

# KNOX ACTIVE AGEING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Thursday 27 July 2023**

**Time: 6.15 pm to 8.50 pm**

**Hybrid:**

**Eastgate North Conference Room, Eastgate North Building,  
Knox City Council, 511 Burwood Hwy, Wantirna South**

**and Via MS Teams**

## 1. Acknowledgement of Country

Knox City Council acknowledges that we are on the traditional land of the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

## 2. Welcome and Apologies

**Attendees:** Cr Nicole Seymour, Cr Meagan Baker, Christine Pow, Diana Bossio, Eddie Atacador, Fen Peng, Gail Power, Geoff Deacon, Lawrie Gaylard, Linda Keenahan, Luise Topma, Peter Burns, Pranee Birch (online), Sheridan Stone, Shoua Liu

**Guests:** Camille Bowles (KCC), Paul Reading (KCC), Kate Innocenti (KCC), Katherine Howard (Emerge Associates)

**Apologies:** Catherine Balaz, Gary Cantwell, Marlene Franke, Rachel Bast, Rosemary Rambert

**Welcome:** Gail Power has joined Knox as the new Manager of Community Access and Support. Gail has joined us from the City of Boroondara and is in her second week at Knox.

## 3. Conflict of Interest Declaration

No conflict of interest declared.

## 4. Items for Discussion

### 4.1 Overview of Preventing Homelessness Among Older Women research project (45 mins)

Facilitator: Camille Bowles, Social Policy and Projects Officer  
KCC – Community Wellbeing

- Please refer to the Preventing Homelessness Among Older Women presentation slides that are circulated with these Minutes.

- The Preventing Homelessness Among Older Women Research Project is commissioned by the Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA), delivered through funding from the Victorian Government's Metropolitan Partnerships Development Fund, and with support from Knox City Council.
- This two-phase research project aims to understand the context of older women's homelessness in Melbourne's Eastern Metropolitan Region (Phase One) and develop solutions to address this issue (Phase Two).
- Phase One involved a variety of research, interviews and focus groups and identified 17 different strategies for consideration.
- A Selection Panel/Working Group considered each of the 17 strategies and agreed two strategies will be researched in Phase Two, which are as follows:
  1. Accessing under-utilised dwellings. There is a desire to see homes, buildings, hospitals, empty units, hotels, or buildings that are currently empty, be converted. This may include commercial office spaces that are vacant, being developed into temporary accommodation. Air BNBs might also be an area of underutilized dwellings.
  2. Cheaper accommodation in retirement villages. These are commonly offered through a deferred management fee model, so the project will research if there is a possibility for reduced rent or rent-to-buy options.
- An online presentation titled 'Preventing Homelessness Among Older Women' is scheduled for Thursday 10 August 2023 from 2pm to 3pm. Registration details circulated with these Minutes.
- The Final Report is due in November 2023 and an Acquittal will be submitted in December 2023.
- KAAAC member questions/comments included:
  - Discussion about reliance of women (who have a low or no income) on violent partners. Could an outcome be considered as part of the Project, whereby a percentage of affordable housing could be allocated for any woman escaping violence, as well as older women. This may result in a project recommendation.
  - Acknowledgement that vulnerable people have difficulty accessing money in emergencies eg. If your fridge breaks, there is likely to be no funds available to replace this essential item.
  - There is a need for community to be aware of the relevant support services available to assist them, with the reassurance there is no judgement when accessing these services.
  - EACH provides financial counselling. An observation was raised that while financial planning for the present moment is valuable, long term planning is also important.
  - There are residents who have spare rooms available that they could potentially rent out, but are worried the money they generate through renting out the room will affect their pension/income. This creates a barrier, preventing homeless people accessing affordable accommodation.

**Action:**

**Advocacy letter to be sent to the Minister for Housing of Victoria, The Honourable Colin Brooks MP from KAAAC, sharing feedback from KAAAC that a barrier to empty nesters / people living alone, being part of a solution to addressing affordable housing needs for vulnerable community members, is the financial impact on Government pensions should they rent out spare bedrooms as part of a Homeshare or private arrangement. KAAAC have suggested something similar to the international/exchange student framework that enables people to supplement their income without being taxed might address this barrier.**

- There was a suggestion to develop a regional response, whereby a variety of Councils (eg those in the Eastern Metropolitan Region) might work together to identify land within their respective municipalities, that could be utilised for affordable housing. Benefits of this type of collaboration would include lower costs shared across a collective of councils and avoid creating “deserts of poverty” because affordable housing would be dispersed across a wider range of suburbs.
- While Retirement Village legislation makes them expensive to buy into, legislation has been amended in Queensland, whereby lifestyle caravans are being established on land.
- What is the definition of low and very low income?

**Action:**

**Linda to source and share the definition of low and very low income (as per below).**

What is low income in Victoria? ^

Definitions around affordable housing in Victoria come into force

|  | Very low income range (annual) | Low income range (annual) |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Single Adult                                       | Up to \$18,380                 | \$18,381 - \$29,400       |
| Couple, no dependents                              | Up to \$27,560                 | \$27,561 - \$44,100       |
| Family (one or two parents and dependent children) | Up to \$38,590                 | \$38,591 - \$61,750       |

4 June 2018

**4.2 Active Knox Strategy presentation**

Facilitators: Paul Reading, KCC Strategic Planning Coordinator  
 Kate Innocenti, KCC Leisure Major Contracts Project Officer  
 Katherine Howard, Emerge Associates

Please refer to the Active Knox Strategy presentation slides that are circulated with these Minutes.

- The Knox community relies on parks and open spaces for informal recreation pursuits. Physical activity patterns show that flexible, fun and non-club based activities are the preferred model for many residents.
- The purpose of the Active Knox Strategy is to develop a Guide to help Council make decisions. The information collected from this evenings session, will help filter into the Open Space strategy and insights are could potentially influence future budget planning.
- The intention is to build awareness, so that community understands that they are allowed to utilise public spaces, while feeling welcome and safe to do so.
- The Top 5 recreational activities for people aged over 55 is reported to be:
  - Bowls
  - Martial arts (including Tai Chi)
  - Golf
  - Walking
  - Pilates
- An icebreaker was allocated whereby KAAAC members shared how they like to keep active. Walking, cycling and swimming were the most popular activities enjoyed by KAAAC members, though all of the activities outlined in the Top 5 above, were also mentioned during the icebreaker.

### **Question 1 – Considering the open spaces throughout Knox, what is working well or not so well?**

- Knox has honoured former resident Sir Hubert Opperman (Oppy) by creating three cycling routes through Knox that cater for all fitness levels and rider types. These are called the [Oppy Routes](#). Oppy won awards in the Tour De France, Olympic Games and held many world records in cycling. Knox City Council used to organise an annual Oppy bike riding event, which was enjoyed by a diverse range of people in Knox and a question was raised as to why this event is no longer available.

#### **Action:**

#### **Linda to contact the Traffic and Transport Team to find out if the Oppy cycling event (or similar) will make a return.**

- Having the option to hire an electric bike would be appreciated due to the high cost to purchase one. Electric bike charging stations along bike paths would also be beneficial.
- Publishing an article with tips on how to maintain your bike is desired.
- [The Knox bike path network map](#) is great, but it is not advertised. There is a need to revise the map and promote through the various Knox newsletters.
- The [Knox Nature Discovery Passport](#) is a guide to the Top 50 bushland reserves in Knox. The passport highlights key features for each reserve such as walking tracks, playgrounds, accessible paths etc.

- Golf cages have been installed at Wally Tew Reserve and Park Ridge, however, not everyone knows they are available and need to be promoted.
- Promoting a full list of public outdoor spaces offered by Council would be useful eg the Disc Golf at Lewis Park, various Golf Cage locations, Knox Nature Passport etc.
- It is known through research that once people commence a group activity and have established their social connections, then they will continue the activity. It is the psychology of ‘if someone cares about you, you are likely to show up’ and this is true for all life stages. Council therefore has a role to play in establishing these connections, by facilitating group activities. The Seniors Exercise Park is a great example of this.
- Coffee is an important element in enabling people to socialise together after their activity. Could a roaming coffee van be engaged to travel between popular sites?
- The Seniors Exercise Park at Carrington Park was reported to be well utilised.
- There are spaces throughout Knox that are allocated for specific ages eg children’s playgrounds and senior exercise parks, but consideration needs to be given as to how to link the ages. For example could Council promote an All Ages Pilates class or bring your pet to the park afternoon?
- Are sporting clubs set up to accommodate intergenerational requirements? For example is Council considering the fact that grandparents may need to bring their grandchildren to their local tennis club?
- Older people prefer to walk in a group, because they feel safer.
- The Westfield Knox Walking Group used to have approximately 700 walkers, but is now longer operating. Westfield stopped walking sessions due to the renovations, but it is unclear as to whether Westfield will re-establish the group when the works are complete.

**Action:**

**Linda to find out if Westfield has any plans on re-establishing the Westfield Walkers walking group or alternatives to this past program.**

- Guided walks would be of interest eg on indigenous history. It was reported that U3A Knox does this well.
- While there are a number of walking groups within Knox. There was a suggestion to create groups for people who have low level function eg they may be experiencing pain, discomfort or have a low income.
- Orana Neighbourhood House has a walking group called ‘Taking Strides’ that is designed for people with limited mobility, who can only walk for about 500 metres to maybe a bit over a 1km, unaided or with the aid of a walking stick, nordic poles or mate. It is lead by KAAAC member, Gary Cantwell. For further details contact Orana Neighbourhood House on 9801 1895 or go to: <https://www.socialplanet.com.au/activity/view?id=15537>
- Schedule exercise groups for people with chronic pain.
- Developing a circuit for people to follow while walking, is accessible and dementia friendly. Could we install a walking trail around a football oval?

- The Knox Dementia Friendly Action Plan was approved by Council at their July 2023 meeting. Representatives from the Leisure Services and Dementia Friendly teams to work together to see where there can be synergy. For example circular walking paths are an important feature for people with disability and/or dementia. Could we select three sites and design them for access, inclusion and dementia friendly. Consideration would need to be given to the colour of concrete, signage, colour panels. This could be enjoyed by people of all abilities, ages and stages. Consider mobility scooters too, so pathways are wide enough to accommodate wheel chairs, bikes and scooters.
- Walking Football and Walking Basketball were originally promoted by the Community Access and Support Team, but are no longer on offer.

### Action:

#### **Linda to find out if there are any plans in offering Walking sports again such as Walking Football and Walking Basketball.**

- Some people need accessible paths and platforms in order to fish.
- Are there enough park benches and rest stops allocated along walking paths? The benches need hand rails and back rests.
- Access to parking, toilets, shelter, drinking fountains etc are important features of a reserve. This is why Jells Park, the 1000 Steps and Westerfolds Park are all great meeting places, because they offer these features.
- A lot of sporting clubs lock their toilets, which prevents people from accessing these facilities during the week (often seniors and mothers who rely on these facilities).
- A request to develop a walking map which includes toilets and cafes.
- Connectivity to trains and/or buses is important.
- Connectivity of bike paths is also important eg the gaps between the cycling path near Ferntree Gully Station (between Scout Hall and train Station) is an issue.
- Way finding around Knox needs improvement. For example signage to get to Carrington Park is poor and therefore, people are unaware that the Park even contains a Seniors Exercise Park.
- Council needs to build the ecosystem and level paths. People can't navigate the systems themselves.
- Suggestion that Council and community could partner with private gyms to promote their activities.
- Dance classes such as Zumba and aerobics would be popular.
- In China there is infrastructure in place for residents to enjoy outdoor Table Tennis and Chess.
- Weather proofing outdoor areas by creating shelter from sun and rain is required.
- Could Council offer low cost activities such as yoga, gym etc.

- Residents near Templeton Reserve have initiated their own neighbourhood activities and meet to do Tai Chi and Traditional Chinese Dance under the outdoor shelter. Could this be replicated elsewhere in Knox? If so, could Council support this by developing guidelines (without the neighbourhood groups incurring costs that are currently charged to personal trainers)?
- Public liability concerns were raised for community lead group activities. The Victorian Managed Insurance Authority could assist with this.
- Could the digital scoreboards at our ovals be used to promote group exercise activities? Some clubs are using the screens for movie nights.
- Street lighting and lighting around parks/reserves are important. People don't walk at night if the lighting is poor.
- Low level solar or sensor lighting would be useful along some of the bike tracks.
- Carrington Park was reported to have insufficient night lighting in the car park area. (Cr Seymour suggested given budget planning is approaching, that Gail and the Leisure team could work together to develop a business case for lighting at Carrington Park).

**Action:**

**Review existing lighting at Carrington Park, car park to community centres and path network around reserve. Use this information to inform whether a business case to improve the lighting at Carrington Park within the carpark and walking path should be submitted at budget time.**

- Could people gather at a monument on culturally appropriate days? It was acknowledged that this is something Knox Council has not traditionally done well and that a policy is required. But the request is outside the scope and remit of the Active Knox Strategy project.
- Consideration is needed to encourage incidental spaces, where people can bump into each other and connect.

## 5. Other Business (10 mins)

- The Chair requested the meeting commencement time was further reviewed. Please note adjusted timeframes below for remaining meetings in 2023. Meetings will commence and conclude with respect to the nominated timeframes.

## 6. 2023 Meetings held in Eastgate North

**Thursday 14 September 2023 – 6.00 pm - catering service, Meeting: 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm**

**Thursday 30 November 2023 – 6.00 pm – catering service, Meeting: 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm**

| Action   | Who                   | Status   |
|--|-----------------------|--|
| <p>Advocacy letter to be sent to the Minister for Housing of Victoria, The Honourable Colin Brooks MP from KAAAC, sharing feedback from KAAAC that a barrier to empty nesters / people living alone, being part of a solution to addressing affordable housing needs for vulnerable community members, is the financial impact on Government pensions should they rent out spare bedrooms as part of a Homeshare or private arrangement. KAAAC have suggested something similar to the international/exchange student framework that enables people to supplement their income without being taxed might address this barrier.</p> | <p>Camille</p>        | <p>To commence: Advocacy to occur at completion of the project to maximize impact and have support from Knox City Council.</p>   |
| <p>Linda to source and share the definition of low and very low incomes.</p>   | <p>Linda</p>          | <p>Complete: the definition is embedded in these Minutes.</p>  |
| <p>Linda/Sheridan to contact the Traffic and Transport Team to find out if the Oppy cycling event will make a return.</p>  | <p>Linda/Sheridan</p> | <p>Complete: The Events team traditionally allocated \$5K to a local community group to run the Oppy bike event. However, this approach came with challenges, so the Traffic and Transport team offered to deliver the event for a three-year period (with funding from the Events team). This resulted in a highly successful event and attracted over 500 participants.</p> <p>Neither the Events or Traffic and Transport teams have capacity to recommence the event. Therefore, further planning and budgeting would be required if Council were to reactive the Oppy bike ride event.</p> <p>In the meantime, pamphlets outlining the Oppy bike routes are available <a href="#">online</a> or at the Knox Customer Service.</p> |



|  |                          |  |
|--|--------------------------|--|
| <p>Linda to find out if there are any plans in offering Walking sports again such as Walking Football and Walking Basketball.</p>  | <p>Linda</p>             | <p>Complete: Walking Basketball proved to be too risky (due to high falls risk), however, the Walking Football was popular, particularly amongst men and it would be beneficial to bring this back.</p> <p>The Knox Walking Football was run through a local soccer club (who owned the equipment) and a group of students were responsible for facilitating the program. Council's role was to promote the activity to community.</p> <p>Therefore, further planning and budgeting would be required if Council were to promote Walking Football again.</p> |
| <p>Linda to find out if Westfield has any plans on re-establishing the Westfield Walkers walking group.</p>  | <p>Linda</p>             | <p>Complete: The Commercial and Community Partnerships Manager at Westfield has indicated that the walking group may recommence under a revamped format in January 2024 – on the assumption that the major development works will be completed in the Centre by then.</p>  |
| <p>Review existing lighting at Carrington Park, car park to community centres and path network around reserve. Use this information to inform whether a business case to improve the lighting at Carrington Park within the carpark and walking path should be submitted at budget time.</p> | <p>Gail/Leisure Team</p> | <p>To commence: business case to be considered as part of the 2024/25 Budget development.</p>  |