

# KNOX ACTIVE AGEING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**5 August 2021**

**Time: 7.00 to 8.44pm**

**Meeting held via Zoom**

*As this Advisory Committee has been established by Council and includes at least one Councillor and a staff member it is an Assembly of Councillors in accordance with the Local Government Act.*

*Councillors and staff are required to declare any conflict of interest that they may have in regards to any item discussed that is intended or likely to be the subject of a report to Council or a decision of an officer under delegation. In declaring a conflict of interest the Councillor or staff member must leave the meeting whilst the matter is being discussed. A definition of conflict of interest in accordance with the Local Government Act is provided in the Active Ageing Advisory Committee Folder.*

*Community representatives on the Committee are not subject to these provisions; however they are required under their terms of appointment to declare any conflicts of interest that may arise for them from time to time. It will be a matter for the Chair to determine if the community representative is required to leave the meeting whilst a particular matter that is subject to a conflict of interest is being discussed.*

## 1. Welcome and Apologies

Attendees: Eddie Atacador; Rachel Bast, Marilyn Beyer; Gary Cantwell; Lyn Maestri; Judith Mercieca; Anne Sherrard; Cr. Nicole Seymour; Cr. Meagan Baker; Judy Chalkley; Kylie Johnson; Linda Keenahan.

Apologies: Linda Black

## 2. Conflict of Interest Declaration

No conflict declared

Gary and Linda advised the Committee of their involvement in the Living Our Best Life project before the relevant presentation/discussion took place. Gary is a volunteer and Linda is part of the Committee.

## 3. Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting

Moved by Gary, Seconded by Anne.

## 4. Items for Discussion

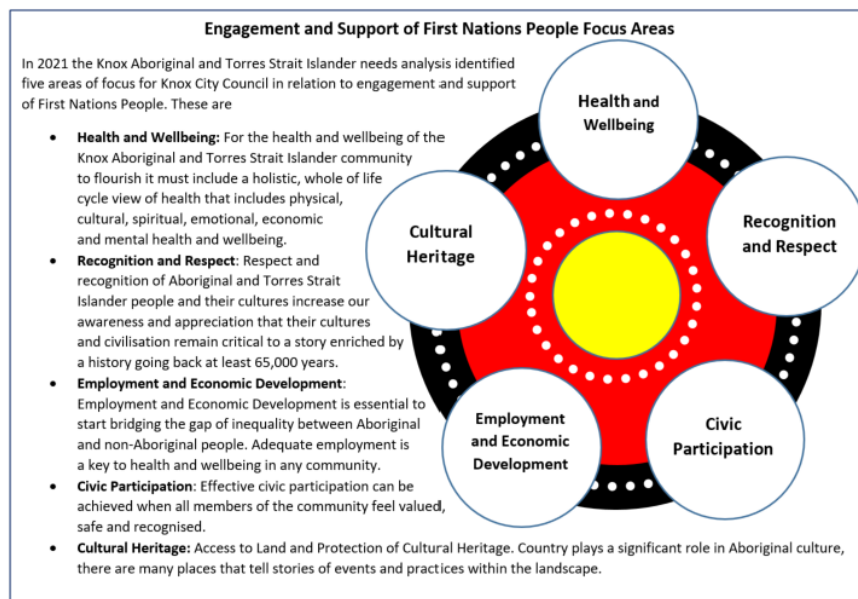
### 4.1 Culture and Diversity – Aboriginal community in Knox

Facilitator: Adrian Greenwood, Community Development Officer, Access and Equity, KCC

Adrian first gave an acknowledgement of country in Wurundjeri language, before providing an overview of his role at Council as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (A&TSI) Lead. Adrian’s responsibilities include building cultural capacity within Council and creating a culturally safe place for First Nations People in Knox.

A summary of the work Adrian has been involved in to date was provided:

- Identification of five areas of focus for Council to take a whole of organisational approach to engage and support First Nations People:



- Recent changes to boundary lines by the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council. Waterways/land forms were the key factor. Knox is on the Wurundjeri and Bunurong lands and a searchable map is available on Council’s website to check which land you are on: [Our Aboriginal heritage | Knox](#)
- Acknowledgement of Country has been added to Council staff email signatures

General discussion from questions:

- According to census data, Knox has a high population of A&TSI people, with the majority aged under 18 years. Due to the historical mistrust in identifying, Adrian estimates the number is likely to be double the census data.
- The meaning of the term ‘Country’ to A&TSI people is the home that holds the knowledge, beliefs and culture. It has sustained the generations so there is a responsibility to look after it. Country is spoken about as if it is a person and A&TSI people speak for, on behalf, and about, Country.
- There is a lot of disconnection to culture and fair-skinned people are reluctant to identify due to stigma. The more accepting people are of A&TSI culture, the more likely people are to identify.
- To attract and engage A&TSI people in community groups, there first needs to be trust earned. It is about building relationships and creating safe places.

A brief overview of future planned work in this space was also provided:

- Developing cultural signage, building more spaces to learn about culture, strengthening networks, and using Kulin nation seasons for biodiversity.

A video about intergenerational trauma, narrated by Uncle Jack Charles, was shared with the Committee: [Intergenerational trauma | Healing Foundation](#)

The Committee can contact Adrian with any further questions:

[Adrian.Greenwood@knox.vic.gov.au](mailto:Adrian.Greenwood@knox.vic.gov.au)

#### 4.2 Social Prescription/Living Our Best Life Pilot Program

Facilitators: Leanne Fitzgerald, Living Our Best Life Project Officer, CHAOS Network  
Maureen McLaughlin, CHAOS Networker and Be the Ripple Project Worker

Leanne and Maureen provided an overview of the project, what has been achieved, and planned next steps.

- Social prescription is the practice where health professionals provide referrals for patients to be linked into community services/activities to address social needs
- There is strong evidence to show social isolation significantly increases the risk of premature death and dementia
- The Living Our Best Life (LOBL) project is a unique social prescribing model that has potential to address key recommendations in the white paper on loneliness (circulated with the agenda) and the Royal Commission into Mental Health
- The project was developed to respond to social isolation and loneliness with a community-led approach
- The project was funded by Equity Trustees in late 2019
- The model consists of three key elements:
  - volunteer community connectors linking people into social activities,
  - weekly Talking Café groups, and
  - signposting (other agencies that promote the project)
- 36 people participated in the project of which 20 were formal referrals from health professionals. 85% of participants were female, 25% were born overseas, and 90% were living alone. The median age of participants was 74 years
- The key challenge was the pandemic preventing face-to-face contact with and between participants
- Results from the trial show 90% of participants reported improved community engagement and feelings of wellbeing, whilst 86% of referring practitioners believed their patients experienced improvement in their general health
- Key learnings during the trial included the importance of the community connectors being volunteers rather than paid social workers or other employees, and, Talking Cafes provide a safe place for people to build trust and practice their social skills
- Barriers to participation included participant anxiety and access to transport

- Participants could however be accompanied by a volunteer to activities to make them feel comfortable and facilitate connections with others. Participants were encouraged to ask family members to transport them to activities or they were referred to a transport service
- Unfortunately, the project hasn't really had long enough to fully trial the model and to understand the medium to longer term impacts. It is only just starting to engage with GP's, so it is hoped that further evidence of the effectiveness of social prescribing can be collected
- The project is currently seeking further funding opportunities to build on the momentum and continue to improve the lives of those who are most disconnected from their community/ies.

Questions, comments and discussion:

- Marilyn – This is fascinating project. Community volunteers have a broad understanding of what activities are available so are a great way to connect people, however volunteers need to be supported by professional people. How are referrals passed onto volunteers?
  - Leanne - I was the conduit. There needs to be a paid person to coordinate referrals and build relationships with referring agencies. One advantage of the project is not needing to collect health information about participants
- Eddie – one of the people from the Talking Café now volunteers in the chess group
- Cr. Seymour – Has there been any conversation with Bolton Clarke who has also undertaken a pilot program? This could work alongside the LOBL project and they may have funding available
  - Leanne – there has been discussion with Bolton Clarke. They have a strong community development focus and use a social worker as a community connector which is costly. The Public Health Network are trying to link us into other trials
- Gary – LOBL is such a valuable program. Participants of the program really appreciate the community connectors because they want to be there. Seeing the positive change in participants is rewarding.
- Lyn – The program sounds great, particularly calling people to touch base during lockdowns is a fantastic way to build connections.

## 5. Business Arising from Previous Meeting

### 5.1 Update on actions from previous meeting have been communicated in the agenda and were discussed further:

- Judy advised that feedback had been received from some Committee members about the meetings going over time, therefore Kylie has worked on reducing the agenda items for each meeting whilst still covering the Committee's key interest areas.
  - As noted in this meeting's agenda, the next meeting is planned to include presentations/discussion on elder abuse, community transport and, if possible, the Child Youth and 'Older Persons' Plan (currently in draft)

- The combined meeting in November for the Life Stages Groups may not go ahead at this stage. If confirmed, the KAAAC agenda plan will be adjusted
- Cr. Seymour commented that the Committee should not be a one-way forum to push out information and there needs to be a focus on outputs rather than inputs.

**5.2** No other business arising from previous meeting.

## 6. Other Business

**6.1** Judy updated the Committee on the feedback received from CA&S staff and volunteers on the 'older person' terminology for the Child Youth and 'Older Persons' Plan.

- The two terms that received the most votes were 'older adults' and 'older persons', whilst the preference is to consult with community
- Community will therefore be consulted via a short survey sent out through existing communications channels and networks, including the Bright Ideas Network, Council's social media platforms and website, current Community Access and Support department clients, and seniors groups and organisations
- This needs to be undertaken relatively quickly in order to progress the Child Youth and 'Older Persons' Plan
- The majority vote will be the accepted terminology used across Council plans, policies and in other settings.

**6.2** Cr. Seymour commented on the pushback Councillors are currently receiving from the community about Council not consulting with them despite the many opportunities provided to residents. Cr. Seymour sought feedback from the Committee regarding an SMS prompting service for pointing people to a consultation opportunity such as a survey.

- Judy commented on the good responses received in the past from our older community when surveys are disseminated via paper and electronic methods through existing channels and networks
- Linda agreed that our distribution is good, however we keep preaching to the people who are already on board. There are gaps in who we engage with including the 25-55 years' age group and these people could be reached via rates notices. There are also residents who don't realise Council provides more than rates, roads and rubbish.
- Marilyn suggested that a face-to-face link is needed to better engage people as there is a lot of information out there but a communication connection is missing
- Anne commented on the effectiveness of putting information up on walls in community centres if technology access and use is limited
- Gary commented that older people tend to go looking for information if they want to know about it. SMS prompting may be seen as bombarding people.

**6.3** Linda and Kylie advised the Committee of upcoming events for International Day of Older Persons on 1 October, Seniors Festival from 4-16 October and the Housing Showcase on 21 October.

## 7. Next meeting

**Knox Active Ageing Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Thursday 30 September 2021, 6.00pm to 7.30pm if held in person or 7.00pm to 8.30pm via Zoom**