plan, the Asset Management Plans, and Draft Play Space Plan. These documents identify how outdoor environments and facilities can be planned and managed in order to optimise leisure opportunities.

Other Plans such as Council's Access and Inclusion Plan and Community Safety Plan identify how social and physical environments can be planned in order to encourage greater use of public places for leisure activities.

The Leisure Plan has also taken into consideration information included in documents produced by the State and Federal Governments such as the Victorian Health Priorities Framework<sup>6</sup> and the Sport and Recreation Strategic Framework<sup>7</sup>. In addition, the Leisure Plan considers the findings of documents prepared by sporting associations, such as the Gymnastics Victoria Strategic Facilities Plan<sup>8</sup> and the Baseball Facilities Development Plan<sup>9</sup>.



### Key Council Plans informing the Leisure Plan:

- Knox Vision
- City Plan and Council Plan
- Health & Wellbeing Strategy and a range of associated Plans such as
- Open Space Plan
- Access & Inclusion Plan
- Community Safety Plan
- Arts & Culture Plan
- Asset Management Plans
- Life Stage Plans- Youth, Healthy Ageing and Early Years

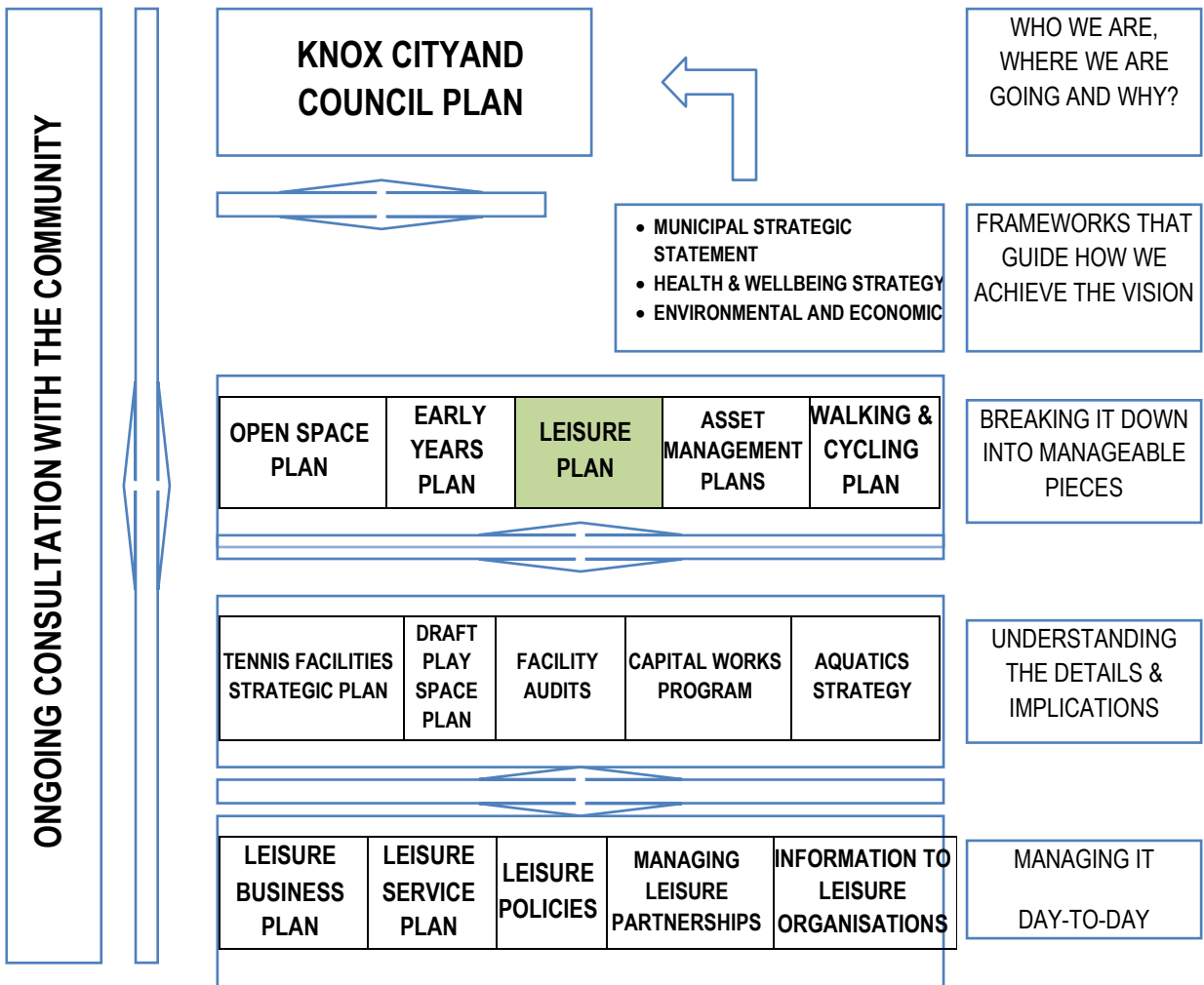
<sup>6</sup> Victorian Health priorities Framework 2012-2022, Metropolitan Health Plan

<sup>7</sup> Sport and Recreation Victoria Strategic Framework, 2013-2015

<sup>8</sup> Gymnastics Victoria Strategic Facilities Plan, Gymnastics Victoria, 2013

<sup>9</sup> Baseball Facilities Development Plan, 2012, Baseball Victoria

Diagram 1 – The relationship of the Leisure Plan to other Council planning documents and Council’s day-to-day leisure operations



### 4.3 What did we achieve from the previous Plan?

The 2004-13 Recreation Plan provided Council with a leisure planning and management framework and delivered a number of key achievements including:

- the completion of the Knox Regional Sports Park that is home to local and regional basketball, the State Basketball Centre, Knox Regional Football (soccer) Centre (including football fives) and the Victorian Association of Radio Model Soaring
- completion of the Eastern Region Soccer Strategy in collaboration with adjoining Councils, which identified options to address the growth in soccer participation
- the Knox Tennis Facilities Strategic Plan that proposes facility development and management options to improve opportunities for tennis
- the upgrading of pavilions/facilities to address/meet facility provision
- the conversion of 18 sports fields to warm season grass turf that improved the quality of sports fields and enabled greater community use
- a safety and risk assessment of sporting reserves
- the introduction of the Club Development Program
- construction of the regional Knox Skate and BMX Park at Gilbert Park, and introduction of holiday and leadership programs at the site
- \$22M funding from State and Federal Governments for leisure and sport facilities and programs, including \$15.1 M for the Knox Regional Sports Park
- expansion of programs, and increased attendances and group hirers at Knox Leisureworks and the Rowville Community Centre
- more than doubling of small grants to leisure and sport clubs (\$42,087 in 2008/09 to \$89,000 in 2012/13)
- the development and review of various Leisure policies
- the completion of the warm water pool at Knox Leisureworks
- the replacement of the synthetic hockey pitch at the Knox School at no cost to Council
- the introduction of Council's Recreation and Leisure Liaison Advisory Committee.

### 4.4 Lifestyle trends that influence the Leisure Plan

The following highlights a number of key trends that have influenced the Leisure Plan:

- the struggle to fit individual and family leisure and physical activity needs into increasingly busy daily routines
- participation rates in structured physical activities has remained steady over the past decade, however, participation in unstructured physical activity has significantly increased<sup>10</sup>
- an increase in the range of activity and sporting groups competing for access to indoor and outdoor facilities
- the recognition that leisure and sport provide real opportunities to address the challenges associated with sedentary lifestyles and people wanting to connect with other people<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> ,The Future of Australian Sport: Megatrends shaping the sport sector over coming decades, p7

<sup>11</sup> The Future of Australian Sport: Megatrends shaping the sport sector over coming decades, p15, Various council research

- the struggle of sport and leisure clubs to manage the increasingly complex business of running community organisations, keeping them viable, and ensuring compliance with regulations
- the increasing cost of providing and maintaining leisure facilities and infrastructure that encourages active lifestyles and are in line with increasing community expectations
- increasing legislative (e.g. Disability Discrimination Act and Building Code of Australia) and risk management requirements on organisations
- more young people are looking for alternative sport, volunteering, and allied social opportunities
- fast changing technology and communications channels and user expectations around these
- a decline in the number of people who regularly volunteer and who have the skills required to run organisations
- the increasing complexity of providing for the leisure and physical activity needs of the community given the demographic impacts relating to people living longer, the different leisure preferences of specific age and cultural groups
- the fear of litigation and how this impacts on the design of facilities such as play spaces, and the community's preparedness to provide leisure opportunities.



## 5. Leisure and sport facilities

The City of Knox is home to a diverse range of community facilities that cater for the different leisure, sport and physical activities needs of residents.

Council is directly responsible for the planning and management of many of these facilities in conjunction with other Departments within Council and the community groups and sporting clubs that use them.

The City's leisure and open space assets are valued at over \$709 million (including land costs).

The Leisure Plan recognises the important role that community, private and commercial operators play in satisfying the leisure, sport and physical activity needs of the community, and the need to work closely with these organisations. These include groups that manage facilities such as guide and scout halls, private gymnasiums and fitness centre operators and home based facilities such as those operated by personal trainers.

### A snapshot of the leisure and sport facilities provided through Council

- 38 sporting reserves with 59 playing fields 37 sporting pavilions
- 14 tennis clubs with 108 courts
- 208 play spaces
- 70 kilometres of trails and bike paths
- Regional sport and leisure facilities including the:
  - Knox Regional Sports Park
  - Knox Leisureworks Aquatic & Recreation Centre
  - Knox Regional Netball Centre
  - Knox Athletics Centre
  - Knox Skate and BMX Park
  - Knox Basketball Stadium
  - Knox Gymnastic Centre
  - Knox BMX Track
  - Rowville Community Centre
  - Waterford Valley Golf Course
- Other leisure facilities such as arts centres, libraries and neighborhood houses

## 6. Why does Council invest in leisure and active lifestyle?

Council invests in leisure infrastructure, programs, and community groups because it recognises the social health and wellbeing benefits derived through this investment.

Communities with high levels of involvement in physical activity are more likely to achieve the following:

Healthy, connected community outcomes:

- a more interactive and friendly community that brings with it enhanced perceptions of safety, greater involvement in community organisations and initiatives, a stronger sense of 'belonging', and stronger referral and support networks
- a greater sense of local pride
- lower levels of injury due to higher levels of alertness (e.g. work) and physical wellbeing (e.g. older people)
- lower incidence of mental health illnesses

Culturally rich and active community outcomes:

- collaborative activities that highlight and build on common values and goals
- lower incidence of major illnesses and diseases such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes
- higher levels of self-esteem and lower levels of stress, depression and anxiety related conditions
- greater fitness, strength, flexibility, coordination and mobility

The direct health care costs due to physical inactivity, based on mid-1990s costings, are around \$400m per year.

Reference: Be Active Australia Framework

Prosperous and advancing economy outcomes:

- financial benefits to business and community organisations associated with events and significant destinations such as regional parks and trails
- growth in retail, service and equipment supply sectors
- higher levels of employment, enhanced work place productivity and less absenteeism
- greater academic and learning performance
- reduced health costs

Vibrant and sustainable built and natural environments outcomes:

- more people using public spaces
- more positive perceptions about safety in the community
- more inviting urban environments and streetscapes that provide safe and welcoming places for physical activity
- a variety of modern sustainable indoor facilities and a wide range of leisure activities
- a wider variety of natural environments

Democratic and engaged community outcomes:

- additional and alternative opportunities for involvement in community decision making through leisure and sporting organisations
- consistency in program and facility provision across the City
- avenues through which residents can influence policy and planning priorities relating to leisure





## 7. The future

### 7.1 What will leisure include in the future?

The Leisure Plan has identified the following key community and Council aspirations for leisure:

- An abundance of leisure opportunities for a community that wants to be active and healthy
- Availability of places for playing, reflecting, competing, learning, having fun, or just 'being'
- Activities that encourage positive individual and community values
- Strong clubs and organisations that are well run and whose members are open and welcoming
- Outdoor and indoor spaces that are inspiring, attractive and address the aspirations of a modern and active community
- Community, government and private enterprise working together to provide leisure opportunities
- People who want to support others and be supported to achieve common goals
- Leisure and sport providing economic opportunities
- Leisure opportunities for all levels of ability.

### 7.2 The principles that guide the Leisure Plan

The following principles have been used to guide the development of the Leisure Plan and will guide outcomes for Council's planning and management of leisure services and facilities over the life of the Plan.

#### 1. Leisure and sport priorities

**Principle 1 - Council will continue to support a wide range of leisure and sport activities and groups but will have an increased focus on 'active lifestyle' opportunities.**

Council will support the growth and development of:

- physical activity opportunities and infrastructure associated with organised sport and sporting competition, whether club based or social
- physical activity opportunities and infrastructure associated with active leisure such as walking, cycling, swimming or visiting the gym
- leisure opportunities such as those associated with the arts, friendship and support groups, or learning and interest groups.

## **2. Different motivations and needs**

**Principle 2 – Council acknowledges that people get involved in sport and leisure for different reasons and are looking for different options to cater for their lifestyle demands.**

- Council will consider the range of factors that influence a person's motivation and commitment to an active lifestyle in determining leisure priorities.
- Council appreciates that residents choose to be active for social, health, and family reasons and to achieve physical or personal targets.
- Council will support different activities in recognition of the different outcomes people seek through different types of leisure activities e.g. confidence and self-esteem, physical skills, knowledge, feeling a part of the community, helping others, having fun, learning, celebrating, time-out.

## **3. Addressing barriers to being active**

**Principle 3 - Council recognises it can help minimise, but not necessarily remove, barriers that prevent people from being active.**

- Council will recognise the barriers that may prevent people leading an active lifestyle including personal (e.g. perceptions, physical ability), physical (e.g. the buildings), financial (e.g. cost), and transport (e.g. no transport) barriers.
- Council will seek to minimise barriers to participation and will assess the cost and benefits associated with strategies to do this.
- Council will encourage and support other organisations to enhance access to participation in leisure and sport.
- Council will plan and design facilities and outdoor environments in consideration of 'universal design' principles.
- Council will prioritise strategies that will have the greatest benefit to the community.

## **4. Partnerships**

**Principle 4 - Council plays a key role in the provision of leisure and sport facilities and environments but requires support from other organisations and agencies to do this.**

- Council is only one of a number of agencies that have a role for there to be a diverse and sustainable range of leisure opportunities.
- The private/business, community, the not-for-profit, and government sectors play an important role providing for the leisure and health and wellbeing needs of the community.
- Council will determine the most effective role it can play in relation to each leisure and sport initiative and associated partnership.

## **5. Planning our services**

**Principle 5 – Council recognises that well-integrated service planning is necessary in order to ensure all service requirements are identified and addressed, and service outcomes optimised.**

- Services will be provided in line with substantiated needs, agreed and defined priorities, and available resources.

- Services will be planned and delivered in accordance with agreed service levels and frameworks.
- All relevant Council departments will be actively involved in the planning of services to:
  - enhance interdepartmental understanding of service objectives
  - identify opportunities to jointly address service needs
  - to ensure consistency of service delivery

## 6. Planning our urban and natural environments

**Principle 6 – Council recognizes that urban and natural environments should be well integrated if the Council is to achieve the desired active lifestyle outcomes.**

- Well planned and attractive streets, footpaths, trails, reserves, and other community infrastructure are important because they:
  - encourage people to be active as part of their daily routine
  - ‘feel’ safe and inviting
  - provide environments which are protected and where people can go to ‘be’ or feel part of the community.
- Effective planning will encourage greater use of urban and natural environments and increase the capacity of these environments to cater for leisure needs.
- Urban and natural environments should be well integrated and connected via trails and pathways.
- It is important to provide facilities (e.g. bike storage facilities, safe road crossings, seats, trails/footpaths) that encourage residents to incorporate physical activity into daily work, school, and family routines.
- Accommodating different and new opportunities into our urban environments (e.g. dog parks, outdoor gym equipment).

## 7. Planning facilities

**Principle 7 – Council planning for facilities will:**

- **consider construction, sustainable design, ongoing maintenance and operating costs**
  - **generally be planned, designed and managed in a way that optimises and encourages use by the whole community, and effectively integrates indoor and outdoor spaces**
  - **be planned and designed in accordance with defined service levels and the Council’s Sporting Facility and Development Guidelines**
  - **generally focus on providing for ‘local’ and ‘municipal’ level needs over ‘regional’ level needs**
  - **be planned and developed in conjunction with adjoining Councils if this achieves favorable outcomes for Knox**
- There will be a priority focus on opportunities to create community leisure ‘activity hubs’ that enhance opportunities for the sharing of indoor spaces.
  - There will be a focus on the planning of facilities along with the entire site/local area at which they are located.

- Facilities of a similar type e.g. sporting pavilions will be designed in accordance with the type and level of sport or activity to be accommodated. This recognises, for example, the difference between a pavilion that caters for high-grade sport/finals competition and one that caters for junior sport.
- Council's focus will be on addressing local leisure and sport needs over the development of facilities that may cater for a regional catchment. This does however recognise there may be opportunities to address leisure needs through partnerships with other Councils, sporting organisations and other levels of Government.
- Council will seek involvement and partnerships with the community in the development and upgrading of facilities.

## **8. A practical and responsible service**

### **Principle 8 - Council resources allocated to leisure services and facilities will be in consideration of leisure and other community service needs, as well as non-Council funding opportunities**

- Council has a responsibility to consider changing service needs which may impact on Council's ability to deliver leisure services as identified in the Leisure Plan.
- Council will consider budget adjustments that allow it to take advantage of external funding opportunities e.g. government grants programs.
- Council will establish and review leisure priorities according to a defined set of criteria. These criteria will include requirements about minimising risk, optimising outcomes (e.g. social and financial), and long term benefits of the service to the community.



## **8. The focus of the Leisure Plan for the next 5 years**

Research for the Leisure Plan has identified the issues and opportunities relating to leisure that Council will focus on over the next five years. These have been addressed in line with the themes of the City Plan and Council Plan and the Community Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The principles outlined for Leisure in Section 7.2 will guide the way in which the Leisure Plan will respond to the research and consultation findings. The following action areas form the focus of the implementation plan.

### **8.1 Information Provision and Communication**

The Leisure Plan will focus on:

- Building better and more sustained partnerships to develop leisure and sport facilities, activities, and organisations. This will include relationships with leisure and sporting clubs, regional and State sporting associations, State Government and other local government agencies, not-for-profit organisations, commercial enterprises, and schools.
- Addressing barriers that prevent people from being physically active and key motivators for participation
- Increasing participation in club based activities
- Assisting volunteers who help run community organisations and facilities in Knox
- Providing information about leisure and active lifestyle opportunities
- Undertaking marketing and promotion of groups, events, and programs.

### **8.2 Club Viability/Volunteer Support and Partnerships**

The Leisure Plan will focus on:

- Advice and mentoring for community and sporting groups
- The viability of clubs and organisations
- Leisure and sport opportunities provided by the business, commercial and 'semi-commercial' sectors.

### **8.3 Structured Sport Planning, Trends and Fees and Charges**

The Leisure Plan will focus on:

- Service standards for leisure facilities, programs and services
- Participation trends and community needs and incorporating these into leisure operations
- Policies relating to leisure services and facilities
- Organisational procedures and protocols for integrated planning.

## 8.4 Service/Facility Planning/ Standards and Service Levels

The Leisure Plan will focus on:

- Planning and developing leisure and sporting facilities including:
  - indoor facilities such as leisure centres, community centres, sports pavilions, and scout and guide halls
  - outdoor facilities and areas such as play spaces, sports fields, trails, parks, skate parks
- Integrating everyday amenities that support active lifestyles including:
  - footpaths and trails
  - social facilities like picnic tables, seats and BBQs and shelters
  - the planning and development of facilities
  - the management and use of facilities.

## 8.5 Health Promotion and Active Living Infrastructure

The Leisure Plan will focus on:

- Alternative activity options that respond to changing life stage needs.
- Increasing participation in 'non-sport' or 'active lifestyles' activities such as walking, jogging, skateboard riding.

## 8.6 Targeted Access Initiatives

The Leisure Plan will focus on:

- Access to a broad range of programs through existing agreements/contracts
- Working with specific groups for additional leisure programs and services



## 9. A snapshot of findings that will influence what we do over the next five years

The following provides a summary of the key findings of the Leisure Plan. These are discussed in line with the four themes of the City Plan.

A detailed discussion of the Leisure Plan findings is provided in Appendix 1.

### 9.1 City Plan Theme 1 - Healthy, Connected Communities

Actions in the Leisure Plan respond to the following key research findings relevant to this City Plan theme:

- There are over 170 community based leisure, sport and community support organisations in Knox. Council supports these organisations because of the health and wellbeing, economic, environmental, and the social benefits they provide.
- Council has a number of separate information databases about private and community leisure providers and programs. There is a need to create a centralised reference database, which is regularly updated, for leisure groups, facilities, and activities. This will ensure all Council departments have access to a comprehensive and accurate database of information.
- The community is looking for more extensive, interactive and current information about leisure opportunities, and there is an expectation that Council's website will play a key role in providing this information using modern technology features.
- Council has an organisation wide commitment to enhancing the health and wellbeing and physical activity levels in the community. This is reflected in Council service planning documents and through Council and state government funding initiatives. To achieve the health and wellbeing and physical activity outcomes being targeted by Council:
  - requires branding and profile;
  - needs to target recognised behavioural and motivational factors;
  - needs to be supported by information and technology; and
  - needs to be supported by a range of different health and wellbeing organisations and sectors.
- There are increasing expectations on volunteers and volunteer based groups, however groups are struggling to attract volunteers and in particular volunteers with the skill and the time needed by organisations. Prospective volunteers now have different expectations about volunteering and organisations do not necessarily understand these expectations or know how to respond to them.
- There are also increasing expectations on clubs and organisations in terms of governance, managing and developing facilities, catering for older participants, promotion of activities and incorporating technology into management and promotion operations. These responsibilities and management priorities now require specialist skills and knowledge if clubs and organisations are to be viable in an increasingly competitive and professional club environment. Organisations now require a far greater level of support to understand responsibilities and develop required skills and knowledge. The support of leisure clubs and organisations is important if Knox is to continue to have a diverse range of leisure and health and wellbeing opportunities.

## 9.2 City Plan Theme 2 - A prosperous, advancing economy

The actions in the Leisure Plan respond to the following key research findings relevant to this City Plan theme:

- There are opportunities to work more closely with the private sector to encourage a greater role by the sector in catering for community leisure and health and wellbeing needs, and to promote opportunities provided by the sector.
- Clubs and organisations can assist Council achieve its leisure and physical activity objectives, however they need assistance to understand the complexities associated with encouraging people into active lifestyles. It is now necessary for clubs to better understand key target markets and how to attract them. Equipping organisations with the necessary knowledge and strategies will provide Council with multiple avenues through which to achieve its leisure and physical activity objectives.
- Consideration needs to be given to securing additional land for future structured sport and leisure needs. The growth of some sports will place pressure on existing resources particularly in areas such as Rowville where there is a shortage of sports fields. This in turn impacts on opportunities to provide sport and leisure opportunities in local communities, which is particularly relevant in terms of young people being able to access leisure and sport opportunities independently.
- Research highlights the financial benefits of sport and leisure to the community in terms of minimising health costs, increasing employment, attracting events, and supporting local business.

## 9.3 City Plan Theme 3 - Vibrant and sustainable built and natural environments

The actions in the Leisure Plan respond to the following key research findings relevant to this City Plan theme:

- Council has over \$709 million invested in sport and leisure infrastructure. A significant challenge for Council is ensuring it has the financial capacity to renew, upgrade or replace this infrastructure as required, and in line with responsible asset management protocols. Council has a number of sport and leisure assets that are ageing (e.g. Knox Regional Netball Centre, Leisure Works), and facilities that do not provide for current day needs (e.g. pavilion facilities for women). In addition, there are sports that have experienced significant growth but have been operating in facilities that do not respond to their needs (e.g. gymnastics).
- Council invests in sport, leisure and fitness facilities because of the physical activity and social benefits associated with them. These facilities include sporting pavilions, aquatic and recreation centres, and community centres. Council also invests in other community infrastructure that supports leisure and fitness activities, but also provide residents with the opportunity to be active as part of their everyday lifestyle. This infrastructure includes on-road bicycle paths, bicycle storage facilities, and walking and bicycle trails.
- Council has identified the opportunity to rationalise some sport facilities i.e. tennis. In the longer term this will reduce asset maintenance and renewal costs. However, in the shorter term funds are required to enable the consolidation of relevant clubs and activities at designated sites. Many of these sites require renewal and upgrading to accommodate the combined activities of relocating clubs.



- A particular challenge for Council over the next 5 years will be determining the future direction for Knox Leisureworks. The centre has been incrementally upgraded, which means the condition of the centre's infrastructure varies greatly. Planning for the centre is complex and has to take into consideration its location in terms of the Knox population; competition from other facilities, including new facilities in the region; and budget implications. Similarly, there is a need to identify an expanded role for the Rowville Community Centre. The centre provides a number of leisure and community services. However, given it is the only community facility in Rowville and the impact on attendances of the new Knox Regional Sports Park, a broader service operation at the centre can be investigated.
- A key focus of asset planning is to provide indoor and outdoor facilities that enhance opportunities for residents to lead physically active lifestyles, either through sport and leisure, or as part of their daily routines such as walking to school or work.

#### **9.4 City Plan Theme 4 - Culturally rich and active communities**

The actions in the Leisure Plan respond to the following key research findings relevant to this City Plan theme:

- Seventy per cent of residents achieve their physical activity independent of any organised club or group. The most popular activity in Knox is walking followed by swimming, and running/jogging. Knox residents are walking for exercise considerably more than they did in the past. The Leisure Plan recognises the importance of facilities and safe environments that will encourage people to continue to exercise.
- The household survey results indicate that residents are likely to exercise more if they can fit exercise or physical activity into their daily routine. This reinforces the need to provide leisure and physical activity opportunities that respond to lifestyle needs. Facilities such as well placed pathways for walking and that accommodate people with mobility aids, facilities that can be accessed any time (e.g. outdoor gym equipment), infrastructure that supports walking to work or school (e.g. bicycle storage facilities, bus shelters), and work based programs enhance options for residents to be active at times convenient to them.
- Research findings also indicate the emergence of impromptu groups of people that link up online in order to find like-minded people to recreate or play sport with. There is an opportunity to promote these groups via Council's website. There is a need to continue to identify real and perceptual barriers to participation and address these where possible, particularly where they relate to an identified group in the community (e.g. young people, people from migrant or non-English speaking backgrounds).

#### **9.5 City Plan Theme 5 - Democratic and engaged communities**

The actions in the Leisure Plan respond to the following key research findings relevant to this City Plan theme:

- Leisure and sport assets comprise one of the largest classes of assets owned or managed by Council. Establishing a provision framework or service levels (e.g. the type and level of provision) for each asset type (e.g. sporting pavilions, sports fields, recreation centres) will ensure facilities are developed and managed in line with clear guidelines. These guidelines

should respond to factors such as the type and level of sport played at the facility, whether the facility has to cater for a mix of age groups, both genders, or other community activities. These factors will determine the size of a facility and the components of the facility and in turn allow Council to better understand the financial implications for building, renewing and maintaining the facility. The Leisure Plan has identified the need to review or establish agreed service levels for a number of sport and leisure assets including sporting pavilions and sports fields.

- The health and wellbeing, social and environmental benefits associated with 'active lifestyle infrastructure' such as walking trails, footpaths and bicycle facilities is well documented in many Council planning documents. Similar to sport and leisure infrastructure, there is a need to establish a provision framework or service levels for active lifestyle infrastructure.
- Council seeks a contribution from most clubs or organisations that use Council facilities. These fees and charges represent a small proportion of the cost of maintaining facilities but help subsidise the costs. Some fees and charges schedules have not been reviewed in recent years and do not necessarily reflect the changed circumstances of some sports and do not reflect improvements to facilities. Fees and charges schedules need to be reviewed and possibly revised to ensure consistency in fees being charged for the use of similar facilities.
- The planning and management of facilities and services used by the community for sport, leisure and their active lifestyle pursuits is complex and involves many departments within Council. All relevant departments within Council and their communities should be involved in the planning and provision of leisure and lifestyle facilities. This will ensure the benefits of integrated facility and service planning are optimised (e.g. minimising duplication of facilities, optimising promotion and integration of services).
- Council's Leisure Services web page is a popular reference point for the community. However feedback indicates that Council needs to work with the community to identify opportunities to better cater for the information and resource needs of the community, and to enhance the technology associated with the site (e.g. interactive, online forms, linkages to external club sites).



## 10. Implementing the Leisure Plan

### 10.1 What will influence priorities?

The tasks outlined in the implementation plan respond to the issues and opportunities identified throughout the planning process and have been prioritised, according to whether these issues and opportunities:

- were significant throughout the consultation process;
- have been identified in other community planning projects;
- address risk management and mitigation issues;
- will achieve significant benefits for the outlay of resources;
- are supported by research; and
- have particular relevance in relation to the demographic trends in the municipality.

### 10.2 What will Council's role be in implementing the Leisure Plan?

Departments within Council will play various roles to ensure the implementation of the Leisure Plan. However, partnerships with other levels of government, community groups, schools and private providers will be critical to sustaining and expanding the range of leisure and active lifestyle opportunities available in Knox.

Council may play one or a number of roles in relation to implementing the Leisure Plan including:

- Planning of services and facilities.
- Delivering services directly to the community or facilitating other agencies or community groups to provide these.
- Building and maintaining leisure facilities and other infrastructure that support an active community.
- Advocacy and partnering with State and Federal Government, business, and local community to provide services, programs and facilities.
- Leadership and innovation to ensure leisure planning is based on current thinking, knowledge and research.
- Information provision and referral.

Council recognises it will need to play a key role in relation to all of the recommendations in the Leisure Plan. Council's role will however vary depending on:

- Availability of resources within Council and the capacity to attract additional external resources such as from the State Government or private enterprise.
- Where Council's investment can be of greatest benefit in achieving leisure and active lifestyle priorities.
- Opportunities for a proactive response to leisure and active lifestyle issues.
- The capacity of the community to support one priority over another.

## 10.3 Our partnerships

Council recognises the valuable role that volunteers, community organisations, private enterprise and the State and Federal Governments play in providing for the leisure needs of the community.

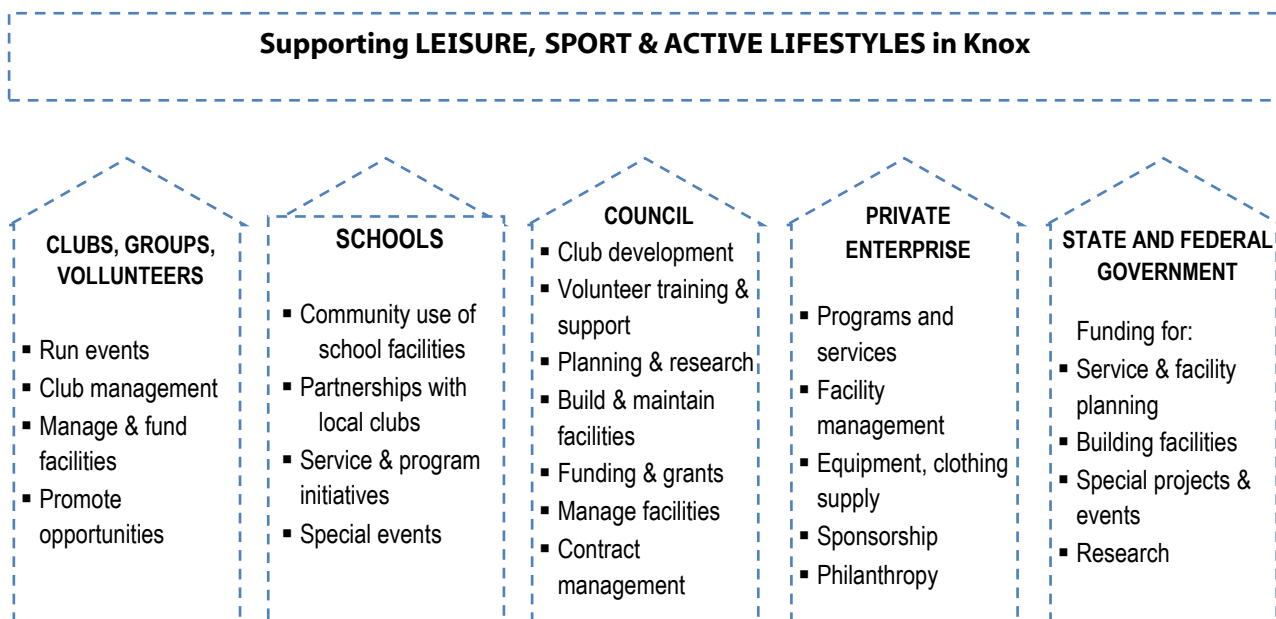


Diagram 2 – Examples of the types of organisations important to the development of sport and leisure opportunities and increasing physical activity.

These relationships and networks will need to remain strong if the aspirations of the Leisure Plan are to be achieved.

## 10.4 How will the Leisure Plan be monitored?

A review process is important to ensure that the implementation plan continues to respond to current issues and opportunities. The Leisure Plan has been prepared as a working document and provides a basis for business plans, and community and Council partnerships.

Council will establish annual work plans for the next five years to ensure the actions in the Leisure Plan are addressed. These work plans will be monitored and a major review of the Leisure Plan will be undertaken in year five to ensure the document remains aligned with the goals of the City Plan and other key planning documents.

It is important that the principles on which the Leisure Plan is based, continue to reflect the needs and priorities of Council, the community, and other stakeholders. It is unlikely there will be significant change to the vision and principles of the plan over its five-year life, however actions may be reviewed, and varied in response to changing circumstances.

## 11. The Implementation Plan

The actions below respond to the issues and opportunities identified through the research undertaken for the preparation of the Leisure Plan. The table identifies the community, government and business organisations, and Council Departments that will need to be involved in the recommended action. It also provides a timeframe and an estimate of costs associated with the action. The relationship with the Community Health and Wellbeing Strategy is indicated in the table, an asterisk (\*) also indicates a shared City Plan strategy.

### Leisure Plan Action Area

#### 1. Information Provision and Communications

Actions	Partners	Resources	Timeline	Community Health and Wellbeing Strategy
<p><b>Database of leisure, lifestyle, support, and information providers</b></p> <p><b>1. Develop a fully integrated organisation-wide database of active leisure and lifestyle providers, including community based and commercial providers.</b></p>	<p><b>Int:</b> CS, L, BA, IT</p> <p><b>Ext:</b> Agencies, organisations, associations, not-for-profit service providers</p>	Within Council's existing operational budget and LTFF.	Yrs 1-3	Strategy 1
<p><b>Information for and about clubs – Council website</b></p> <p><b>2. Explore opportunities for Council's website to provide an enhanced information exchange service for community groups and residents.</b></p> <p>The website will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with established successful systems and media outlets</li> <li>• Be enhanced using available technology</li> <li>• Be accessible, interactive and easy to navigate</li> <li>• Be self managing by each community group</li> <li>• Have multiple search platforms for ease of use.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Int:</b> CS, FC, IT, M, L, BA</p> <p><b>Ext:</b> Agencies, clubs/ organisations, associations, not-for-profit service providers</p>	Within Council's existing operational budget and LTFF.	Yrs 1-3	Strategy 1

<p><b>Club/organisations and technology</b></p> <p>3. <b>Work with clubs and/or peak associations to identify opportunities (and priorities) to support interested clubs to transition to or integrate computerised (including) online club management and information systems.</b></p> <p><b>The online club management and information systems will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address and break down gender and social barriers including infrastructure (e.g. provision of female facilities)</li> <li>• Support Council's broader initiatives (i.e. Prevention of Violence Against Women)</li> <li>• Identify and address club/organisation weaknesses</li> <li>• Identify additional revenue streams</li> <li>• Streamline club operations and decrease volunteer dependence.</li> </ul>	<p>Int: <b>L, CS, IT,</b></p> <p>Ext: <b>Clubs, peak associations, special interest groups</b></p>	<p><b>\$15,000</b> for mentoring and advice from external sources AND/OR seek work/student placement support AND/OR corporate mentor Subject to budget consideration during annual business planning process.</p>	<p><b>Yrs 1-3</b></p>	<p><b>Strategy 26*</b></p>
<p><b>Promotion of private providers</b></p> <p>4. <b>Investigate an approval process for Council to promote commercial/ private providers of health and fitness, leisure and sport services.</b></p>	<p>Int: <b>L, M, E, IT</b> CS, BA</p> <p>Ext: Private providers</p>	<p>Within Council's existing operational budget and LTFF.</p>	<p>Yrs 1-3/ ongoing</p>	<p>Strategies 14*, 15* &amp; 16*</p>
<p><b>Leisure Services webpage/s</b></p> <p>5. <b>Upgrade and improve the capability and ease of use of Council's Leisure Services webpage/s.</b></p>	<p>Int: <b>L, IT</b></p> <p>Ext: clubs, community organisations, private service providers</p>	<p>Within Council's existing operational budget and LTFF.</p>	<p>Yrs 1-3</p>	<p>Strategies 1, 14* and 16*</p>

**Leisure Plan Action Area****2. Club Viability, Volunteer Support and Partnerships**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Community Health and Wellbeing Strategy</b>
<b>Volunteering – Research for Leisure</b> <b>6. Undertake an action research project of community sporting clubs to better understand the different Leisure volunteer segments.</b> The research project will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take into account the results from the broader Council Volunteering project</li> <li>Target specific areas of volunteering</li> <li>Identify non-volunteer groups and factors that influence volunteers</li> <li>Identify attraction and retention strategies</li> <li>Implement targeted strategies based on findings.</li> </ul>	<b>Int:</b> SP, CS, L, CSH, FC, Y  <b>Ext:</b> Peak groups, special interest groups, facilities (CL and private), government agencies, research institutions	<b>\$25,000</b> for a one-off project.  Subject to budget consideration during annual business planning process.	Yrs 4 - 5	Strategies 8* & 9*
<b>Club/organisation development program</b> <b>7. Continue to review and develop Council's club development program of seminars and training sessions with a particular focus on technology and management systems.</b>	<b>Int:</b> L, CS, BA, CSH, HTK, Y  <b>Ext:</b> Clubs, peak associations, special interest groups	Within Council's existing operational budget and LTFF.	Yrs 1-3 / ongoing	Strategies 8*, 9* & 10*
<b>Private sport and leisure facilities partnership</b> <b>8. Investigate opportunities for privately owned facilities to address the needs of community sport.</b>	<b>Int:</b> L, P, PD, O, FN, E  <b>Ext:</b> Clubs, peak associations, special interest groups	Within Council's existing operational budget and LTFF.	Yrs 4-5/ ongoing/ or as opportunities arise	Strategies 8*, 9* & 14*
<b>Viable clubs and organisations</b> <b>9. Actively work with clubs that want to improve their viability through strategies including:</b>	<b>Int:</b> L, E  <b>Ext:</b> Clubs, peak associations, special	Within Council's existing operational budget and LTFF.	Ongoing	Strategies 8* & 9*

Stakeholder Legend: A=Asset Management, AAD=Active Ageing & Disability, BA=Be Active (State Government Grant), B=Biodiversity, CA&E=Community Access and Equity, CF=City Futures, COMS=Committees of Management, CS=Community Strengthening, CSH=City Safety & Health, CW=Community Wellbeing, DTPL=Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure (formerly DPCD), E=Economic Development, F=Facilities, FN=Finance, FC=Family & Children's Services, G= Governance, HTK=Healthy Together Knox, IT=Information Technology, KRNC=Knox Regional Netball Centre, L=Leisure, LTFF=Long-term Financial Forecast, LW=Leisure works, M=Marketing & Communications, O=Open Space, P=Parks, PD=Project Delivery, RCC=Rowville Community Centre, SF=Sustainable Futures, SP=Social Policy & Planning, T=Traffic & Transport, VV=Volunteering Victoria, VA=Volunteering Australia, Y=Youth Services

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Amalgamation opportunities</li> <li>▪ Shared/ joint resources</li> <li>▪ Best practice.</li> </ul>	interest groups			
<p><b>Tenancy Agreements and infrastructure funding partnerships</b></p> <p><b>10. Consider opportunities to improve tenancy arrangements with organisations that use sport and leisure facilities, and enhance tenancy management protocols.</b></p> <p>Give consideration to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different types of agreements</li> <li>• Review existing agreements to ensure consistency with Council policy</li> </ul>	<p><b>Int:</b> L, IT</p> <p><b>Ext:</b> clubs, community organisations, private service providers</p>	<p>Within Council's existing operational budget and LTFF.</p>	<p>Yrs 1-3</p>	<p>Strategies 8*, 12 &amp; 17*</p>



**Leisure Plan Action Areas****3. Structured Sport Planning, Trends, Fees and Charges**

Actions	Partners	Resources	Timeline	Community Health and Wellbeing Strategy
<b>Regional facilities – Gymnastics</b> <b>11. Work with the Knox Gymnastics Club and other potential funding partners to consider and respond to the findings of the Knox Gymnastics facilities strategic review.</b>	<b>Int:</b> L, F, A <b>Ext:</b> Gymnastics Vic., local clubs, adjoining LGAs, peak associations	Within Council's existing operational budget and LTFF.	Yrs 1-3	Strategies 14*, 16* & 17*
<b>Regional Facilities – Regional Councils Study</b> <b>12. Support the Regional Facilities Strategic Plan.</b>  Council to support the joint Eastern Region plan, to develop a framework for the future planning and development of facilities across the Region.	<b>Int:</b> L, F, A <b>Ext:</b> Knox, Whitehorse Maroondah, Manningham, Monash and, Yarra Ranges LGAs, Regional Development Australia, clubs, and peak associations	Multi-stakeholder joint SRV Planning Project for 2014/15. Outcomes will be reviewed within Council's existing operational budget and LTFF.	Yrs 1-3	Strategy 17*
<b>Indoor Netball Courts</b> <b>13. Identify short, medium and longer term strategies for addressing the shortage of indoor netball courts.</b>	<b>Int:</b> L, A, F <b>Ext:</b> Clubs, peak associations (MDNA, KBI)	<b>\$40,000</b> Conduct Netball Facility Review (Costed at 2013-14 Prices) Subject to annual Council budget consideration and possible external funding opportunities.	Yrs 4-5	Strategies 8* & 16*
<b>Fees and charges</b> <b>14. Review fees and charges for Council sporting facilities to ensure a fair and equitable system across all sporting facility users.</b>	<b>Int:</b> L, FN, SP,CS <b>Ext:</b> clubs, peak associations, COMs	Within Council's existing operational budget and LTFF.	Yrs 1-3	Strategies 1 & 16*

Stakeholder Legend: A=Asset Management, AAD=Active Ageing & Disability, BA=Be Active (State Government Grant), B=Biodiversity, CA&E=Community Access and Equity, CF=City Futures, COMS=Committees of Management, CS=Community Strengthening, CSH=City Safety & Health, CW=Community Wellbeing, DTPL=Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure (formerly DPCD), E=Economic Development, F=Facilities, FN=Finance, FC=Family & Children's Services, G= Governance, HTK=Healthy Together Knox, IT=Information Technology, KRNC=Knox Regional Netball Centre, L=Leisure, LTFF=Long-term Financial Forecast, LW=Leisure works, M=Marketing & Communications, O=Open Space, P=Parks, PD=Project Delivery, RCC=Rowville Community Centre, SF=Sustainable Futures, SP=Social Policy & Planning, T=Traffic & Transport, VV=Volunteering Victoria, VA=Volunteering Australia, Y=Youth Services

<b>Integrated facility and service planning</b>	<b>Int:</b> SP, L, A, O, F, T, SF	Within Council's existing operational budget and LTFF.	Yrs 1-3	Strategy 16*
<b>15. Develop an internal service and facility planning checklist to support a coordinated approach to Council planning for Leisure Infrastructure.</b>	<b>Ext:</b> N/A			
The checklist will include:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ formalising interdepartmental referral protocols</li> <li>▪ formalising planning protocols</li> <li>▪ formalising service standards for primary and secondary functions of different types of assets</li> <li>▪ Reference to Council's policies relating to social infrastructure</li> </ul>				

## Leisure Plan Action Areas

### 4. Service/Facility Planning/ Standards and Service Levels

Actions	Partners	Resources	Timeline	Community Health and Wellbeing Strategy
<p><b>Sports fields – Opportunities for additional sports fields and infrastructure</b></p> <p><b>16. Investigate opportunities for the provision of additional sports reserves, with a particular focus on opportunities in Rowville.</b></p>	<p><b>Int:</b> P, L, O, BA, SP</p> <p><b>Ext:</b> Clubs, peak associations</p>	Investigation within Council's existing operational budget and LTFF.	Ongoing	Strategies 16* & 17*
<p><b>Pavilions at sports reserves</b></p> <p><b>17. Review the pavilion renewal and upgrade capital works program giving particular consideration to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The criteria in the 'Sporting Reserve and Facility Development Guidelines' and 'Sporting Club Financial Contributions Policy'</li> <li>The current renewal and New/Upgrade spend and long term financial forecast, and</li> <li>Identifying pavilions that should be designed as part of a future, multi-purpose community hub (integrated planning).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Int:</b> A, L, F, FN, O, SF</p> <p><b>Ext:</b> Clubs, peak associations</p>	Within Council's existing operational budget and LTFF.	Yrs 1-3	Strategies 14*, 16* & 17*
<p><b>Knox Regional Netball Centre</b></p> <p><b>18. Develop a business plan for the growth and development of netball with a particular focus on the Knox Regional Netball Centre.</b></p> <p>Consideration should be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centre operations and any multi use opportunities.</li> <li>Partnership opportunities for Knox Regional Netball Centre and Mountain District Netball Association.</li> <li>Best practice and research by Netball Victoria</li> </ul>	<p><b>Int:</b> A, L, F</p> <p><b>Ext:</b> Clubs, peak associations (MDNA, KBI)</p>	<p><b>\$20,000</b></p> <p>Conduct Knox Regional Netball Business plan and strategy review. (Costed at 2013-14 Prices)</p> <p>Subject to annual Council budget consideration and possible external funding opportunities.</p>	Yrs 2-3	Strategies 8* & 16*

**Leisure Plan Action Areas****4. Service/Facility Planning/Standards and Service Levels**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Community Health and Wellbeing Strategy</b>
<b>Rowville Community Centre</b> <b>19. Undertake a review of the Rowville Community Centre to determine the scope of services that could be provided through the centre.</b> <b>The review will include:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>A review of the broad service needs for Rowville;</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Opportunities to enhance the service offered by both the Centre and the Rowville Neighbourhood Learning Centre; and</b></li> <li>▪ <b>A 10 year strategic plan to address the future need in Rowville (including both centre based services and any potential outreach services)</b></li> </ul>	<b>Int:</b> SP, L/RCC, FC, AAD, F, CS, CF  <b>Ext:</b> Clubs, peak associations, residents, agencies	<b>\$55,000</b> for RCC Facility Review (Costed at 2013-14 Prices) Subject to annual Council budget consideration and possible external funding opportunities.	Yrs 2-3	Strategies 14*, 15* & 17*
<b>Leisureworks – Planning facilities</b> <b>20. Prepare a strategy for the future provision of indoor aquatic, health and fitness services and facilities in Knox.</b> <b>The strategy will include:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Current services and service levels at the centre;</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Current accessibility of the facilities in relation to community expectations;</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Define Council future role in the provision of aquatics; and</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Identify potential allied Health and Wellbeing services that may be co-located.</b></li> </ul>	<b>Int:</b> L, F A, SP, BA, AAD, Y, FC  <b>Ext:</b> YMCA, individual and organisation users, residents, State/Federal Governments.	<b>\$20,000</b> Conduct Knox Aquatics Facilities Study and Strategy Review. (Costed at 2013-14 Prices) Subject to annual Council budget consideration and possible external funding opportunities.	Yrs 2-4	Strategies 14*, 15* & 17*
<b>Golf facilities and participation</b> <b>21. Work with Waterford Golf Course Management to ensure the business plan addresses desired performance areas and targets, particularly those relating to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ financial performance</li> </ul>	<b>Int:</b> L, F, ED  <b>Ext:</b> Contractors	Within Council's existing operational budget and LTFF.	Yrs 1-3	Strategies 1, 5*, 14*, 15* & 16*

Stakeholder Legend: A=Asset Management, AAD=Active Ageing & Disability, BA=Be Active (State Government Grant), B=Biodiversity, CA&E=Community Access and Equity, CF=City Futures, COMS=Committees of Management, CS=Community Strengthening, CSH=City Safety & Health, CW=Community Wellbeing, DTPL=Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure (formerly DPCD), E=Economic Development, F=Facilities, FN=Finance, FC=Family & Children's Services, G= Governance, HTK=Healthy Together Knox, IT=Information Technology, KRNC=Knox Regional Netball Centre, L=Leisure, LTFF=Long-term Financial Forecast, LW=Leisure works, M=Marketing & Communications, O=Open Space, P=Parks, PD=Project Delivery, RCC=Rowville Community Centre, SF=Sustainable Futures, SP=Social Policy & Planning, T=Traffic & Transport, VV=Volunteering Victoria, VA=Volunteering Australia, Y=Youth Services

- participation data and trends
- marketing/promotional activities and initiatives
- marketing placement and segment impacts

### **Leisure Plan Action Areas**

#### **4. Service/Facility Planning/Standards and Service Levels**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Community Health and Wellbeing Strategy</b>
<b>Service levels for sport infrastructure</b> <b>22. Review agreed service levels for sporting pavilions and sporting reserves and then undertake a gap analysis against current provision to inform capital works planning (Renewal and New/upgrade). Link to action 11.</b>	<b>Int: L, A, F</b>  <b>Ext:</b> Clubs, peak associations, facility users/tenants	Review - Within Council's existing operational budget and LTFF. Review capital works budget to inform priorities for renewal/upgrade program ahead	Yrs 1-3  Yrs 4-5/ ongoing	Strategy 16*
<b>Service levels for open space (non-sport) assets</b> <b>23. Develop agreed service levels for all open space assets in line with the Open Space Asset Management Plan and the Open Space Plan. i. e. play spaces, trails, etc.</b>	<b>Int: L, P, O, T, A</b>  <b>Ext:</b> N/R	Within Council's existing operational budget and LTFF.	Yrs 2-4	Strategy 17*

**Leisure Plan Action Areas****5. Health Promotion and Active Living Infrastructure**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Community Health and Wellbeing Strategy</b>
<p><b>24. Develop an integrated Knox-based health and wellbeing initiative/ program</b></p> <p>The program will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate existing state and federal initiatives (i.e. Premier's Active Challenge)</li> <li>• Be branded and profiled across the municipality</li> <li>• Be integrated within existing Council facilities</li> <li>• Involve various health and wellbeing, education and leisure sectors; and</li> <li>• Recognise and target factors that are most likely to motivate/influence positive behaviours over time.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Int:</b> FC, L, SP, CS</p> <p><b>Ext:</b> Peak groups, special interest groups, facilities (CL and private), government agencies</p>	<p>One off <b>\$10,000</b> for program investigation/feasibility</p> <p>Subject to budget consideration during annual business planning process and possible external funding.</p>	Yrs 2-3	Strategy 26*
<p><b>Active travel infrastructure and programs - Schools</b></p> <p><b>25. Continue program with 3 schools (initially) to identify changes that can be made to create a more bike and walker friendly environment.</b></p> <p>The targeted school program will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Suitable/safe parent or drivers practice in the immediate area;</li> <li>▪ Child and parent incentives</li> <li>▪ Supporting infrastructure (weatherproof shelter).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Int:</b> BA, HTK, T, CS, L</p> <p><b>Ext:</b> VicHealth, Victoria Walks, schools, State, Federal govt.</p>	<p>Currently funded through Be Active (Vic Health)</p>	Yrs 1-2	Strategies 7*, 9*, 12 & 13*
<p><b>Alternative participation opportunities</b></p> <p><b>26. Identify strategies that enable residents to form or link up through spontaneous or regular physical activity (interest related) groups.</b></p>	<p><b>Int:</b> L, BA, HTK, indoor centres, IT, M</p> <p><b>Ext:</b> Interest groups, VicHealth, clubs</p>	<p>Within Council's existing operational budget and LTFF.</p>	Yrs 1-3	Strategies 14*, 15* & 16*

<p><b>Outdoor gyms</b></p> <p><b>27. Explore opportunities for the establishment of outdoor gyms in line with:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• defined service levels/provision hierarchy, and</li> <li>• leading practice (provision checklist being produced by the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Int:</b> L, P, O, indoor facilities, CSH, FC</p> <p><b>Ext:</b> COMs, YMCA</p>	<p>Within Council's existing operational budget and LTFF. Infrastructure subject to annual Council budget consideration and possible external funding opportunities.</p>	<p>Yrs 4-5</p>	<p>Strategies 14*, 15* &amp; 16*</p>
<p><b>Physical activity initiatives</b></p> <p><b>28. Continue to implement/review strategies to increase physical activity levels (through the implementation of the Healthy Together Victoria Achievement Program) in targeted groups with a focus on:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees</li> <li>• Young children (preschool aged)</li> <li>• School age children</li> </ul>	<p><b>Int:</b> BA, HTK, L, FC, LW, RCC, E, M</p> <p><b>Ext:</b> Local business, YMCA, Schools</p>	<p>Within Council's existing operational budget and LTFF and the State government funded Healthy Together Knox initiative.</p>	<p>Yrs 1-2</p>	<p>Strategy 16*</p>
<p><b>Service levels for active lifestyle infrastructure</b></p> <p><b>29. Review/develop minimum service levels, and criteria for determining priorities, for active lifestyle infrastructure (e. g. walking and cycling).</b></p> <p>Infrastructure that is to be reviewed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Railway infrastructure to support an active lifestyle (weatherproof storage);</li> <li>▪ Bus stops and interchanges</li> <li>▪ Trail and footpath linkages</li> <li>▪ Activity centres</li> </ul>	<p><b>Int:</b> T, SP, L, E, O, B</p> <p><b>Ext:</b> State/Federal Governments, private and State transport service providers, business groups</p>	<p>Within Council's existing operational budget and LTFF.</p>	<p>Yrs 4-5</p>	<p>Strategy 16*</p>

**Leisure Plan Action Area****6. Targeted Access Initiatives**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Community Health and Wellbeing Strategy</b>
<b>Scout and Guide halls</b> <b>30. Work with the Scout and Guide associations to support them to realise opportunities to enhance participation.</b>	<b>Int:</b> L, SP, Y <b>Ext:</b> Local, district and State associations	Within Council's existing operational budget and LTFF.	Yrs 3-5	Strategies 14* & 16*
<b>Attendance Fees and Charges - Multi-pass tickets</b> <b>31. Consider the introduction of a multi facility pass for Council's sport and leisure facilities</b>	<b>Int:</b> L/RCC/LW, AAD, Y, FC <b>Ext:</b> YMCA, Golf course	Within Council's existing operational budget and LTFF.	Yrs 4-5	Strategies 1, 14*, 15* & 16*
<b>Services for specific cultural groups</b> <b>32. Investigate the need for culture specific programs and/or integration of multicultural groups as part of service planning for leisure centres, community health centres, sporting clubs and other relevant facilities</b>	<b>Int:</b> L/RCC/LW, CSH, FC, SP, CS, CA&E <b>Ext:</b> YMCA, Migrant Res. Centre	Within Council's existing operational budget and LTFF.	Yr 2 - ongoing	Strategies 1, 14*, 15* & 16*



## 12. Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Detailed discussion of findings that underpin the actions in the Implementation Plan

The following provides a summary of the key findings of the Leisure Plan. These are discussed in line with the four themes of the City Plan.

#### City Plan Theme 1: Healthy, connected communities

There are 195 community organisations in Knox that provide residents with access to leisure and sport opportunities. Many of these operate from community facilities under a lease, licence or casual hire agreement with Council.

The household survey<sup>12</sup> told us that 27% of residents aged over fifteen are likely to be involved in physical activity and sport through a sporting organisation, with slightly more males (29%) than females (25%) being members of a club. An additional 7% of all respondents told us they play sport, but through a social or work based competition rather than a traditional seasonal sporting competition.

The household survey indicates that basketball (9% of respondents), cricket (5% of respondents) and netball (5% of respondents) are more popular in Knox, and aerobics/fitness (Knox 16%, Vic. 24.7%) less popular in Knox, than in Victoria as a whole.

The top ten club-based physical activities in Australia 2010<sup>13</sup>, in terms of the numbers involved, were golf, football (soccer), tennis, Australian Rules football, tennis, outdoor cricket, lawn bowls, basketball, touch football and martial arts.

Rank	Knox	%	Victoria	%	Australia	%
1	Walking	49	Walking	37	Walking	36
2	Bike riding/cycling	14	Aerobics/fitness	25	Aerobics/fitness	24
3	Swimming	12	Swimming	14	Swimming	13
4	Running/Jogging	11	Cycling	13	Cycling	12
5	Gym/Weights	11	Running	13	Running	11
6	Basketball	9	Golf	7	Golf	7
7	Golf	6	Tennis	7	Tennis	6
8	Tennis	6	AFL	5	Football (outdoor)	5
9	Cricket	5	Basketball	5	Walking (bush)	5
10	Aerobics/fitness / gentle exercise	5	Walking (bush)	5	Netball	4
11	Netball	5				

References: Leisure Plan household survey; Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERAS), 2011

<sup>12</sup> Leisure Plan household survey, 2013

<sup>13</sup> Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey, 2011, p

Of these, AFL (Australian Rules Football), football (soccer), outdoor cricket, basketball, netball and lawn bowls all experienced increases in participation between 2001 and 2010. For football (soccer) the overall increase is largely attributed to an increase in the number of females playing the sport.

In Knox, participation in most of these sports continued to increase in participation over the last 12 months. Basketball has had a significant 16% increase in participation locally despite a decrease in participation across the region. The most significant increase has been at the sub-junior level (+632) followed by senior age groups (+1,245)<sup>14</sup>.

Cricket and AFL have also experienced an increase in participation at the local and regional levels over the last 12 months. However, the increase in local participation was double that of the region. Participation in soccer in the region<sup>15</sup> increased by 2.4% over the 12-month period while participation in netball decreased marginally (1%) at both the local and regional level. Netball Victoria reports that participation in the local region is stronger and more stable than in most other regions in the state. In some of these regions there has been a significant decline in participation.

On a local level, participation in tennis has remained stable over the last 12 months. However, information collected as part of the Knox Tennis Facilities Strategic Plan shows that participation in tennis has declined significantly over the past decade. This is consistent with national trends that show participation in tennis has declined by 13% between 2001 and 2010.

The club-based activity that had the most significant decline in participation in Australia over this time was martial arts with a 44% decline.

The increase in participation in field sports such as AFL, cricket and football (soccer) means that a number of facilities in Knox are struggling to accommodate the demand in terms of capacity and quality of facilities. For example, some facilities do not have the space to cater for increased numbers or sufficient change facilities, and in particular, change facilities for females.

For children under 15<sup>16</sup>, the highest level of participation in organised sport is in the 9-11 age group (66%) followed by 12-14 year olds (60%) and 5-8 year olds (56%). Overall 15-17 year olds have the highest participation in sport (75%).<sup>17</sup> Since 2003 swimming and diving has remained the most popular sports for children aged 5-8, and football (soccer, 13%), netball (11%) and dancing (11%) for children aged 12-14.

After the age of 17, involvement in organised sport diminishes with age, however research indicates that older adults want to stay involved in their sport and physical activities but often find that clubs do not, or do not know how to accommodate their needs.

Of the 40 Knox clubs responding to the club survey<sup>18</sup> 19 clubs/organisations reported an increase in total membership (i.e. social and playing members) over the last 3 years, and in the number of playing members/participants. Twelve clubs/organisations reported a decrease in total club membership and 9 reported a decrease in playing members/participants. Twelve clubs reported that their playing membership had remained constant.

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<sup>14</sup> Information provided by Knox Basketball Association

<sup>15</sup> Data was not available from all the associations that operate in Knox so conclusions about trends in local participation have not been drawn. However, FFV data provided indicates participation has increased at the local level over the last year

<sup>16</sup> Sports and Physical Recreation: A Statistical Overview, Australia, 2012 ABS 4156.0

<sup>17</sup> Participation in Sport and Physical Recreation, Australia 2011-12, ABS 4177

<sup>18</sup> Leisure Plan Club survey, Dec 2012-April 2013

The 3 most significant membership issues facing clubs relate to attracting more members overall (29), finding volunteers with the skills they need (23), financial challenges (23). Club priorities relating to outdoor areas focus on the condition of playing surfaces (26), maintenance of playing surfaces (25), floodlighting (24). Twenty-nine clubs/organisations identified car parking issues and 23 disability access issues.

Most clubs responding to the survey report a positive relationship with Council. Twenty-eight clubs say they know who to go to in Council to get assistance, and 24 report that Council staff are helpful and informative. This is strongly reinforced by anecdotal feedback received through the project.

Clubs are however looking for greater assistance from Council for the promotion of their activities and organisations. They believe Council's website could be far more effective in achieving this (30 clubs/organisations) and needs to capitalise on modern platforms and technology available. Twenty-seven clubs/organisations are struggling to find opportunities to promote their activities/clubs in the community and 18 are looking for more information to help them run their organisation.

Anxiety and lack of confidence about entering unfamiliar settings such as gyms were the main barriers to participation in GP referral schemes. Not knowing other people, poor body image and not fitting in with the 'gym' culture were the prime concerns of older adults.

<sup>16</sup>

Feedback from workers in the sector also reinforces the need to better access information about leisure and sport clubs and activities and this needs to be based on a fully integrated information database.

Attention continues to be drawn to the low levels of participation in organised sport by girls. A recent study in New Zealand<sup>19</sup> identified that 25% of young people spend no time in organised sport and this increases to 45% for young girls. This is significant because research indicates that young girls involved in sport are likely to achieve better social, self-esteem and academic and health outcomes than those who don't have a history of sport participation.<sup>20</sup> Clubs need assistance to better understand how to address factors that deter young people, and girls in particular, from involvement in sport.

Other research indicates the leisure and sport sector is not addressing the factors that deter middle age and older people from participating in sport and physical activity. There are a number of strategies that can be used to engage people as they get older. These include modified sport, fitness and health centres that understand factors that deter middle/older age adults from attending, more appropriate role models and marketing strategies and debunking myths often held about the level of skill needed.<sup>21</sup>

The Leisure Plan recognises the need to reduce barriers that minimise the number of females involved in leisure and sport. This may involve ensuring that facilities provided appropriate amenities for females, that club

It is estimated that over 80% of the sport and recreation workforce is unpaid.

Ref: Service Skills Australia, 2013 Sport, Fitness and Recreation Environmental

<sup>19</sup> [www.nsherald.co.nz/sport/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=4&objectid=10895634](http://www.nsherald.co.nz/sport/news/article.cfm?c_id=4&objectid=10895634)

<sup>20</sup> [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Teenage\\_girls\\_getting\\_them\\_active](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Teenage_girls_getting_them_active)

<sup>21</sup> Understanding participation in sport and physical activity among children and adults: a review of qualitative studies, Health Education Research Vol.21 no.6 2006 Theory & Practice Pages 826–835, Advance Access publication 20 July 2006

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environments and culture are inviting of females and families and that clubs understand their responsibilities in relation to gender equity.

Volunteering Australia information indicates the number of volunteers has almost doubled between 1996 and 2006, however the number of hours people spend in volunteering has decreased significantly. Volunteering Australia findings also suggest that organisations are generally reporting stable or increasing volunteer numbers over this time. They also report an increase in the number of young people volunteering.

These trends are not necessarily being reflected locally or in the sport and recreation sector. Sport and recreation clubs in Knox report a shortage of volunteers and in particular volunteers with the skills needed to run clubs. The disparity in findings may be that data is not necessarily separating informal volunteering from formal<sup>22</sup> volunteering. Evidence indicate<sup>23</sup> that formal volunteering is declining and this is why sport and leisure clubs report an inability to attract and retain volunteers in ongoing and key administrative roles. Instead volunteers are generally preferring short term, occasional or event and project specific volunteer roles.

Research indicates there are correlations between volunteering and playing sport as a child, higher socioeconomic and health status, Anglo Australian background, and a family history of volunteering. A number of trends including static or declining participation in sport, declining levels of volunteering in families, declining levels of health and an increasingly multi-cultural society may continue to undermine formal volunteering numbers.

According to research undertaken for the National Volunteering Strategy<sup>24</sup>, increasing volunteering levels requires increasing promotion of volunteering opportunities; increasing the profile of volunteering; appealing to a more diverse population; and reducing barriers to volunteering.

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<sup>22</sup> Formal volunteering is generally done through an organisation e.g. sport club, meals on wheels programs. Informal volunteering may be helping out neighbours or casual cleanup or planting days'

<sup>23</sup> Smith Family briefing paper, How many people volunteer in Australia and why do they do it?, 2001

<sup>24</sup> National Volunteering Strategy (2010-2020) consultation, Australian Government, 2010

## City Plan Theme 2: A prosperous, advancing economy

The economic benefits of being a physically active community and investing in leisure and sport infrastructure are considerable and include:

- the financial savings to community groups and organisations because of the hours given by individual and corporate volunteers.  
 Frontier Economics<sup>25</sup> notes that by better supporting the work of volunteers in the sport and leisure sector we can disproportionately enhance health and social benefits because of the number of volunteers involved.  
 Without volunteers there would be fewer opportunities and these opportunities would be more expensive to provide. Volunteers make leisure and sport more attainable.
- the financial benefits of major events including festivals and sporting finals to local organisations and communities.  
 Event Impacts<sup>26</sup> highlights the importance of events and festivals to local economies and in particular those that attract people from outside the region and, in the case of sport, large numbers of spectators.
- growth in businesses associated with the fitness, and health and wellbeing sector in turn creating additional local employment activities.
- the re distribution of government funding to preventative health programs and infrastructure and away from programs dealing with disease that is preventable with increasing physical activity.  
 Frontier Economics<sup>27</sup> points out the importance of local level sport and physical activity initiatives. There are the obvious health benefits that accrue to the active individual but these spill over into the wider community in terms of the reduction in health costs.
- increased work productivity due to fewer 'sick days' and enhanced work outputs.<sup>28</sup>

... increased participation could generate gross savings of about \$1.49 billion per year as against \$834.1 million worth of health costs from sports injuries.

Ref: The Economic Contribution of Sport to Australia, Frontier Economics, p4

... productivity gains by making the Australian workforce healthier through increased physical activity could be as much as 1% of GDP (or \$12 billion) per year

Ref: The Cost of Physical Inactivity, Medibank Private

<sup>25</sup> The economic contribution of sport to Australia, Frontier economics

<sup>26</sup> eventimpacts.com

<sup>27</sup> The economic benefits of reducing physical inactivity: an Australian example, 2011, Cadilhac et al

<sup>28</sup> The cost of physical inactivity, Medibank Private, October 2008

Community groups now have to manage their groups in a far more sophisticated and businesslike manner than in the past. This is in part due to the regulatory requirements placed on them, and in part due to the often-competitive market place they are now operating in. Clubs often find themselves competing with other organisations that are perceived to have better facilities or have a friendlier club environment, or be better organised and are technically savvy. As a result, clubs need access to volunteers, or paid support, that have specialist skills in very defined areas of club administration to complement the all-round volunteer.

In addition clubs are expected to have the skills that will enable them to lobby funding agencies and put forward competitive and professional grant applications. They are also expected to have access to participation trend data and technology so they report on the status of their sport. Without these increasingly sophisticated skills local organisations will not survive. As a result local communities may have a decreasing number of leisure and sporting choices.

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) highlights the complexity of running successful sporting organisations and in particular how to target and attract prospective members. The ASC identifies four distinct groups of potential club members. One of these groups, the 'club loyalists', represent the more traditional club members. However, there are three other groups of current members that sport may lose if their needs are not met - the 'socially engaged', the 'sport driven' and 'the 'apathetic clubbers'<sup>29</sup>.

The same document suggests there are three groups of potential members available to sports clubs, the 'sidelined sporsters', the 'club wary' and the 'ponderers'. To attract these groups clubs need to address the negative perceptions they have about sport and make it easy for them to participate<sup>30</sup>.

Council runs club development programs, which are well received by those clubs that attend. Given the complexity of the issues now facing clubs consideration should be given to expanding the program to provide more technical information and online platforms that can assist clubs and organisations.

Council's recent Tennis Facilities Strategic Plan identified options for securing a more viable future for tennis. The challenge with such strategies is often the cost associated with implementing them and the emotional considerations that may be involved with decisions relating to amalgamation of clubs. Since the Tennis Facilities Strategic Plan was completed some tennis clubs have amalgamated and others are developing strategies to increase participation.

The longer-term benefit of reducing the number of small clubs that compete for skilled committee members and associated skills is reduced. In addition, the diminishing number of tennis players will have fewer courts and pavilions to maintain and upgrade.

The Leisure Plan recognises the expansion of the fitness industry to include growing number of health and fitness centres, and in particular 24-hour gyms. Alongside this is a significant increase in the number of small businesses associated with the leisure and fitness sector, including personal trainers, yoga, and fitness instructors. These commercial providers complement club based leisure and sport opportunities. In some cases there may be opportunities for private facilities to address the shortfall in community based facilities and programs.

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29 Market Segmentation for Sport Participation – Adults 14-16, Australian Sports Commission, 2013

30 Market Segmentation for Sport Participation – Adults 14-16, Australian Sports Commission, 2013

## City Plan Theme 3: Vibrant and sustainable built and natural environments

Council has over \$709 million invested in sport and leisure infrastructure. Over the past five years Council has invested \$33M in renewing existing leisure and sporting infrastructure and building new facilities. The most recent facility developed by Council, and in conjunction with the Victorian Government is the Knox Regional Sports Park.

Ageing and outdated leisure and sporting infrastructure is one of the most significant challenges facing Council. This together with the demand for additional facilities, created by the growth in participation in some sports, means infrastructure provision will be a major consideration for Council in the future.

Council's indoor aquatic and leisure facility (Leisureworks) which is located in the north-east of the municipality has been progressively upgraded over the last 10 years. However, the centre's core infrastructure is past its useful life and the layout of the centre is compromised by the successive additions to the centre.

Significant planning and time is required before a new indoor aquatic and leisure facility is built. Therefore it is necessary that planning for the future provision of indoor aquatic and leisure facilities commence. Any plans for Leisureworks must take into account new facilities that have been or are being developed in the region, the impact these facilities will have on the viability of the centre, and the most effective and viable way to accommodate the community's indoor facility needs.

The Knox Regional Netball Centre is a major centre that hosts programs run by Council and the Mountain District Netball Association. The centre consists of 18 outdoor courts and 2 indoor courts. The building that accommodates the indoor courts is 27 (1986) years old, dated and would not comply with current 'universal design'<sup>31</sup> standards. The location of the administration and reception areas in the building does not allow effective monitoring and access to indoor and outdoor spaces. Initial planning for the new Knox Regional Sports Park flagged that netball could be relocated to the centre in later years.

Given the significant investment in outdoor courts at the Knox Regional Netball Centre and little likelihood of further development of the Knox Regional Sports Park in the short term, consideration should be given to upgrading indoor court provision at the Knox Regional Netball Centre. Any redevelopment should take into account partnership opportunities with adjoining Councils, the Mountain District Netball Association, and opportunities associated with the Knox Basketball Centre in Boronia.

The Rowville Community Centre is another older facility, built in 1989 and upgraded in 2004. It is the only Council owned or managed community facility in Rowville. The site accommodates the Rowville Community Centre and Neighbourhood Learning Centre, multi-purpose high ball courts and a major play space. The centre has indoor courts and rooms for hire, and runs pre-kinder and leisure programs.

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<sup>31</sup> Universal design-Design that optimises access for the whole community

With the development of the Knox Regional Sports Park, use of the centre by basketball has declined and future use by basketball is unclear. The recent announcement of funding from the Victorian Government for 2 indoor courts at Rowville Secondary College suggests use of the centre by basketball might diminish further.

Given Rowville Community Centre is the only community centre in the area, and the uncertain use by sporting clubs it is opportune to consider the wider leisure, social and community services role of the centre.

Because of the decline in tennis participation and the oversupply of tennis courts recent Council planning<sup>32</sup> identified the need to significantly reduce the number of tennis facilities. This is consistent with Council's asset management plan to minimise long term asset maintenance and replacement costs in line with agreed service levels. This will require funding in the short to medium term to maintain community support for the outcomes of the Tennis Facilities Strategic Plan, in particular for amalgamation and a reduction in the number of tennis facilities.

A review of sports fields indicates there is limited opportunity to accommodate additional growth in field sports and there is likely to be a significant shortfall in sports fields over the term of the Leisure Plan.

A number of under sized sports fields together with the introduction of warm season grasses in response to the past decade's drought conditions makes it difficult to accommodate the same level of sport as prior to the conversion. The lack of sports fields in the Rowville area appears to be impacting on the development of new clubs in the area, and in particular the ability to accommodate soccer. There is also a need to acquire additional open space for sport and leisure activities previously unplanned for, such as dog off leash activities.

The need to accommodate the growing needs of gymnastics has been recognised for considerable time. In the initial planning for the Knox Regional Sports Park consideration was given to accommodating gymnastics in the new centre. This was not achieved and it is unlikely the centre will be expanded in the near future. Gymnastics Victoria and the Knox Gymnastics Association have commissioned independent studies both of which have identified a need for additional facilities in Knox. Gymnastics participation is forecast to increase<sup>33</sup>, particularly given the introduction of alternative forms of the sport such as aerobic gymnastics and cheerleading.

Similar to Knox, other Councils in the region are challenged by the need to cater for increasing participation in some leisure and sport activities. Some of these pressures are similar, as in the need to provide for gymnastics. Local eastern region Councils are seeking funding from the State Government for a project that will identify a strategy to address regional indoor sport and recreation needs.

It is not the purpose of the Leisure Plan to address open space planning matters other than where they are central to the delivery of Council's leisure and sport objectives. The Leisure Plan however recognises that attractive and inviting outdoor areas are critical if the community's health and wellbeing needs are to be fully addressed. Without appropriate outdoor environments residents would not have access to the environments where they can achieve their very different leisure, sport and healthy lifestyle aspirations. This means having access to a range of outdoor areas including

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<sup>32</sup> Knox Tennis Facilities Strategic Plan, 2012

<sup>33</sup> Draft Knox Gymnastics Facilities Strategic Review, 2013



natural bush land and wildlife areas, waterways, park lands and play spaces. Council's Leisure Services Unit will continue to work closely with Council's Parks Service and Open Space, Biodiversity and Landscape Design Units to optimise leisure and environmental outcomes.

## City Plan Theme 4: Culturally rich and active communities

The household<sup>34</sup> survey tells us that walking<sup>35</sup> is the most popular<sup>36</sup> physical activity that is undertaken outside of clubs or organisations. Forty-nine percent of Knox residents are involved in walking for exercise, which is up from 42% three years ago. In Knox we appear to walk more frequently than other Victorians (36.6%).<sup>37</sup>

Excluding club and fitness centre based activities the next most popular activities are bike riding (14%), swimming (12%), and running and jogging (11%).

It is also worth noting that 13% of survey respondents nominated gardening as their most frequent leisure time or physical activity. This places it well inside the top 10 physical activities Knox residents are likely to be involved in. Not surprisingly, and similar to walking, we get more involved in gardening as we get older.

Ninety-one percent of survey respondents told us it is important for them to be more physically active which correlates with only 14% saying they get the recommended 30 minutes of daily activity.<sup>38</sup> The survey indicates that residents over 15 aspire to be more physically active but only 39% say they are likely to be more active in the future. More males than females, and people over 60 rather than younger people, say they will increase their levels of physical activity in the future.

Residents tell us they will be more motivated to be active if they can measure the benefits (88%) and if they can fit it into their daily routine (84%). This indicates the importance of personal support networks, and infrastructure such as trails and secure bike storage facilities if residents are to be encouraged into active lifestyles.

Nearly 50% of respondents told us they are likely to be motivated by having likeminded people to exercise with, or by encouragement from other people. This indicates the importance of social connections as a motivation for physical activity.

The increase in the number of online platforms that allow people to link up with people interested in similar in leisure and sporting activities or events. 'Meetup'<sup>39</sup> and the local 'Team Up' provide examples of popular online and local platforms that allow likeminded people to connect.

More of us (24%) use an indoor sports venue (e.g. swimming pool, sports courts) than any other venue for our main physical activity. This is followed by streets and footpaths (21%), trails (18%), and outdoor sports facilities (18%).

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<sup>34</sup> Leisure Plan household survey

<sup>35</sup> Includes 10% who nominated 'walking the dog'

<sup>36</sup> 300 survey respondents aged 15+ were asked to nominate the 3 activities they do most frequently

<sup>37</sup> Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey, 2011, p

<sup>38</sup> Australian Government: National Activity Guidelines for Adults/ National Activity Guidelines for Children

<sup>39</sup> australia.meetup.com

When residents were asked to rate the facilities most important to their physical activity and sport needs they rated streets and footpaths number one (97%). These were followed by parks and gardens (95%), trails and walking tracks (87%). This indicates the importance of non-sport infrastructure for leisure and health and wellbeing activities.

However, feedback indicates that the level of provision for these amenities may not be up to community expectations. This is reflected in the disparity between 'importance' and 'satisfaction ratings' (table 3). This is a very basic level of evaluation and consideration has to be given to the overall 'good' rating provided for most of these amenities.

	% of survey respondents <sup>41</sup>	% rating as 'good'
Streets & footpaths	97%	53%
Parks & gardens	95%	72%
Trails & walking tracks	87%	67%
Sports fields	79%	71%
Playgrounds	76%	62%
Sports courts	75%	54%
Indoor facilities	57%	55%
Outdoor exercise equipment	46%	16%

Other Council service planning documents<sup>42</sup> also identified the need to consider opportunities to enhance infrastructure that supports and encourages an active lifestyle by providing:

- safer and more comfortable walking and cycling routes to railway stations and safe bike storage facilities at transport hubs
- continuous footpaths and trails that lead to key community destinations and pass through pleasant environments
- pedestrian and bike friendly road crossings and environments around schools
- attractive and inviting public spaces
- parks and play spaces that encourage children and carers to engage in physical play
- infrastructure, information and programs that supports people with special needs
- sporting facilities that are available for wide community use
- information about leisure and physical activity opportunities available through community groups and private providers.

40 Ref: Leisure Plan household survey, 2012

41 Leisure Plan household survey

42 e.g. Access and Inclusion Plan, Open Space Strategy, Liveable Streets Plan, Community Safety Plan, Pedestrian Plan

The number of people from multicultural backgrounds is increasing in Knox. However, the number of people from these backgrounds and the number of different cultural groups is not as significant as elsewhere around Melbourne.

A disturbing fact is the declining health status of migrants the longer they are settled in Australia. Research undertaken in Queensland<sup>43</sup> identifies the need for a better understanding about culture and its impact on levels of physical activity, for more culture specific information and messages about the relationship between physical activity and good health, for more effective strategies to integrate people into mainstream activities, and for the involvement of multicultural leaders and associations.<sup>44</sup> As the number of migrants increases in Knox there will be a need to consider these issues.

..... new migrants generally enjoy good health, if not better health, than the Australian-born population.

However any health advantage they have on arrival diminishes the longer they are resident in Australia.

Reference: Whose Health? How Population Groups Vary

As of 2014 Council's 'Be Active' program will focus on a number of programs and initiatives which will focus on unstructured physical activity in schools, the workplace as well as in the wider community.

This includes walking, cycling and play. Initiatives will be in settings such as schools which have been identified as a target group because of the need to address increasing obesity levels in children and to support schools in their endeavor to increase levels of physical activity in children and families.

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43 Engaging culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) Queenslanders in physical activity: Findings from the CALD Physical Activity Mapping Project, Queensland Health, 2010

44 Engaging Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities in Physical Activity: A Discussion Paper, Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health, 2006

## City Plan Theme 5: Democratic and engaged communities

Council has invested significant time and resources into the planning and management of leisure and sport related assets that cater for the community's leisure, sporting and active lifestyle needs<sup>45</sup>. There are many service planning documents that set the vision and decision making framework to ensure these assets accommodate as many activities and groups as possible, comply with modern day standards, support an active lifestyle, and balance social and environmental needs as best as possible.

Council's various Asset Management Plans identify the need to quantify the number of indoor and outdoor facilities required to cater for the city's leisure and sporting needs. They also identify the need to determine the type and level of infrastructure (service levels) that will be provided at these facilities.

For some of these assets a hierarchy of provision has been established. In the case of sporting pavilions, their size and the features (service levels) they include have been determined in line with the level and type of activities they need to cater for.

For other types of assets such as parks, trails and pathways and play spaces, a hierarchy of provision has been established. In some, but not all cases corresponding features and service levels are yet to be documented. It is important to ensure there is not an over provision of facilities such as play spaces in some areas, particularly if this is to the detriment of other areas and results in unwarranted expenditure on maintenance.

Documenting services levels for all types of assets is critical because they ensure a consistent and equitable level of provision is achieved over time, they minimise inequities across the City associated with over and under servicing, and provide a responsible planning framework.

Defined service levels also allow Council to fully understand the financial implications associated with the development of facilities, as well as the cost of maintaining facilities.

In the case of sporting pavilions the Leisure Plan found there are a number of facilities that do not meet the documented service levels. This is resulting in an inconsistent level of provision between clubs of the same sporting code (e.g. soccer) that are catering for the same or similar level of sport. There is also inconsistency between different sporting codes that are competing at similar level. In some cases this is having an impact on the ability of clubs to attract and retain local residents as members.

Council's commitment to increasing levels of physical activity in the community is well articulated in a number of documents<sup>46</sup>. Further indication of this commitment is Council's 'Be Active Knox' program, which is focused on increasing physical activity at schools and work places. As with sporting infrastructure there is a need to formalise the type and level of provision that will be associated with infrastructure that encourages the community to incorporate physical activity as part of their every day routine.

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<sup>45</sup> Open Space Strategy, Tennis Facilities Strategic Plan, Bicycle Plan

<sup>46</sup> Open Space Strategy, Pedestrian Plan, Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Livable Streets Plan, 2012-22, various precinct plans

For example, there is a need to document the type and level of provision of amenities (e.g. secure bike shelters, sealed pathways) that might be included at major and minor shopping precincts, major (e.g. railway station, bus interchange) and minor transport connections (e.g. local bus stop).

Fees and charges levied on clubs for the use of Council facilities have not been reviewed for some time. It is important to do this to ensure fees are levied equitably and to take into account the impact of any decline in participation. Of particular note is the decline in tennis participation and the impact this is having on the ability of clubs to raise the funds necessary to maintain facilities.

Research for the project identifies an opportunity to upgrade the Leisure Services website to include more targeted information for clubs and organisations including templates (e.g. submission, checklists), key contacts in Council, examples of successful submissions and interactive opportunities for clubs to seek partnerships and or information from other clubs.

The project has also identified that Leisure Services is challenged to fulfill expectations relating to the implementation of key service planning projects, community support initiatives and in terms of the role it plays in implementing the capital works and facility renewal programs. As a matter of priority there is a need to support Leisure Services to create work efficiencies by optimising the use of online technologies to communicate with clubs and organisations.