

# knox vision:

our city, our future



Knox City Council

2013-17

Knox City Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the City of Knox, the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation.

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# Message from the Mayor\*

It is a pleasure to present to you the *Knox Vision: Our City, Our Future*. This *Vision* has been developed in a partnership between Council and the Knox community and outlines our shared aspirations for the future of our city.

**This year we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Knox.** This significant milestone gave us the perfect opportunity to spend some time reflecting on how the City has changed and developed over the past 50 years, and to look forward to how the City needs to plan for changes into the future.

We began a conversation with you during 2012, through a program we called Knox@50 and asked how we should consider and deal with the challenges that come with change and growth, to help us prepare and plan for the next 50 years.

You told us what you wanted for the City. We have listened and we are planning to help make it happen through this document and our *City Plan 2013-2017* which has also been developed based on what we heard from you.

Thank you to all those involved in helping us to create this *Vision* document but don't let it end here. Let's keep talking...

*Councillor Karin Orpen  
Knox City Council Mayor, 2012-13*

\**Knox Vision: Our City, Our Future* was endorsed on 25 June 2013.

# introduction

The first *Vision* for Knox was developed in 2003. It provided an outline of what the ideal future City would look like in 2020. Following a comprehensive community engagement program, this *Vision* was again revised in 2006, and refreshed in 2010. Building on a strong history of planning in partnership with the community, the *Vision* has been comprehensively reshaped in 2013 following a substantial community engagement program delivered throughout 2012.

As with all modern cities, Knox operates in a dynamic global environment, and grows and changes over time. The unique opportunity to reflect on the past 50 years and consider the next fifty and beyond provided a lens through which to view this change and consider how Knox needs to plan to manage change over time. There are a range of factors influencing change in Knox, which will be important to understand and work with in coming years. The changes impacting on Knox's future have been summarised under five key headings: identity, technology, resources, population and governance. It is important that planning for Knox's future takes account of the opportunities and challenges these drivers create. Detailed information about these drivers of change is provided in the State of Knox section of this document, and was used as the basis for developing this *Vision*.

The *Vision* provides a clear statement of aspirations for the future Knox, and a picture of the features in place in our ideal future City. The *Vision* has deliberately been developed in partnership with community members, other government organisations, business, community agencies and other partners to ensure the widest possible range of views about the future of Knox have been incorporated. Achieving our *Vision* will require passion, energy and involvement of all stakeholders in Knox. It is intended that the *Vision* is shared, embraced and used as a shared planning document for our City.

Within Council, the *Vision* is part of a broader planning framework which is outlined in Underpinning our *Vision* – Key Strategic Directions. Knox's shared *Vision* is an integral component informing Council's own operations, and identifies Council as having a key role in working with and supporting achievement of the *Vision* for the City. Council, however, cannot deliver the *Vision* alone, and fully acknowledges the critical role individuals, businesses, community agencies and other organisations have in making the *Vision* a reality. As a result, Council will continue to place a high value on partnerships with others in Knox, and focus on the development and maintenance of partnerships as a high priority.

The role Council will play in helping to achieve the *Vision* is outlined in Council's own four year strategic plan for implementing the *Vision*. This strategic plan provides clarity around Council's strategic intent and priorities, and some of the key high level programs of work Council will deliver over the next four years. This in turn drives Council's annual planning process and allocation of resources through the budget.

As we work together over coming years to make the *Vision* a reality, it will be important to share our success stories and monitor our progress. This will be done through a regular update to the State of Knox report, described in the State of Knox section of this document. A series of indicators to track progress toward achievement of the *Vision* have been developed, and will be monitored and regularly reported to the Knox community and stakeholders. The State of Knox report will incorporate two types of information about the City. Firstly, it will include specific data about the make-up and nature of our City, including population trends and forecasts, health data, information about business trends in Knox, and data about our natural and built environments, amongst other information. Secondly, the State of Knox will include information about the changing views, values and aspirations of members of the Knox community.

# the state of knox

## a changing city

Living in cities means living in changing places – change is constantly occurring with people, structures and communities.

For the first time in human history more people live in cities compared to rural areas. The reason for this is that metropolitan areas are becoming safer, healthier places to live with more and more opportunities to find work, to get a good education, to find good healthcare, and to play and be entertained. This process has not simply happened over night. In European countries it's been happening for hundreds of years. In Australia this process has been happening ever since Europeans first settled and our cities are now experiencing greater urbanisation.

The look and feel of our cities is changing faster today than ever before. Improvements in technology, better use of land, the growth of new communities with new interests and pursuits, changing family structures, and the emergence of new types of businesses have all helped to make cities all over the world highly desirable places to live. Regardless of whether we're dealing with a city in Europe, Australia or elsewhere, the one thing that all cities have in common is that they are full of everyday people who are engaged in the everyday exercise of living.

Living in a big city like metropolitan Melbourne presents challenges and opportunities. This is not only because our lives are connected to many more people and activities, it's also because change happens so much more quickly these days. Some of this change is positive because it provides many great opportunities for our societies to grow and prosper, however some change needs to be well managed to ensure our *Vision* for the future of Knox can be realised.

## key influences for community wellbeing

As part of thinking about the future of Knox, five key drivers of change have been identified that will provide challenges and opportunities for the Knox community in the future. These are:

- Our Identity is shaped by people, places and events
- Technology allows us to be connected, become more efficient and improve our quality of life
- Our community and businesses rely on Resources such as energy, water, food and people to prosper
- Our Population is getting older, is more diverse, more mobile, reflects different ideas of 'family', and household structures are changing
- Good Governance is fundamental to a stable, inclusive, equitable and progressive society

Of course there are many factors which can influence the progress, strength and health of communities. These five drivers were developed through identifying the *key* elements that can either pose a threat to, or present an opportunity for, achieving community wellbeing.

# what we know about knox

This section provides a snapshot of data describing Knox and its community in 2013. This information is taken from a range of sources, and provides insight into the characteristics of the City today and projections about how the City and our community are likely to change in the future. This information is critical to inform good planning to ensure we achieve our shared *Vision*. The data is summarised under the headings of the five key influences for community wellbeing.

## Identity

The Knox community is diverse, and becoming more so. Cultural diversity is increasing, and other changes include more socio-economic diversity, and diverse household structures (2011 Census).

Public events and celebrations of local identity are valued in Knox, for example Knox's Carols by Candlelight event is the largest in Melbourne outside of that held in the Myer Music Bowl on Christmas Eve, and Stringybark and the Knox Festival are similarly highly valued events. The first Knox Multicultural Harmony Festival which was led by the community in April 2013 was an outstanding success. The 2008 Community Strength Survey indicated higher than Melbourne average attendance at local community events (53% compared with 48%).

The crime rate in Knox has continued its broad decline over recent years. Knox's crime rate today is 37% lower than the rate in 2001/2002, and has remained significantly and consistently below the 2001/2002 State average. The crime rate is currently 26% lower than the state average. Despite these positive results, some Knox residents report feeling unsafe at night, particularly at public transport interchanges (2011 VicHealth Indicators Survey).

## Population

Like many other parts of Melbourne, Knox is experiencing an ageing population. Those aged over 55 increased from one in five Knox residents in 2006, to one in four in 2011. By 2031 it is forecast that one third of Knox's population will be aged over 55 years including 20% post-65. Additionally, the number of people in Knox post-65 is forecast to double over the next twenty years from 19,000 to 36,000.

As identified in the section on Identity above, Knox's population is becoming more culturally diverse. Knox has an increasing overseas-born population, with 25% born overseas in 2006 increasing to 28% in 2011. Increasing numbers are also born in countries where English is not the first language – 17% in 2006 compared to 20% in 2011. Knox's top five largest overseas-born groups include those from the United Kingdom, India, China, Malaysia and Sri Lanka. The largest migrant group remains those born in the United Kingdom, but this number is declining, as are the numbers of post-war migrants from Europe, while the number of residents born in Asia is higher and growing.



In terms of the health profile of the Knox community, while overall the data shows that Knox is a generally healthy community there are some specific areas for concern. Fifty percent of the local population are overweight or obese, 26% smoke, and only 20% consume enough vegetables. Around 35% of the Knox community exercise only minimally, and of 12-17 year olds, only 15% exercise every day.

Family violence and violence against women remains a concern in Knox. The most recent figures place Knox in the 'top 10' cities recording the highest rates of family violence across Melbourne, a pattern that has been consistent over the past decade. Child-abuse is also a concern, with higher than metropolitan average of child abuse re-notifications within twelve months amongst 0-8 year olds (2008, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development), and higher than regional average and increasing rate of child protection substantiations amongst 10-17 years olds (2012, Department of Human Services).

There are pockets of Knox where family, household and personal income is below the metropolitan average and where income support payments and rent assistance is higher than average, according to data derived from the 2011 Census and 2006 Centrelink data. In a number of these areas there is a higher than average level of food stress, which occurs in instances where people have run out of food and could not afford to buy more. Other socio-economic profiles relevant to Knox, for example the Australian Early Development Index, and the Socio-Economic Index for Areas, also show evidence of vulnerability in some areas, for example delayed learning outcomes and socio-economic disadvantage.

Knox's changing population is being reflected in changing household structures, including a shift towards smaller households, and a need for more housing diversity to support a more diverse household structure. For example, in Knox currently families with children represent 52% of households, while smaller couple only and lone person households are at 43%. Twenty years ago the split was 63% families with children to 31% smaller couple only and lone person households. In comparison to this change, 87% of housing in Knox is in the traditional separate houses form. Knox's population has grown from 147,433 in 2001 to 154,097 in 2011. Based on Council's population predictions undertaken after the 2006 census, Knox's population may reach 177,050 persons by 2031. As change occurs in Knox there will be a need for different forms of housing to meet the needs of changing household types.

Median rent in Knox has increased by 50% since 2006 and access to affordable housing is shrinking. In 2006

around 50% of rental homes in Knox were affordable for lower income families, compared with just 6% in 2011. Mortgages also consume an increasing share of household income. The typical mortgage in Knox accounted for 29% of typical household income in 2011, compared with 25% in 2006 (2011 Census).

## Governance

Issues of governance and representation are important to the Knox community. In Knox in 2008, 33.7% of adults said that they feel they have a say on important issues, compared to 41.3% in Eastern Metropolitan Melbourne and 45.8% across Victoria (Department of Planning and Community Development, 2008). 17.5% of adults in Knox are members of a decision-making board or committee, compared to 19.9% in the Eastern Metro Region and 22.7% in Victoria (Department of Planning and Community Development, 2008). In Knox 17% of the population report doing some form of voluntary work. (2011 Census). Involvement in local groups and the capacity to have a say and influence local issues are areas for improvement in Knox.

## Resources

In terms of use of natural resources, Knox has one of the highest average weekly expenditures on fuel of Melbourne municipalities (CSIRO, 2008). Electricity use is comparable to the Victorian average, and household gas use in Knox is 66 gigajoules per customer compared with 55 for Victoria as a whole. Occupied dwellings in Knox are responsible for slightly higher than the Victorian average emissions over the period 2004 to 2007 with 11.15 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> recorded compared with the Victorian average of 10.05 tonnes (Community Indicators Victoria). Knox diverts an above average amount of waste away from landfill, achieving the fifth highest diversion rate of all Victorian councils (2009/2010, Sustainability Victoria).

In terms of human resources, health and skills, Knox experiences a lower than average proportion of young people completing year 12, at 76.5% compared with the Melbourne average of 77.7%. This completion rate is increasing over time. Knox has a higher than average proportion of young people completing formal education to only the level of Year 10 or below, with 11.4% compared with 8.8% for Melbourne. Knox also has a lower than average participation rate amongst 15-24 year olds in post-school education (vocational or university), with 28% compared with 32%. It is noted that unemployment in Knox is consistently below the national average (2010/2011, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations).





## Technology

Changing technology has a significant impact in the key areas of health and wellbeing, and communication and connectedness. Similar to the majority of Australians, Knox residents experienced improving life expectancy throughout the 20th century, partially as a result of improved availability of health technology. In terms of communication technology, 81% of homes in Knox have an internet connection, of which 76% is broadband.

In terms of industry in Knox, there has been a noticeable shift from traditional manufacturing to high-tech manufacturing, requiring new and emerging technologies, resources and skills.

## the community's views

This section provides an overview of the community's views about the future of Knox as expressed during extensive community engagement over 2012.

## Identity

Given the changes occurring to the population structure of Knox, the need for diverse forms of housing and housing choice is acknowledged. However the look, feel and location of housing (character of an area) is an essential component of the community's acceptance of or resistance to different types of housing.

Community events in Knox generally, are valued. In particular, multicultural groups see community events as a way to bring people together and improve understanding. In addition, 'community connectedness' and the concept of the 'local village' are important elements of living in Knox.

## Population

The Knox community is keenly aware of the implications of the ageing population, including:

- The requirement for an increase in health services
- The need for appropriate housing for the aged
- The importance of ageing in place, and the need for an increasing number of carers, particularly family members, who will need support

- Young people are aware of the demands that will be placed on them in the future, for example an increased tax burden on young people to support an ageing population
- The positive contribution that the ageing population can have is recognised, for example in volunteering, skill sharing and mentoring, and family care.

The Knox community recognises multiculturalism as part of the changing face of Knox. Some community members see multiculturalism as an asset to the community, while some see it as a challenge that needs to be managed. Opportunities for multicultural groups to mix and 'fit in' are seen as important by the broader community. Multicultural groups express the need for support, for example with places to meet, and appropriate support for the elderly, and express an interest in opportunities to share their cultures, for example at local events.

Concerns around population growth are closely connected to infrastructure needs and capacity. Traffic congestion is a major concern, as is the need for more open space where housing density is increasing. Higher density development is identified as a major concern, however most people state that higher density housing would be appropriate in identified locations close to public transport, shopping and hubs, but not in existing quiet residential areas. Urban design quality is identified as being paramount, together with upgrading infrastructure and services to support increases in parking, traffic and service needs. The community acknowledges that different types of housing will be needed in the future; the challenge however is how and where, how well it is designed, and how it respects the green, leafy character of Knox that residents highly value.

Mental health is also a major health concern for the Knox community. The potential for lone person households to lead to social isolation and exacerbate mental health issues is of concern to the community.

## Governance

The community is interested in building its own capacity and agency in terms of taking care of themselves, taking responsibility, and the community taking care of itself. Some community members seek Council's support to enable this, and Council's role as linking existing groups and service providers and enabling partnerships is a consistent theme. Some community groups are concerned about the increasing level of compliance and regulation they need to deal with; and in this context attracting and keeping volunteers is proving to be a challenge.

Access to appropriate community facilities has also been identified as a challenge.

Transparency and trust regarding local government is also a strong theme from some members of the community – that is, for some there is a lack of trust of Council and a view that there needs to be greater transparency in the processes of government in general.

## Resources

The community has expressed a strong focus on 'community resources', particularly the need for more access to shared and multi-use facilities.

Food security is identified as a challenge for Knox, with the need for local production and community based solutions such as community gardens. Some community members also identify that Council needs to be a leader in the sustainable consumption of resources, and in utilising and promoting new green technologies. The community has a strong focus on developing and supporting local innovative (green) industries and local employment.

Young Knox people express an awareness of – if not active concern about – their future employment prospects, particularly in light of technological advancement.

The desire to 'live locally' (live, work, play and shop) is a key theme for Knox residents of all ages, and this is associated with increased resource costs, availability of local jobs, and the desire for a self-sufficient community, as well as being associated with 'local identity' and community connectedness. Technology is seen to facilitate this, for example through flexible working options and the ability to work from home.

## Technology

The Knox community is aware of the benefits of improvements to communications technology such as greater flexibility of employment and better community connections. However, the community is also keenly aware of the risks and downsides, particularly of 'social media' such as:

- Potential for greater social isolation
- Young people potentially losing 'social skills'
- The increasing divide of the 'haves and have nots' where people do not have access to or the skills to use technology (particularly the elderly), as the community become more reliant on it.
- The potential for cyber-bullying
- The 'waste issue' regarding the constant upgrading of hardware (TVs, phones, etc) and that this is not sustainable.

# grappling with future issues – challenges and opportunities for knox

The above two sections provide an overview of data and community views regarding the current and future wellbeing of Knox. Analysis of this data has revealed several key challenges that will require strong leadership to ensure tensions are managed and opportunities realised. These key challenges are:

- Managing the need for more diverse housing forms in the context of a changing population, while respecting the unique character and identity of Knox neighbourhoods, and ensuring adequate infrastructure and open space is available to support an increasing population
- Supporting and celebrating an ageing population, while ensuring the complex needs of an older community are met through appropriate service provision, and older people are encouraged to be active in community life

- Ensuring employment, education and social opportunities enable Knox residents to live, work and play locally
- Providing all members of an increasingly diverse Knox community with opportunities for public expression and engagement, in which diversity is celebrated and valued
- Improving the overall health, wellbeing and activity of Knox residents
- Fostering and promoting opportunities for community connections, involvement and participation in civic life, and the capacity for Knox residents to have a say on issues that affect them
- The provision of safe, accessible and connected transport options and infrastructure, and reducing car dependence in Knox
- Developing a productive economy in Knox that provides local employment opportunities, through fostering diverse and productive economic spaces
- Better managing resource use in Knox, and reducing reliance on non-renewable energy sources



# aspirations for the future city

Knox's *Vision* provides a picture of the future City that will deliver the lifestyle, jobs and industry, health and wellbeing desired by members of the Knox community. The aspirational future is outlined under five headings, each containing a description of our ideal future, and identifying the features that will be in place when that aspired future is achieved.



## Healthy, Connected Communities

### Our Aspiration:

The Knox community is well supported to be strong and motivated and actively engaged in shaping its own future. People in Knox enjoy good health and wellbeing, are active and have access to excellent health, community and leisure facilities and services. There are many opportunities in Knox to make meaningful connections in the community that foster a sense of belonging. Knox is a safe place to live, and community members are proud to freely enjoy their local streets, parks and public spaces. Community leaders – for example in sporting clubs and community groups – are supported, and active participation by all members of the community is valued.

Knox is a vibrant, resilient and sustainable community that recognises and values the efforts of its volunteers. Community members are physically and mentally healthy, have a sense of wellbeing, are connected to others and have access to a range of services. The Knox community nurtures its children and young people and embraces learning. Similarly, older adults are valued and supported to be actively engaged in community life. Meaningful work – be it paid or unpaid – is available and valued. Knox is a community built on mutual respect, generosity of spirit, and one that enjoys a range of opportunities for people to participate in community life.

### Features of our future City:

- Strong community connections, and a range of opportunities for all members of a diverse community to participate in public life
- Volunteering is valued and celebrated, and people are enthusiastic to seek opportunities to be involved
- Volunteering is actively supported, and barriers to volunteering are minimised
- The *proVision* of services and infrastructure support a diversity of community connections: all members of a diverse community have opportunities to be engaged, public and civic spaces support a thriving community life, and technology enhances opportunities for community connections
- A range of high quality, affordable and accessible transport options promote activity and involvement in community life for all members of the community
- Excellent health and community services are available and accessible in Knox
- The availability of a range of diverse housing options promotes intergenerational and flexible living
- Members of the Knox community are able to live, work, play, and learn locally
- The Knox community enjoys good health, in which community members are active and wellbeing is promoted
- Improving health technology supports a better and more healthy quality of life for people of all ages
- Members of the Knox community feel safe to actively participate in community and public life



## Prosperous, Advancing Economy

### Our Aspiration:

Knox enjoys a global economy and business precincts which are recognised nationally with contemporary business opportunities and support for entrepreneurship, business attraction and local employment opportunities. Innovation and creativity are valued, and local economies thrive, recognising that work is integral to community wellbeing and whether inside or outside the home it makes a valuable contribution to our individual wellbeing and the economy. Local employment is highly desired and encouraged as it minimises the personal and environmental costs of travel. Because people work locally they are embedded in the local community and are more inclined to contribute to the social life of the community and spending is retained. Development is undertaken in a sustainable manner with impacts minimised. Businesses pride themselves on and are recognised for being environmentally and socially responsible.

Knox enjoys a skilled workforce and fosters opportunities for local education and skill development. Businesses benefit from strong collaborative networks and increased skills and capabilities created locally, and Knox is well regarded as a business and investment destination. Educational institutions are dedicated to creating capable, confident, emotionally mature young people who are equipped to reach their full potential. Knox businesses and the community have benefited from valuing and encouraging the ongoing contribution and wisdom of Knox's older community members.

Knox has a strong culture of encouraging entrepreneurship and diversification of its economy. Knox supports and facilitates local business and commercial and industrial hubs, with an emphasis on advanced manufacturing and environmental technologies as core drivers of its economy. Knox businesses are well recognised as being leaders in corporate social responsibility and because of this Knox is a place of choice for business and talent.

### Features of our future City:

- Diverse and thriving business hubs across the City
- Appropriate services and infrastructure – including public transport options – make doing business in Knox attractive
- The availability of quality education options lead to a skilled local workforce
- Knox enjoys flexibility in education and lifelong learning options
- There are strong business networks within and outside Knox
- Living and working locally is common and highly valued, and housing variety has created the flexibility for a diverse workforce to live in Knox. Mixed use residential and business neighbourhoods create integrated areas to live, work, play and learn in Knox
- Innovation and creativity flourish in Knox, supported by high tech local industry
- Industry in Knox is sustainable, and balances the built and natural environment
- Not-for-profit and service industries have developed in response to the needs of a population living locally, and a changing community structure





## Vibrant and Sustainable Built and Natural Environments

### Our Aspiration:

Knox residents identify and strongly value Knox being made up of a network of villages with access to urban facilities and services. Growth and change through development occurs at a rate and type that is responsive to Knox's character while meeting the needs of a changing community. Development respects and celebrates the strong sense of character of Knox's villages while making positive design and investment contributions. Knox is known for getting the balance right!

Knox has proactively planned to support residential housing choices that are available and accessible to Knox residents considering stages in life, household size, and income. The Knox community and businesses are leaders in sustainable management and living, valuing and protecting significant environmental assets, celebrating a healthy local environment, a green and leafy municipality, and sustainable living opportunities for all. Biodiversity is valued and protected in Knox. Knox has proactively and innovatively encouraged investment in sustainable technologies, industries and products. Knox's community is benefiting from this as genuine opportunities for renewable energy sources, reduction of green house gas emissions and application of sustainable design products and features are common.

Through continued advocacy and increased investment, public transport services in Knox are readily available, accessible and highly patronised. Knox has a strong functioning network of bicycle and walking paths, which support mobility for all, serve commuters working and shopping locally and for recreation, thereby reducing the reliance on the car, and minimising greenhouse gas emissions

### Features of our future City:

- Cycling, walking and public transport connections are readily available, safe and reliable
- There are a range of well designed and diverse housing options, that have been well planned and appropriately located
- Good quality and accessible public open space is accessible to all
- Local identity is respected and valued, and expressed through natural and built environments. The Knox community takes pride in local identity, and neighbourhood character is valued and preserved
- There is a healthy balance between village feel and local identity, and access to urban facilities and services
- Knox enjoys multi-purpose public spaces, that remain contemporary and functional
- Art and cultural expression is encouraged and valued in the public domain
- Protected natural environment and biodiversity



## Culturally Rich and Active Communities

### Our Aspiration:

Knox enjoys an active and engaged community, in which a range of major and local events and festivals thrive, and in which the local community comes together and diversity is valued. Public open space is valued, accessible and plentiful, and public art is appreciated for its contribution to public life. Diverse leisure and recreational activities are abundant, and people have access to a range of contemporary cultural and leisure facilities. Cultural activities are enjoyed in parks and public spaces

Knox's unique local character is valued and preserved, through celebration of local heritage sites, villages and neighbourhoods, and the contribution and role of the local indigenous community. The community participates in a diverse range of sporting and recreational activity, which is supported by flexible and multi-use facilities and public space. Transport infrastructure encourages participation, physical activity and connection and supports an active community life. Lifelong learning is valued in Knox, and services and facilities provide learning options at all life stages, to foster a diverse local skill set.

### Features of our future City:

- Flexible community facilities are available for shared community use and enjoyment
- Diversity is encouraged, valued and celebrated, including indigenous heritage, multiculturalism, and age diversity, through events, the arts and community spaces and activities
- Knox is a community in which acceptance, appreciation and respect for diversity and difference is valued
- Knox enjoys a healthy and physically active community
- The arts are promoted and celebrated, and an imaginative and innovative community thrives
- There is civic pride in Knox's unique character and identity
- Parks and public open space respond to needs of all age groups and a diverse community, with a wide range of recreational opportunities
- The local community is connected and involved
- The arts have a symbolic point of focus in Knox, which is able to support and direct cultural engagement throughout the broader community
- Diverse education and lifelong learning opportunities abound
- Transport infrastructure encourages physical activity and connection



## Democratic and Engaged Communities

### Our Aspiration:

The Knox community is engaged and values opportunities to be actively involved in community life. Community members regularly participate in community groups and organisations, and have a genuine opportunity to influence decision-making. Local government processes are transparent and accountable, and actively encourage and build community involvement. The Knox community has confidence that government and other local decision making groups and agencies will make decisions for the greater good of the Knox community, and community members seek opportunities to be involved and influence. Because they are engaged they feel empowered that they have personal political efficacy and that they are in control of their destinies.

Knox enjoys an empowered community that encourages and enables different forms of governance of community groups and organisations. Members of the Knox community are proud that Knox City Council works in partnership with the community to achieve outcomes on their behalf. The Council operates in an efficient, effective and sustainable manner, demonstrates strong local governance practices for the benefit of the Knox community, and exercises sound financial management.

### Features of our future City:

- The community seeks and enjoys opportunities for early, genuine and meaningful community engagement in local decision making
- Members of the community are interested, skilled and have opportunities for genuine input into decisions that affect them
- The City continues to be well governed
- The Knox community is inclusive, participatory and empowered, and enjoys easy access to quality information
- Community groups are engaging organisations in which life-long learning is embraced
- Technological advancement has led to better access to community connections
- Genuine partnerships between community groups and agencies, Council and business abound
- Council advocates strongly for the Knox community on key issues
- The community feels connected, engaged and empowered, and as a result is less reliant on government
- Decisions are made in the best interests of the community as a whole
- Community groups and other agencies are well supported to play a key and vibrant role in the Knox community
- Government agencies at all levels of government work collaboratively in the best interests of the future of Knox
- Decisions are taken on balance considering the current and future needs of all within the Knox community



# delivering the *Vision*

## council's role

Council accepts a leadership role in moving the City toward achievement of the *Vision*. This will require Council to be a leading edge, best practice organisation, committed to the future of Knox, and building a culture that enables and drives community engagement and participation and achieves service excellence. These objectives involve Council being an organisation that supports achievement of the community *Vision* through the areas of:

- Innovation and Excellence,
- Effective Governance,
- Partnering and Engaging,
- Stewardship of Finances and Assets,
- Social and Environmental Responsibility, and
- Being an Employer of Choice.

## what will this look like?

This section provides an overview of the organisation Council strive to be, in order to play its role in delivering on the City's *Vision*.

### Innovation and excellence

- **Best practice and innovation**  
Council has a reputation for best practice and innovation, where its people are empowered to create new opportunities, explore new ideas, and continuously improve the quality of services and processes. Innovation and courage is valued and mistakes regarded as an opportunity to learn.

- **Integrated planning and resources**  
Council has a collaborative, leading edge approach to planning where strategies, plans, and activities are all integrated toward meeting the community's *Vision*. Resources are appropriately obtained, maintained, used and managed in alignment to ensure the achievement of those strategies. Council's decisions are made using good research and a solid evidence base.
- **A learning organisation**  
Council is renowned for its best practice knowledge management and development processes. Council maintains and shares data, information and knowledge to ensure understanding in how the community is progressing toward its *Vision*, and what it can do to ensure this ongoing progress.

### Effective governance

- **Accountability and good governance**  
Council is an organisation of best practice which conducts its affairs in an ethical, effective and efficient manner, is accountable to the community, and meets all of its legal obligations.
- **Risk management**  
Council has highly developed integrated risk management processes which ensure the protection of the community and its assets, and considers a balance of social, cultural, environmental and economic impacts of both the actions we take and choose not to take.
- **Transparency and honesty**  
In Council's dealings with all its stakeholders, it behaves in a manner which is open, honest and transparent.
- **A balanced approach to decision making**  
Council's decision making and reporting is based on a balanced consideration of economic, environmental and social and cultural factors and related impacts.

## Partnering and engaging

- **Strong relationships and partnerships**  
Council operates in a way that builds and illustrates a strong and beneficial relationship with its community that is based on openness, trust and respect. It is based on a thorough understanding of the community's needs, aspirations and values. Council partners with stakeholders to achieve the best outcomes for the community. Council will be flexible in its operations to ensure we are well placed to take advantage of opportunities that support achievement of the *Vision* as they arise.
- **Courageous and effective advocacy**  
Council is successful in its influence, leadership and relationships to actively advocate to other levels of government and other organisations on issues of community concern. It has a strong reputation for its capability in advocacy.
- **Best practice engagement**  
Council actively engages with the community as a key driver for decision making, in a way that builds democratic participation and genuine community empowerment at best practice levels.
- **Leaders in the community**  
Council actively accepts and takes on a collaborative style of leadership with the community. It values, supports and facilitates community participation in pursuit of the *Vision* while accepting responsibility for making courageous decisions that support the *Vision's* realisation.

## Stewardship of finances and assets

- **Excellence in financial management**  
Council is in a position of long term financial sustainability, where financial resources are aligned to best deliver on services and strategies which will assist the community in meeting its *Vision*.
- **Stewards of community assets**  
Assets and infrastructure under Council's control are strategically managed, aligned to the needs of the community and its *Vision*, and designed, maintained, upgraded and replaced so that they are enjoyed by current and future generations.
- **Balanced revenue streams**  
Council meets community needs through an appropriate balance of revenue streams. This includes: a fair and equitable rating system in accordance with the Local Government Act, service charges and fees which balance community expectations, and the active pursuit of external revenue streams.

## Social and environmental responsibility

- **Social consciousness**  
Council role-models and advocates for socially equitable practices and behaviour which respect and protect the human rights of individuals while





enabling strengthened communities, and which ensures accessibility for all members of society to participate fully.

- **Environmental responsibility**  
Council is an organisation that is actively working to reduce its environmental footprint. It sets an example in the community and is the leader amongst local governments nationally for its practices in waste, water-use and greenhouse gas emission reductions, energy efficiency and protection of biodiversity.
- **Social and environmental awareness**  
Councillors and staff believe in making a positive contribution to the future of the social and environmental health of the wider global community. Opportunities and encouragement to participate in the wider community outside of their formal roles and responsibilities are afforded.

## Employer of choice

- **A values based organisation**  
Council is an organisation of integrity, where its preferred values drive the behaviour, decisions and practices of Councillors and staff.
- **People who make a difference**  
Council operates successfully within a competitive recruitment environment, and the best candidates are attracted to joining Knox's workforce. Council's

staff want to make a genuine difference in improving the lives of people in the community and contribute passionately toward the achievement of the *Vision*.

- **Empowering leaders**  
Leadership at Council is highly valued and exercised at all levels of the organisation by individuals who are self-aware and reflective, and whose behaviour and practices maximise the potential of those around them. There is mutual trust and respect between Councillors, leaders and teams, and people are proud to work at Council.
- **Culture of learning and high performance**  
Diverse, highly skilled people are attracted to work and stay at Council, where they are encouraged and nurtured, and experience world's best people management and flexible work practices. They are motivated, challenged and provided with learning and development opportunities to reach their full potential.
- **A Safe and Healthy Workplace Culture**  
Council enables and fosters a healthy, safe and positive workplace culture by actively encouraging and developing positive and proactive practices and systems which support our people's health and wellbeing at work. Workers and managers collaborate and use continuous improvement processes to protect and promote the health and wellbeing of all staff.

# the community's role

Whilst Knox City Council acknowledges we have a crucial leadership role to play in supporting the Knox community to achieve the aspirations of its *Vision*, the contribution of Knox's businesses, residents, community agencies and other organisations will also be critical to success. Council will operate as a key leader working in partnership with the community, and promoting partnerships, connections and opportunities for community awareness of and involvement in implementing the *Vision*.

Specific actions Council will take to facilitate shared community ownership and involvement in implementing Knox's *Vision* include:

- In partnership with the community, Council will develop and maintain a *City Plan* that outlines the strategic objectives and strategies required to deliver on Knox's *Vision*
- Council will proactively engage with and facilitate the partnerships required to ensure Knox businesses, community groups and agencies and other key stakeholders are involved in delivering the *Vision*.
- As part of the *City Plan*, a Council Plan will be developed to outline how Council's own activities align with and support delivery of the *Vision*.
- Council will raise awareness of the *Vision* and promote community opportunities to be involved in making it happen.
- Council, in partnership with other agencies, will advocate for the needs of the Knox community to other levels of government and other stakeholders so that enhanced services, infrastructure and policy decisions complement and uphold the realisation of the *Vision*.
- Council will ensure that the specific services and projects delivered by Council are designed to support achievement of the *Vision*, and are environmentally, economically and socially sustainable.

## Opportunities to be involved

There are a range of ways for Knox's businesses, community groups and agencies, and community members to become involved in making the *Vision* a reality.

- Choose to be informed about the work being undertaken across the community and explore opportunities for individuals, groups, businesses or organisations to be mobilised in pursuit of the *Vision*.
- Let Council know what community members and organisations are doing already to work towards achieving the *Vision*.
- Contribute to community forums and engagement opportunities provided by Council and other local agencies, including through online and social networking tools, to participate in decision making about Knox's future.
- Consider becoming a volunteer in Knox. There are many types of volunteering opportunities available, from assisting with delivering a service through to being involved in a community or sporting group. Volunteers contribute so much to the heart of the Knox community and are always sought across many areas of interest.
- Participate and contribute to local environment friends groups, public transport and other community action groups, speak to Ward Councillors and Members of Parliament about issues relating to achievement of the *Vision* for Knox. Communicate and share what is important to the Knox community and how others can support the realisation of the *Vision*.
- Community based groups can apply for community grants through Council's Community Development Fund. Each year Council distributes funds to community groups that are working toward achievement of the *Vision*.
- Talk to neighbours and build community connections throughout Knox. Studies show that people who know their neighbours feel safer and more connected in their local communities. Connections and social support networks are a primary component of achieving our *Vision*.
- Share and promote the programs and projects of businesses, community groups and community members that work toward achievement of Knox's *Vision*, and promote opportunities for others to be involved.

# monitoring our progress

## the state of knox

Council is progressively developing a suite of indicators to monitor progress toward achievement of the *Vision* and our *City Plan*. The first set of indicators has been published in Knox's *City Plan 2013-2017*, and will be monitored and reviewed annually. Achievement of these indicators is reported to the Knox community through the State of Knox report, and in summary form in Knox's Annual Report.

A snapshot of the types of indicators used to monitor the community's wellbeing can be summarised under the following five themes:

- *Healthy, Connected Communities*: Personal health and wellbeing; mental health; healthy ageing; community connectedness; early childhood development; personal and community safety; service availability; and lifelong learning.
- *Prosperous, Advancing Economy*: Economic activity; employment; income and wealth; skills; work/life balance; diversity of land use; and business diversity.
- *Vibrant and Sustainable Built and Natural Environments*: Open space; housing (diversity and affordability); transport accessibility; sustainable energy use; water; waste management.
- *Culturally Rich and Active Communities*: Arts and cultural activities; leisure and recreation; acceptance of diversity.
- *Democratic and Engaged Communities*: Citizen engagement; community satisfaction with Council.

Information on how the community is progressing is regularly made available via Council's Annual Report. To access this, log onto Council's website at [www.knox.vic.gov.au](http://www.knox.vic.gov.au).

## Council's Performance

Council has a leadership role in working in partnership with the community to achieve Knox's *Vision*, and as such Council's own services and projects are developed specifically to respond to and support the aspirations of the *Vision*. Council's objectives and strategies for the next four years are published as part of the *City Plan 2013-2017*, and annual activities are published each year as part of the Council's Annual Budget. Both documents contain a set of performance indicators against which the achievement of Council's objectives, strategies and actions will be measured. Results of Council's performance against these measures is published annually in Council's Annual Report.

# **glossary of some key terms used in this document**

Activity Centre	The networks of Principal, Major, and Neighbourhood Activity Centres provide the focus for services, employment and social interaction in cities and towns. They are where people shop, work, meet, relax and live. Usually well-served by public transport, they range in size and intensity of use from local neighbourhood strip centres to major regional malls. They are not just shopping centres, they are multifunctional (from 'Melbourne 2030').
Environmental Sustainability	Environmental sustainability involves meeting three conditions: rates of use of renewable resources should not exceed their rates of regeneration; rates of use of non-renewable resources should not exceed the rate at which sustainable renewable resources are developed; and rates of pollution should not exceed the assimilative capacity of the environment.
Place Management	The Place Management model of managing activity centres responds to all the elements of an activity centre and community that cannot be fixed simply through streetscape and infrastructure works. The Place Management approach takes a co-ordinated, effective and efficient approach to manage community expectations and revitalise and improve activity centres by responding to the social, economic and environmental aspects of the local community.

# knox vision: our city, our future

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