

# MINUTES



## Meeting of Council

Held at the  
Civic Centre  
511 Burwood Highway  
Wantirna South  
On  
Monday 19 June 2023

The Agenda for the Meeting of Council, Monday 19 June 2023, forms part of these Minutes and is attached in full at the end of the Minutes.

These Minutes are considered draft until adopted and confirmed at the next Meeting of Council.

The meeting commenced at 7:06pm.

**PRESENT:**

<i>Cr M Timmers-Leitch (Mayor)</i>	<i>Collier Ward</i>
<i>Cr Y Allred</i>	<i>Baird Ward</i>
<i>Cr J Dwight (Via Zoom)</i>	<i>Chandler Ward</i>
<i>Cr S Grasso</i>	<i>Dinsdale Ward</i>
<i>Cr M Baker</i>	<i>Dobson Ward</i>
<i>Cr S Laukens</i>	<i>Friberg Ward</i>
<i>Cr L Cooper</i>	<i>Scott Ward</i>
<i>Cr D Pearce</i>	<i>Taylor Ward</i>
<i>Cr N Seymour</i>	<i>Tirhatuan Ward</i>

<i>Mr B Dobson</i>	<i>Chief Executive Officer</i>
<i>Mr G Curcio</i>	<i>Director - Customer and Performance</i>
<i>Mr G Thorne</i>	<i>Director – Infrastructure</i>
<i>Mr J McNally</i>	<i>Acting Director - City Liveability</i>
<i>Ms J Chalkley</i>	<i>Director – Connected Communities</i>
<i>Ms N Lorkin</i>	<i>Chief Financial Officer</i>
<i>Mr A Dowling</i>	<i>Manager, Governance and Risk</i>

**THE MEETING OPENED WITH A PRAYER, STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND A STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT**

***“Knox City Council acknowledges we are on the traditional land of the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people and pay our respects to elders both past and present.”***

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## 1 Apologies and Requests for Leave of Absence

Nil.

## 2 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

Councillor Seymour foreshadowed a declaration in relation to Item 6.1 - Kindergarten Service Review, noting it was not considered a conflict, but a declaration in the interests of transparency.

## 3 Confirmation of Minutes

The Chairperson, Councillor Timmers-Leitch invited Councillors to raise any opposition to the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 22 May 2023. There being none, the Chairperson declared the Minutes be confirmed.

## 4 Presentations, Petitions and Memorials

Councillor Timmers-Leitch noted Council was aware of an online petition regarding the Kindergarten Service Review item that has over 2000 signatures. However, a copy of this petition has not yet been presented to Council.

## 5 Public Question Time

Question Time commenced at 7:15pm.

The following questions were raised with Council:

### 5.1 Question One - Catherine Mewett

**I was part of the Kindergarten Community Panel. When we arrived for our first meeting an information pack was provided to all panel members. It stated that our role as a panel member was to “Provide your recommendations and advice on the preferred model”.**

**I would like to know why we were not allowed to state our preference for the proposed viable options, collectively or individually, at the conclusion of the sessions and only asked to write a guiding statement?**

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- The outcomes of the community panel is one input to the range of information Council needs to consider in making its decision. On balance of all the information, officers have recommended option 2. By giving due consideration to all three options the community panel has provided Council with valuable insight into what role it should play depending on which option Council determines is its preferred option tonight. The information pack given to panel members clearly states the intention for the panel from the outset was to provide a statement.

### 5.2 Question Two - Catherine Mewett

**As part of the Kindergarten Community Panel, we were all assured, all 3 options were viable. I feel like the feedback from the Community Panel has not influenced the recommendations made to the council.**

**As stated in the agenda, it has already recommended Option 2 (to remain a provider 2 Early Years Hubs only) and states “Why not Option 1” (Remain a sessional kindergarten provider). It is clearly thought by the council to not be financially viable when it was previously indicated all options were. This information has given mixed message and false hope about Option 1.**

**I would like to know why this recommendation goes against the panels guiding statement to the council and why it insinuates that Option 1 is not viable and was not recommended?**

**As elected representatives of the community, I implore you to vote in the best interest and values, of current and future families in your ward, who will be directly impacted by this change.**

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- All options were considered and officers used the information from the three phased review and the statements provided from the Community panel to recommend Council formally consider option 2. While none of the options available to Council completely remove the risks presented by the reform, officers consider that Option 2 will provide an appropriate and reasonable balance between Council’s responsibility for delivering social benefit for the community, and meeting community expectations that Council has a role to

play in service provision, while managing the risks to council's financial and operational sustainability of the program in the longer-term.

- Officers also took on board the opportunities the Community Panel outlined in their statement regarding Option 2 which considered the potential to lease the sessional facilities to alternate community managed and not-for-profit providers while maintaining Council's provision of sessional programs in the two integrated Early Years Hubs, would mean that Council could refocus its strategic approach to how it supports access to quality kindergarten services for the community to more closely align with Council's legislative and other responsibilities.

### 5.3 Question Three - Rachel Vine

**Early childhood teachers and educators often seek out council positions because they offer the best guarantee of decent working conditions. At the moment there is a teacher shortage and as an AEU member, I know that having good pay and conditions attracts teachers and educators into the profession to deliver the vital start to a student's education that they deserve. So it needs to be asked why is this council risking the chance of teachers looking beyond Knox for employment or leaving the profession entirely at a cost to our local kids and their families?**

The Chief Executive Officer, Bruce Dobson responded:

- The kindergarten service review has been looking at what role Council is best placed to provide going forward, with significant changes to the service under the State Government's reforms.
- Should Council ultimately decide to withdraw from sessional kindergarten service delivery in part or in full, Council's industrial instruments provide various safety nets for staff including things like professional development, outplacement support, redeployment, redundancy, and/or a transfer of business scenario under the Fair Work Act. Council will be seeking to support its staff through any transition to new service providers within Knox.

### 5.4 Question Four - Rachel Vine

**Councillors were not elected with a mandate to walk away from being a provider of Knox kinder services so why is this local issue being decided on now prior to the next election?**

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- Council has been reviewing Knox Kindergarten services since 2019.
- Council's current service agreement with the Department of Education is due to finish in December 2024.
- Should Council make the decision to formally consider Option 2, Council then has time to notify the Department and for Council to work with them to ensure a transition of service to a new provider.

## 5.5 Question Five - Glenn Mewett

**With 4 year old kinder changing from 15-30 hours a week, it essentially halves available spaces for families.**

**What happens if Knox is not able to bring in an independent provider to all required sites to meet community demands, where will these kids attend kinder?**

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- In metropolitan Melbourne 4 year old kinder is moving to 30 hours by 2032. With the introduction of 30 hours of 4 year old kindergarten all providers, including Council, will have a commitment to ensure that relevant places are available.
- With the introduction of 30 hours of 4 year old kindergarten all providers, including Council, will have a commitment to ensure that relevant places are available.
- Whilst all providers are still working through how this will work, there would be a need to look at larger, fuller classes, having blended 3 & 4 year old programs as well as having a rotational model.
- Should Council make the decision to formally consider option 2, Council Officers would work with the Department of Education to ensure a transition of services to a new sessional kindergarten provider/s from 2025. This would mean that the Knox community would still be accessing sessional Kindergarten from the current active sites in Knox and that would include the two kindergartens in the hubs.

## 5.6 Question Six - Sarah Chilcott

**Why would you shut down the Kinders that are located next door to schools? As they are what feed into local schools which some, maybe struggling with numbers already. This is also where long term friendships start and follow through to Grade 6.**

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- Council recognises the importance of kindergarten for children from a social and educational perspective. Council needed to suspend the operation of some kindergartens in 2023 and 2024 as there was not enough children registered for these sites. This is a normal part of Council's annual planning process and not a result of the service review. By grouping children from smaller sessions into larger ones, it has meant that kindergarten in 2023 and 2024 is being offered at fewer sites but with fuller sessions. Future changes would be determined based on registration numbers and maximising value for the community and local families.

## 5.7 Question Seven - Leon Reeves

**What's the plan once the 2 kinders you choose to have open become full and you have to start rejecting applications?**

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- Regardless of the decision made by Council there will be ongoing sessional kindergarten across Knox. Should Council make the decision to formally consider option 2, Council Officers would work with the Department of Education to ensure a transition of services to a new provider. This would mean that the Knox community would still be accessing Kindergarten from the current active sites in Knox and that would include the two kindergartens in the hubs.

## 5.8 Question Eight - Zenia Vas

**If the only choice at our council is long day care in order to go to kinder, you will have two outcomes on your hands:**

1. Fewer women going back to work to able to stay at home and take care of their kids.
2. Fewer kids will go to kinder because young families cannot make it work with the extra cost (a reminder that a lot of younger families don't have extended family, grandparents etc in the country that can take care of their kids on some days. As a result the option of full time long daycare again possess only cost drain on the families, which will result in mothers not returning to work post maternity leave. Definitely not the smartest option for the economy).

**Why can't Knox council keep a few sessional kinders in each of its suburbs for those families that want it? Considering the cost of living and additional fees associated with long care, if a family can juggle their work commitments around sessional kinder, why take away the few things that are actually keeping young families afloat at the moment?**

**Other councils are already giving 3 year olds a sessional 15 hours a week option (like the Government intended) while we only get 5 hours. Honestly, Knox council needs to take a hard look at itself in the mirror. How can you'll still justify these proposed changes?**

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- Should Council formally consider Option 2, active Sessional Kindergartens and centres in Knox would not be closing. Officers would work with the Department of Education to explore an Expression of Interest process for identifying alternate providers, with the aim of Council leasing kindergarten stand-alone facilities to service providers from January 2025, which means sessional kindergarten would continue. This decision would have no implications to long day care centre operations.
- Council would continue to run kindergartens in 2023 and 2024, offering 15 hours per week for three year-old Kinder from 2024.



## 5.9 Question Nine – Erin Killingback

**Can Council please clarify who exactly is recommending option 2 as being the way forward as the final statement from the community panel did not suggest this in any way nor where they asked for a recommendation. And if it goes with option 2 what happens to the other standalone kindergartens while looking for an early years manager/not for profit to take over, will they continue to be run by council until then even if this takes longer than planned?**

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- All reports that are presented to Council are completed by Officers of Knox City Council. Recommendations are based on information available and with regards to the Kindergarten Report it is a culmination of three phases, staged over 18 months. Council's kindergarten service review looked at the costs, opportunities and risks associated with its kindergarten services and the community and social benefits of Council's role, supported by Staff and community engagement, including the statements from the Community Panel.
- Council's Service Agreement with the Department of Education runs until the end of 2024. Should Council make the decision to formally consider option 2, Council will work with the Department of Education to ensure a transition of services to a new provider. Officers are confident this can be achieved in the timeframe available.

## 5.10 Question Ten - Steve Bogos

**In the event council does proceed with the proposal to close the majority of its sessional kindergarten centres, what concessions will be made to ensure children enrolling for sessional kindergarten at long day care centres, whom do not access daycare at the centre are not deprioritised in favour of children who are enrolled in the centre's day care program?**

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- It should be noted that if Council formally consider Option 2, active Sessional Kindergartens and centres in Knox would not be closing. Officers would work with the Department of Education to explore an Expression of Interest process for identifying alternate providers, with the aim of Council leasing kindergarten stand-alone to service providers from January 2025, which means sessional kindergarten would continue. No direct implications to long day care centres operations.

## 5.11 Question Eleven - Matthew Harris

**The report notes staff concerns about the long term consequences of outsourcing. In the event that Council accepts the review recommendation, what assurances can the Council provide that the quality of this service will not decline, and will in fact increase - including an improvement to staff to children ratios?**

The report states that "Remaining a service provider in any capacity means Council's service would continue to be subject to changing State Government policy and funding allocations into the future. It also means ongoing exposure to changing utilisation trends, enrolment levels, workforce factors, increasing infrastructure costs, and a history of cost shifting." (p.12)

**The report infers that free kinder funding is not ongoing, contrary to State Government Budget announcements. The focus of the review is very much on the costs of early childhood learning,**

**but not its importance, why has no case for it to form part of the core services that Council makes available to the people been genuinely considered as part of this review?**

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- The Commonwealth sets the quality standards and these are then monitored by the Department of Education as the regulatory authority in Victoria for the National Quality Framework.
- There are many providers that either meet or exceed the required standards within Victoria.
- The Report does indicate that free kinder is ongoing and is improving the financial position of Council kindergarten services as this funding component is higher than the fees previously charged by Council.
- The remaining kindergarten service providers carry inherent operational and sustainability risks for local government in terms of Council's capacity to respond to ongoing reform of the early childhood sector.
- Council has considerable aspects of early childhood learning as part of the review process and that has occurred over the last 18 months and sees the positive benefits for children in a social, emotional and development outcomes perspective into the future, regardless of who provides the service.

Question Time Concluded at 7:39pm.

## 6 Officer Reports

### 6.1 Kindergarten Service Review

SUMMARY: Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley

The State Government has introduced the largest social, economic and educational reform of early childhood education in Victoria's history, fundamentally redesigning the kindergarten service system. In coming years this reform agenda will see further expansion of early learning to include 30 hours for 4-year-old children.

Kindergarten programs in Victoria are delivered in both long day care and standalone (sessional) services. While some Councils operate kindergartens, many Councils do not and are focused instead on early years planning and managing community infrastructure. Sessional kindergartens in these Council areas are run by other community-based and not-for-profit providers. Knox Council is somewhat of an outlier, particularly in Melbourne's eastern region, having been a direct provider of kindergarten services for many years.

Knox Council currently delivers 3-year-old kindergarten (five hours/week) and 4-year-old kindergarten (15 hours/week) and will expand this to include 15 hours per week for 3 and 4-year-olds in 2024. Council supports the intention of the State Government reforms, however the scale and frequency of policy and funding changes in recent years has posed and will continue to pose significant challenges for kindergarten service providers and Early Years Managers into the future. With the current Service Agreement between Council and the Department of Education set to expire in December 2024, it is timely that Council determine what its role in kindergarten service provision will be into the future.

Council's Kindergarten Reform Project has considered the impact of the reforms for Council in three separate yet connected phases since 2019. In Phase 1, in April 2021, Council determined to expand its existing 4-year-old kindergarten service to include five hours of kindergarten for 3-year-olds from 2022 and developed the Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan (KISP) in partnership with the Department of Education (DE).

In Phase 2, Council considered the challenges posed by its existing suite of early years facilities and the estimated \$49-70M investment in infrastructure required to support 15 hours for 3 and 4-year-olds from 2029, resolving in November 2021 that the funding required was beyond Council's financial capacity and that fully implementing the reform in Knox will require significantly increased State Government investment in early years infrastructure.

In Phase 3, which commenced in June 2022, Council determined to undertake a review of the kindergarten service and Council's role as kindergarten service provider and Early Years Manager, inclusive of community consultation and a Community Panel process.

An initial analysis of the kindergarten service was undertaken to determine potential options which Council could consider with regards to Council's future role in kindergarten service provision. Council undertook broad community engagement at the end of 2022 about the value of kindergarten in Knox and contracted Capire Consulting Group to convene a demographically representative Community Panel.

In February 2023 Council referred three potential options and the broader community feedback to the Community Panel, committing to receive an options statement and an overarching community statement from the Panel regarding its perspectives on the social and community benefits of Council being a kindergarten service provider. Over the same period, Council undertook initial engagement and pre-consultation with the kindergarten staff who could potentially be impacted by any future change if Council determined to implement any of the options. The three options considered include:

Option 1 – Remain a sessional kindergarten provider and create a more sustainable service: Consolidate the existing service into no more than 20 kindergarten sites from 2024, increasing the hours offered to 15 hours per week for both 3 and 4-year-old children. Noting that a further review would need to be undertaken by 2026 regarding the implication of the State Government's requirements to increase Pre-Prep to 30 hours per week by 2032.

Option 2 – Remain a sessional kindergarten provider in the 2 Early Years Hubs only: Cease providing sessional kindergarten in stand-alone facilities and relinquish Council's role as an Early Years Manager from December 2024 in line with the expiry of the current kindergarten service agreement.

Option 3 – Exit sessional kindergarten service provision: Cease all sessional kindergarten service provision (sessional kindergarten in the Hubs and stand-alone services) and relinquish Council's role as an Early Years Manager from December 2024 in line with the expiry of the current kindergarten service agreement. This excludes long day care in the Hubs with funded kindergarten places.

This report summarises the three phases of the Kindergarten Reform Project and key insights from the Kindergarten Service Review. It includes the Community Panel report, the community statements and summarises feedback from the initial engagement with staff.

The report outlines a recommendation for Council to formally consider Option 2, as defined in this report to remain a service provider in the two Early Years Hubs only from January 2025. Under this option, other providers would be sought to operate sessional kindergarten services in Knox and Council would be able to lease its stand-alone kindergarten facilities to alternate not-for-profit service providers. Officers consider that this option provides the greatest balance between Council's responsibility for delivering social benefit for the community, while managing its risks and financial sustainability into the future. It would allow Council to re-align its role in direct service provision with many of its Local Government counterparts and legislative responsibilities under the Local Government Act 2020.

The State Government's recent "Free Kindergarten" funding has improved the financial position of Council's kindergarten service, as this funding component is higher than the fees previously charged by Council. Even with this, remaining a kindergarten service provider carries inherent operational and sustainability risks for Local Government in terms of Council's capacity to respond to on-going reform of the early childhood sector. In the context of the State Government reforms, this is inherently more challenging for Council – whose operations and focus is necessarily spread across more than 100 different community service areas – than a service provider for which kindergarten service provision is a core business and focus.

In Council's ongoing roles as municipal planner and infrastructure owner, Knox City Council can, like other Local Governments who are not direct service providers, continue to partner with non-Council providers to support continued access to quality early childhood education for the children and families of Knox.

Initial staff engagement has already been undertaken with potentially impacted staff on all three options. Indicating the intention to consider Option 2 will trigger formal staff consultation in line with Council's industrial obligations. If Council endorses the recommendations outlined in this report, an extended period of consultation would be undertaken before officers present a further report to a Strategic Planning Committee or Council meeting in August 2023 for a final decision.

It should be noted that if Council ultimately determines to implement Option 2, this means Council would provide sessional kindergarten in the 2 early years hubs only from January 2025 and could lease its sessional kindergarten facilities to not-for-profit providers. Kindergarten is a universal service and alternate providers will be required to ensure all eligible children are able to access kindergarten places in Knox. Council has a role in municipal planning and would work with the Department of Education to identify alternate providers to ensure all children have ongoing access to a kindergarten place in Knox.

#### RECOMMENDATION

That Council, having completed a comprehensive review of the kindergarten service and Council's role in kindergarten service provision, inclusive of broad community engagement, initial consultation with staff and deliberative engagement with a demographically representative Community Panel, resolves to:

1. Thank the Community Panel for its work and statements in relation to each of the options it was asked to consider.
2. Formally consider Option 2 as defined in this report to remain a sessional kindergarten provider in the two Early Years Hubs from January 2025, to balance the operational and financial risks of being a kindergarten service provider with the social benefits and returns of investing in early learning.
3. Note that staff consultation with impacted employees will now be undertaken in accordance with Council's relevant industrial instruments.
4. Note that a further report will be presented to Council in August 2023 seeking a final decision in relation to Option 2, following consultation being undertaken with staff.
5. Continue to work in partnership with non-Council kindergarten providers and the Victorian Government to support a mix of kindergarten provision in the municipality. Noting that the delivery of kindergarten including implementation of the 2020 reform "3-year-old Kindergarten Expansion", and 2022 reform "Free Kindergarten and Pre-Prep" is primarily the responsibility of the State Government.
6. Note that investment in early childhood education and care has lasting long-term social and educational benefits for children, families and communities and Council is committed to supporting access to high quality early learning for the Knox Community.

7. To authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person the Chief Executive Officer selects) to communicate the contents of confidential Attachment 2 to the extent necessary at their discretion, including for the purposes of giving effect to Council's decision.

*Councillor Seymour advised she had recently attended the opening of a private early childhood centre and sessional kindergarten and that her daughter had recently undertaken work experience at a private early childhood centre. Councillor Seymour advised these matters were not considered to give rise to a conflict of interest, but were disclosed in the interests of transparency.*

## **RESOLUTION**

**MOVED:** Councillor Timmers-Leitch

**SECONDED:** Councillor Pearce

**That Council, having completed a comprehensive review of the kindergarten service and Council's role in kindergarten service provision, inclusive of broad community engagement, initial consultation with staff and deliberative engagement with a demographically representative Community Panel, resolves to:**

1. **Thank the Community Panel for its work and statements in relation to each of the options it was asked to consider.**
2. **Formally consider Option 2 as defined in this report to remain a sessional kindergarten provider in the two Early Years Hubs from January 2025, to balance the operational and financial risks of being a kindergarten service provider with the social benefits and returns of investing in early learning.**
3. **Note that staff consultation with impacted employees will now be undertaken in accordance with Council's relevant industrial instruments.**
4. **Note that a further report will be presented to Council in August 2023 seeking a final decision in relation to Option 2, following consultation being undertaken with staff.**
5. **Note that, should Council resolve to adopt Option 2 in August 2023, Council would work with the Department of Education to support them in identifying alternative providers for sessional kindergarten in Knox, with the option of Council leasing facilities to such providers from January 2025.**
6. **Continue to work in partnership with non-Council kindergarten providers and the Victorian Government to support a mix of kindergarten provision in the municipality.**
7. **Note that the delivery of kindergarten including implementation of the 2020 reform "3-year-old Kindergarten Expansion", and 2022 reform "Free Kindergarten and Pre-Prep" is primarily the responsibility of the State Government.**
8. **Note Council's commitment to updating the Knox Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan (KISP) which assists kindergarten providers to meet demand and provide a clear picture of infrastructure across the municipality.**
9. **Note that investment in early childhood education and care has lasting long-term social and educational benefits for children, families and communities and Council is committed to supporting access to high quality early learning for the Knox Community.**
10. **To authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person the Chief Executive Officer selects) to communicate the contents of confidential Attachment 2 to the extent**

necessary at their discretion, including for the purposes of giving effect to Council's decision.

**PROCEDURAL MOTION**

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

**MOVED:** Councillor Baker

**SECONDED:** Councillor Cooper

That Council resolve to suspend standing orders.

**CARRIED**

**STANDING ORDERS WERE SUSPENDED AT 7:51pm**

**PROCEDURAL MOTION**

**RESUMPTION OF STANDING ORDERS**

**MOVED:** Councillor Dwight

**SECONDED:** Councillor Laukens

That Council resolve to resume standing orders.

**CARRIED**

**STANDING ORDERS WERE RESUMED AT 8:45pm**

The substantive Motion was put and CARRIED.

**A Division was called by Councillor Cooper**

**For the motion:** Councillor Allred, Councillor Baker, Councillor Cooper, Councillor Dwight, Councillor Laukens, Councillor Pearce, Councillor Seymour and Councillor Timmers-Leitch

**Against the motion:** Councillor Grasso

**Abstention:** Nil

**CARRIED 8:1**

## 6.2 ICT Capital Works

SUMMARY: Chief Information Officer, Scott Coleman

The ICT Capital Works Report shows projects on Council's ICT Capital Works Program and indicates the monthly status of each project.

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the ICT Capital Works Report, as at 19 May 2023.

### **RESOLUTION**

**MOVED: Councillor Laukens**

**SECONDED: Councillor Allred**

**That Council receive and note the ICT Capital Works Report, as at 19 May 2023.**

### **CARRIED**



### 6.3 Capital Works Program Report

SUMMARY: Coordinator, Capital Works, John Bixby

The Capital Works Program Report shows projects on Council's Capital Works Program and indicates the status of each project as of 9 June 2023.

#### RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Capital Works Program Report, as of 9 June 2023.

#### **RESOLUTION**

**MOVED: Councillor Baker**

**SECONDED: Councillor Cooper**

**That Council receive and note the Capital Works Program Report, as of 9 June 2023.**

#### **CARRIED**

*Councillor Allred noted there had been some delays in the upgrade works at Erica Avenue. Councillor Allred apologised to those who read her Ward Update in the latest edition of Knox News, where she had reported that the project was on track. Due to timing issues, this was not able to be corrected prior to publication.*

7 Supplementary Items

Nil.

8 Notices of Motion

Nil.

9 Urgent Business

Nil.

10 Questions Without Notice

Nil.

11 Confidential Items

Nil.

**MEETING CLOSED AT 8:55pm**

Minutes of Meeting confirmed at the  
Meeting of Council  
held on Monday, 26 June 2023

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Chairperson

The Agenda for this meeting is attached in full at the end of the Minutes.

# AGENDA



Meeting of Council

To be held at the

Civic Centre

511 Burwood Highway

Wantirna South

On

Monday 19 June 2023 at 7:00 PM

This meeting will be conducted as a hybrid meeting

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Bruce Dobson

Chief Executive Officer

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1 Apologies and Requests for Leave of Absence

2 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

3 Confirmation of Minutes

Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting of Council held on Monday 22 May 2023

4 Presentations, Petitions and Memorials

5 Public Question Time

## 6 Officer Reports

### 6.1 Kindergarten Service Review

**SUMMARY:** Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley

The State Government has introduced the largest social, economic and educational reform of early childhood education in Victoria's history, fundamentally redesigning the kindergarten service system. In coming years this reform agenda will see further expansion of early learning to include 30 hours for 4-year-old children.

Kindergarten programs in Victoria are delivered in both long day care and standalone (sessional) services. While some Councils operate kindergartens, many Councils do not and are focused instead on early years planning and managing community infrastructure. Sessional kindergartens in these Council areas are run by other community-based and not-for-profit providers. Knox Council is somewhat of an outlier, particularly in Melbourne's eastern region, having been a direct provider of kindergarten services for many years.

Knox Council currently delivers 3-year-old kindergarten (five hours/week) and 4-year-old kindergarten (15 hours/week) and will expand this to include 15 hours per week for 3 and 4-year-olds in 2024. Council supports the intention of the State Government reforms, however the scale and frequency of policy and funding changes in recent years has posed and will continue to pose significant challenges for kindergarten service providers and Early Years Managers into the future. With the current Service Agreement between Council and the Department of Education set to expire in December 2024, it is timely that Council determine what its role in kindergarten service provision will be into the future.

Council's Kindergarten Reform Project has considered the impact of the reforms for Council in three separate yet connected phases since 2019. In Phase 1, in April 2021, Council determined to expand its existing 4-year-old kindergarten service to include five hours of kindergarten for 3-year-olds from 2022 and developed the Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan (KISP) in partnership with the Department of Education (DE).

In Phase 2, Council considered the challenges posed by its existing suite of early years facilities and the estimated \$49-70M investment in infrastructure required to support 15 hours for 3 and 4-year-olds from 2029, resolving in November 2021 that the funding required was beyond Council's financial capacity and that fully implementing the reform in Knox will require significantly increased State Government investment in early years infrastructure.

In Phase 3, which commenced in June 2022, Council determined to undertake a review of the kindergarten service and Council's role as kindergarten service provider and Early Years Manager, inclusive of community consultation and a Community Panel process.

An initial analysis of the kindergarten service was undertaken to determine potential options which Council could consider with regards to Council's future role in kindergarten service provision. Council undertook broad community engagement at the end of 2022 about the value of kindergarten in Knox and contracted Capire Consulting Group to convene a demographically representative Community Panel.

In February 2023 Council referred three potential options and the broader community feedback to the Community Panel, committing to receive an options statement and an overarching community statement from the Panel regarding its perspectives on the social and community benefits of Council being a kindergarten service provider. Over the same period, Council undertook initial engagement and pre-consultation with the kindergarten staff who could potentially be impacted by any future change if Council determined to implement any of the options. The three options considered include:

**Option 1 – Remain a sessional kindergarten provider and create a more sustainable service:** Consolidate the existing service into no more than 20 kindergarten sites from 2024, increasing the hours offered to 15 hours per week for both 3 and 4-year-old children. Noting that a further review would need to be undertaken by 2026 regarding the implication of the State Government's requirements to increase Pre-Prep to 30 hours per week by 2032.

**Option 2 – Remain a sessional kindergarten provider in the 2 Early Years Hubs only:** Cease providing sessional kindergarten in stand-alone facilities and relinquish Council's role as an Early Years Manager from December 2024 in line with the expiry of the current kindergarten service agreement.

**Option 3 – Exit sessional kindergarten service provision:** Cease all sessional kindergarten service provision (sessional kindergarten in the Hubs and stand-alone services) and relinquish Council's role as an Early Years Manager from December 2024 in line with the expiry of the current kindergarten service agreement. This excludes long day care in the Hubs with funded kindergarten places.

This report summarises the three phases of the Kindergarten Reform Project and key insights from the Kindergarten Service Review. It includes the Community Panel report, the community statements and summarises feedback from the initial engagement with staff.

The report outlines a recommendation for Council to formally consider Option 2, as defined in this report to remain a service provider in the two Early Years Hubs only from January 2025. Under this option, other providers would be sought to operate sessional kindergarten services in Knox and Council would be able to lease its stand-alone kindergarten facilities to alternate not-for-profit service providers. Officers consider that this option provides the greatest balance between Council's responsibility for delivering social benefit for the community, while managing its risks and financial sustainability into the future. It would allow Council to re-align its role in direct service provision with many of its Local Government counterparts and legislative responsibilities under the Local Government Act 2020.

The State Government's recent "Free Kindergarten" funding has improved the financial position of Council's kindergarten service, as this funding component is higher than the fees previously charged by Council. Even with this, remaining a kindergarten service provider carries inherent operational and sustainability risks for Local Government in terms of Council's capacity to respond to on-going reform of the early childhood sector. In the context of the State Government reforms, this is inherently more challenging for Council – whose operations and focus is necessarily spread across more than 100 different community service areas – than a service provider for which kindergarten service provision is a core business and focus.

**In Council's ongoing roles as municipal planner and infrastructure owner, Knox City Council can, like other Local Governments who are not direct service providers, continue to partner with non-Council providers to support continued access to quality early childhood education for the children and families of Knox.**

**Initial staff engagement has already been undertaken with potentially impacted staff on all three options. Indicating the intention to consider Option 2 will trigger formal staff consultation in line with Council's industrial obligations. If Council endorses the recommendations outlined in this report, an extended period of consultation would be undertaken before officers present a further report to a Strategic Planning Committee or Council meeting in August 2023 for a final decision.**

**It should be noted that if Council ultimately determines to implement Option 2, this means Council would provide sessional kindergarten in the 2 early years hubs only from January 2025 and could lease its sessional kindergarten facilities to not-for-profit providers. Kindergarten is a universal service and alternate providers will be required to ensure all eligible children are able to access kindergarten places in Knox. Council has a role in municipal planning and would work with the Department of Education to identify alternate providers to ensure all children have ongoing access to a kindergarten place in Knox.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council, having completed a comprehensive review of the kindergarten service and Council's role in kindergarten service provision, inclusive of broad community engagement, initial consultation with staff and deliberative engagement with a demographically representative Community Panel, resolves to:**

- 1. Thank the Community Panel for its work and statements in relation to each of the options it was asked to consider.**
- 2. Formally consider Option 2 as defined in this report to remain a sessional kindergarten provider in the two Early Years Hubs from January 2025, to balance the operational and financial risks of being a kindergarten service provider with the social benefits and returns of investing in early learning.**
- 3. Note that staff consultation with impacted employees will now be undertaken in accordance with Council's relevant industrial instruments.**
- 4. Note that a further report will be presented to Council in August 2023 seeking a final decision in relation to Option 2, following consultation being undertaken with staff.**
- 5. Continue to work in partnership with non-Council kindergarten providers and the Victorian Government to support a mix of kindergarten provision in the municipality. Noting that the delivery of kindergarten including implementation of the 2020 reform "3-year-old Kindergarten Expansion", and 2022 reform "Free Kindergarten and Pre-Prep" is primarily the responsibility of the State Government.**
- 6. Note that investment in early childhood education and care has lasting long-term social and educational benefits for children, families and communities and Council is committed to supporting access to high quality early learning for the Knox Community.**



- 7. To authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person the Chief Executive Officer selects) to communicate the contents of confidential Attachment 2 to the extent necessary at their discretion, including for the purposes of giving effect to Council's decision.**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The State Government's kindergarten reform agenda is informed by significant research and international experience which recognises the social, educational and economic benefits of extended periods of high-quality early learning and their life-long beneficial impacts. Two years of universal kindergarten in the years prior to school and 30 hours of pre-prep for 4-year-olds from 2026 under the "Best Start, Best Life" reforms, represent fundamental changes to the kindergarten service model in Victoria.

Knox City Council has historically fulfilled multiple roles in the early years sector as an Early Years Manager, kindergarten service provider, early years municipal planner and community infrastructure holder on behalf of the Knox community. However, ongoing State Government reforms mean the provision of kindergarten services in Victoria is changing and will continue to change into the future.

Kindergarten is primarily the responsibility of the State Government forming part of the State Government Education system. It is delivered to the community through private, not-for-profit and Local Government providers. While all Councils provide municipal planning for early years services, under the Local Government Act 2020 Councils do not have any statutory obligation to directly deliver children's services, and it is at the discretion of each Council to determine its role according to local needs and priorities through their Municipal Early Years Plan. For Knox City Council this is the "Child Youth and Seniors Plan 2021-2025".

Unlike many of its Local Government counterparts whose role in kindergarten involves early years planning and managing community infrastructure through lease arrangements with other providers, Knox City Council has been a direct provider of kindergarten for many years. In other municipalities where the relevant Council does not deliver kindergarten services, the sessional services are operated by community-based and not-for-profit providers.

In recent years, changing policy and funding arrangements, sector-wide workforce challenges, the increased costs of developing and maintaining fit-for-purpose community infrastructure and community trends toward accessing kindergarten in long day care have made it increasingly difficult for Council to sustain its role in direct service provision – particularly the provision of sessional kindergarten in stand-alone, single-room facilities which has a number of challenges. Single-room facilities comprise the large majority of Council's kindergartens.

Notwithstanding the impact of the pandemic on short-term utilisation, there are ongoing trends in Knox which indicate families are choosing to access kindergarten programs in long day care services which integrate funded kindergarten with longer hours of childcare. This has resulted in fewer enrolments and lower utilisation of Council's sessional kindergarten program since 2017.

State Government funding of kindergarten has changed with the introduction of "Free Kindergarten", and this has assisted the financial position of Council's service. The State Government has advised that current policy and funding commitments are included in its budget

forward estimates, and that Early Years Providers can expect funding to be indexed each year. The current funding levels still require that Council subsidise the kindergarten program.

Although requested, the State Government has not been able to provide certainty of future funding levels nor an assurance that funding will cover service cost increases in the future. The conditions of “Free Kinder” funding limit Council’s capacity to raise any further revenue to cover the program costs through fees. In a rate capped environment, amid ongoing Pandemic recovery and economic uncertainty, it is important that Council balances its role in providing services to the community with ongoing risks to its financial and operational sustainability.

At the same time, there is potential for expansion of not-for-profit and community managed providers delivering sessional kindergarten in Knox. Not-for-profit Early Years Managers already operate in neighbouring LGAs (Whitehorse, Monash and Yarra Ranges) and across the metropolitan region. These providers operate across municipal boundaries, often leasing Council facilities to create robust service portfolios and effective economies of scale while maintaining service quality for children and families. While some of the challenges noted apply to all Early Years Providers, the challenges are inherently greater for Council whose operations are necessarily spread across over 100 different community service areas, compared with service providers for which kindergarten service provision is a core business and focus.

### **Kindergarten Reform Project**

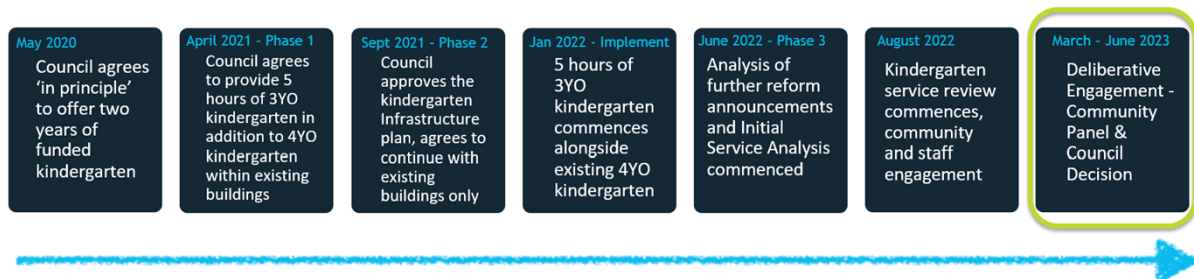
In 2019, Council initiated the Knox Kindergarten Reform Project to support it to consider the implications of the kindergarten expansion reform for Council in its roles as kindergarten service provider, Early Years Manager, municipal planner and infrastructure provider in three separate, yet connected, decision phases.

In Phase 1, Council considered its capacity to expand Council’s existing kindergarten service to respond to the State Government’s announcement in 2020 of two years of kindergarten, resolving in April 2021 to include five hours of 3-year-old kindergarten in 2022 alongside the existing 4-year-old kindergarten program within Knox’s existing early years infrastructure.

In Phase 2, Council considered its capacity to expand the existing early years facilities to support the delivery of contemporary kindergarten services into the future. Knox partnered with the State Government to develop a Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan (KISP) and resolved in November 2021 that without significantly increased State Government investment, Council was not in a financial position to fund the \$71.1M required for expanding infrastructure to support Council’s on-going provision of kindergarten places for eligible children in the municipality. This figure is expected to be over \$100M now given construction costs have increased since the infrastructure review was undertaken in 2021, as well as the impact of providing facilities for 30 hours of 4-year-old kindergarten by 2032.

In Phase 3, in 2022/23, Council has undertaken a review of the kindergarten service and Council’s role and investment in kindergarten service provision inclusive of broad community engagement and a Community Panel.

**Figure 1 –Kindergarten Reform Project Milestones**



This report includes the Community Panel final report which contains the community statement on each of the three options and the overarching community statement (please refer to Attachment 1 and Section 2.4.1). Council thanks the individual Community Members who made up the Community Panel and the effort and time the Panel put into developing the assessment framework and the collaborative Community Statements. The Panel report and each of the statements has been considered by officers in preparing this report and in making a recommendation for Council’s consideration.

This report also summarises feedback from initial engagement with staff and provides a recommendation for Council to consider Option 2. Officers consider that this option best balances Council’s commitment to supporting access to quality early learning with a sustainable approach to service provision which would see Council continue to provide sessional kindergarten in the two Early Years Hubs only from January 2025, creating an opportunity to lease the stand-alone sessional facilities to alternative community managed and not-for-profit providers.

## 2. DISCUSSION

### 2.1 Background Context

#### Council’s Role in the Early Years Sector

Knox City Council has a long history of kindergarten service provision and Early Years Management. As a municipal planner, Council has advocated for and supported a mix of early years services in the municipality which include independent, private and not-for-profit providers who deliver a range of integrated and stand-alone early years services in addition to Council’s sessional kindergartens and integrated Early Years Hubs.

In coming years, the State Government’s “Kindergarten Expansion” and “Best Start, Best Life” reforms will require service providers to offer 15 hours of kindergarten each week for 3-year-old children (by 2029) and 30 hours of 4-year-old pre-prep for 4-year-old children (from 2026, to be fully implemented by 2032), posing a range of opportunities and challenges for service and infrastructure providers across Victoria. Implementation of the reforms is a significant and complex challenge for Local Government providers like Knox, who must balance the cost of expanded programs by reducing spending in other areas of the community.

The Kindergarten Service Review consisted of initial service analysis, which explored the costs, opportunities and risks presented by the reform for Council's role in kindergarten service provision, broad community consultation on the value the Knox community places on kindergarten in Knox, a deliberative Community Panel process to consider community benefits of

Council's role and develop option statements and an overarching community statement for Council to consider in its deliberations. It also included initial staff engagement with the kindergarten workforce who could be impacted by any potential change to Council's future role in kindergarten service provision.

## **2.2 Key Insights from the Kindergarten Reform Project (Phase 3) - Kindergarten Service Review**

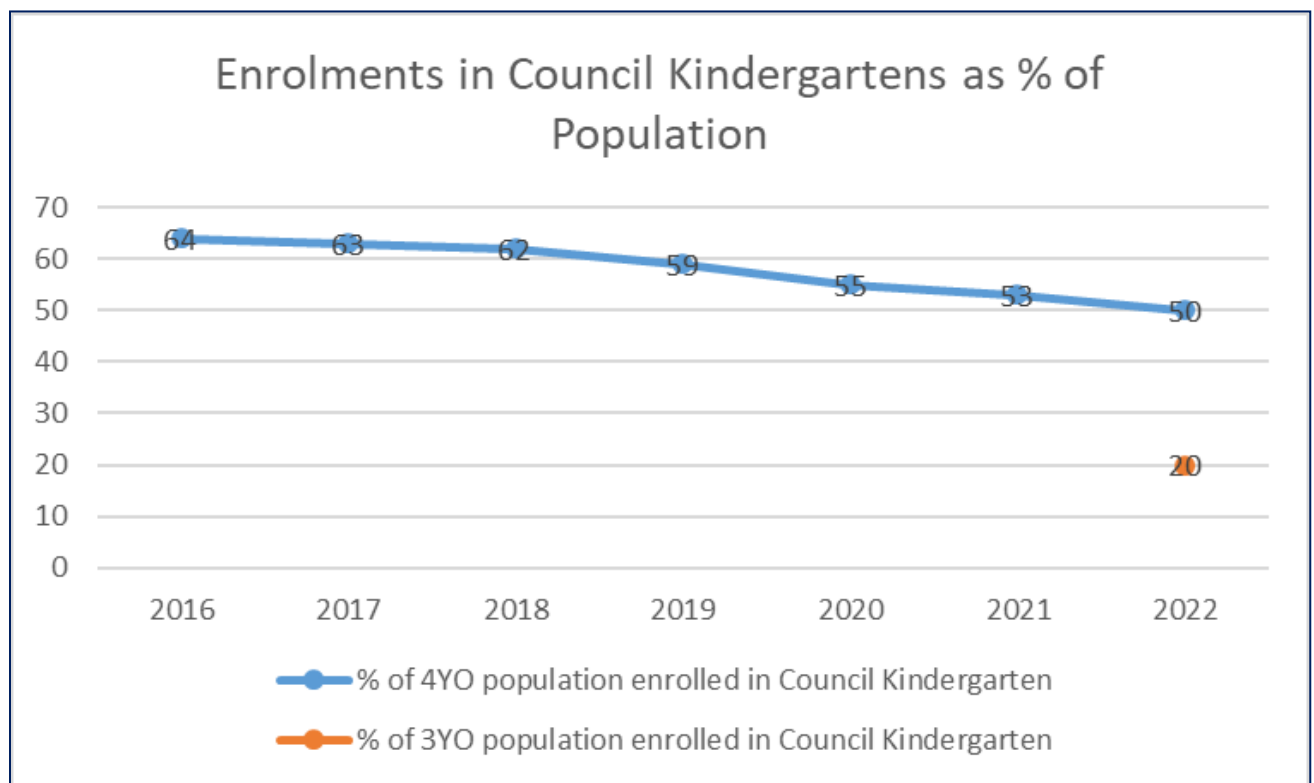
- Since 2017, there has been a growing trend in Knox of families accessing kindergarten in long day care rather than sessional programs.
- Viable and sustainable kindergarten services operate bigger, fuller groups than Council has historically offered.
- Council maintaining its current provision of kindergarten services leaves Council exposed to fluctuations in demand, utilisation and changes to policy and funding settings.
- There are other not-for-profit operators with similar quality ratings to Council's services already operating sessional kindergartens in some neighbouring LGAs (Whitehorse, Monash, Yarra Ranges).
- Despite Council's intention that the kindergarten service be full cost recovery, Council's subsidy of the kindergarten program was \$3.3M in 2021/2022 (including a \$2.2M operational subsidy for direct service delivery, exclusive of corporate overheads and \$1.1M for infrastructure and maintenance, not including capital works).
- Council is unable to fully control the number of enrolments received, nor the policy parameters and year-to-year funding allocation provided by the State Government. History indicates annual enrolments have generally been less than expected and budgeted.
- While the State Government has included Free Kinder funding in its forward estimates and this improves the financial position of the service, this is not likely to cover the full cost of service for Council and also limits Council's capacity to generate revenue through fees.
- Being a direct provider of early years services carries inherent financial and operational risks for Local Governments, which are responsible for over 100 different community services
- Despite Knox's significant (\$26M) investment in early years facilities since 2014, these buildings are on average 50-70 years old and are not all fit for the State Government's future vision of kindergarten in Victoria (two years, 15 hours for 3-year-olds and 30-hours for 4-year-olds).
- Given the on-going context of a constrained financial operating environment impacted by rate-capping, Council is not in a financial position to further invest in infrastructure to support implementation of the reforms.
- Alongside the immediate challenges arising out of the COVID-19 Pandemic for Council's kindergarten service, the population impacts of the pandemic have also reduced the early childhood population in Knox (due to decreased birth rates, reduced immigration and families moving out of the city).
- Lower enrolments in 2022 and 2023 has meant Council has not offered programs in all kindergarten facilities.

## 2.3 Overview of the Challenges

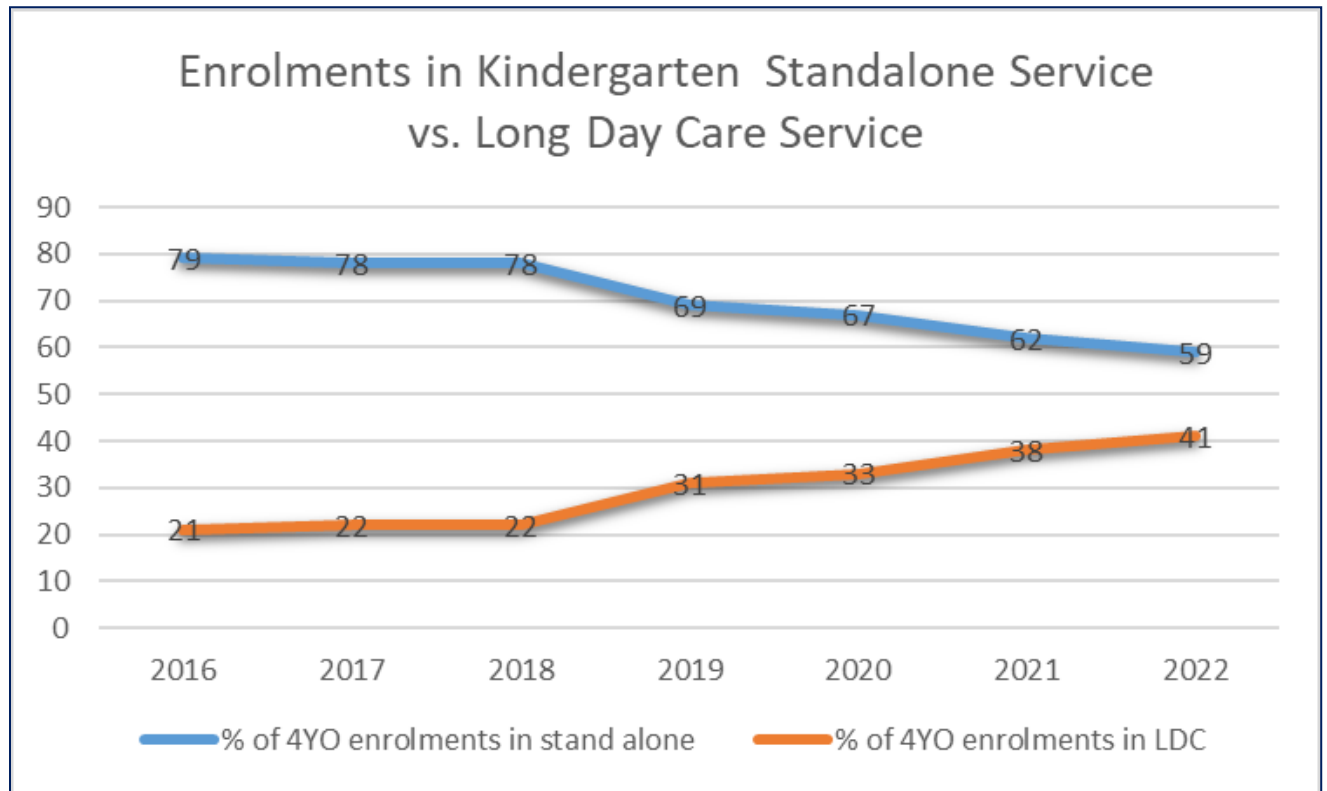
### 2.3.1 Changing Demand for Sessional Kindergarten

Demand for Council’s sessional kindergarten program has changed in recent years. Historically Council has aimed to cover places for 60% of the eligible population of children. In 2017, 63% of the 4-year-old population in Knox were enrolled in a Council sessional program. This has declined year on year since that time as shown in Figure 2. There are ongoing trends in Knox which indicate families are choosing to access kindergarten programs in long day care services which integrate funding kindergarten with longer hours of childcare shown in Figure 3. In 2021 Council sessional kindergartens attracted 53% of the 4-year-old kindergarten population. In the first year of offering 3 and 4-year-old kindergarten in 2022, Council’s programs attracted lower than the expected enrolments. The 4-year-old program attracted approximately 50% of the 4-year-old population. Council’s 3-year-old program, which currently provides five hours per week, attracted approximately 20% of the 3-year-old population. The trend of lower-than-expected enrolments for the 4-year-old program has continued in 2023 and is expected to continue in 2024 based on current registrations. There is potential for some growth in 3-year-old enrolments with the provision of 15 hours per week in 2024, however the level of overall enrolments next year and into the future is inherently uncertain. Registrations for first round offers for 2024 will close on 30 June 2023.

**Figure 2 Enrolments in Council Kindergartens**



**Figure 3 Enrolments in Kindergarten Standalone Services vs. Long Day Care Services**



Council is party to a Service Agreement with the Department of Education for provision of sessional kindergarten services up until December 2024. The upcoming expiry of the current Service Agreement is an opportunity for Council to consider its role in service provision and Council’s broader legislative responsibilities.

In addition to the changing utilisation of Council service, there are also a range of other matters for Council to consider in making this decision. While the community statement (see Section 2.4.1) indicates the high value the community places on Council maintaining service provision, it is important for Council to also consider the broader economic context and policy environment over which it has no control.

**2.3.2 Uncertain Operating Environment for Local Government Providers**

Maintaining any level of service provision represents a risk for Local Government providers in the context of maintaining viable and sustainable services in an uncertain operating environment, along with the many other community services that Local Governments provide. This is particularly pertinent given the planned expansion of 4-year-old kindergarten programs to 30 hours under State Government policy (30 hours will commence for the most vulnerable children from 2026 and be fully implemented for all children by 2032).

While the current State Government funding to service providers associated with Free Kinder has improved the current financial position of the service, inherent uncertainty remains in the future policy, operating and funding landscape.

The announcements of both the initial Kindergarten Expansion reform to include 3-year-olds, and the further expansion to 30 hours for 4-year-olds were both determined without consultation with the Local Government sector. Remaining a service provider in any capacity means Council's service would continue to be subject to changing State Government policy and funding allocations into the future. It also means ongoing exposure to changing utilisation trends, enrolment levels, workforce factors, increasing infrastructure costs, and a history of cost shifting.

### **2.3.3 Infrastructure Challenges**

Council's ongoing delivery of local services and infrastructure needs to be future proof. Contemporary, fit-for-future-purpose facilities are needed which can incorporate Council's range of services in ways that are flexible, integrated, co-located and intergenerational. Facilities require the capacity to be able to deliver a range of services to ensure a broad, mix of services can operate in the municipality.

Currently, the majority of Council's kindergarten facilities are stand-alone, single-room sites which are not easily expanded due to their location, limited land size and challenging typography. The limited capacity of these services to host two years of kindergarten (at 15 and 30 hours per group) or integrate other Council services represents an ongoing cost and significant challenge.

### **2.4 Potential Options and Opportunities**

Despite these challenges, the Kindergarten Service review identified a number of options and opportunities for Council as it considers its future role in kindergarten service provision.

Council engaged Capire in late 2022 to convene a demographically representative Community Panel between March to April 2023 and on 27 February 2023 referred three options to the Community Panel for the purposes of their deliberations. The three options were:

#### **Option 1 – Remain a sessional kindergarten provider and create a more sustainable service:**

Consolidate the existing service into no more than 20 kindergarten sites from 2024, increase the hours offered to 15 hours per week for both 3 and 4-year-old children. Note that a further review would need to be undertaken by 2026 regarding the implication of the State Government's requirements to increase Pre-Prep to 30 hours per week by 2032.

#### **Option 2 – Remain a sessional kindergarten provider in the 2 Early Years Hubs only:**

Cease sessional kindergarten provision in stand-alone facilities and relinquish Council's role as an Early Years Manager from December 2024 in line with the expiry of the current kindergarten service agreement.

#### **Option 3 – Exit sessional kindergarten service provision:**

Cease all sessional kindergarten service provision (sessional kindergarten in the Hubs and stand-alone services) and relinquish Council's role as an Early Years Manager from December 2024 in line with the expiry of the current kindergarten service agreement. This excludes long day care in the hubs with funded kindergarten places.

### 2.4.1 Community Panel Process, Report and Community Statements

The Community Panel included 29 demographically representative community members who participated in four facilitated workshops between March-April 2023. This group considered the challenges facing Council in detail and were tasked with exploring how Council might manage change to provide value for rate payers and the wider community, assessing the potential future scenarios available to Council, and authoring a community statement which informs Council of the principles the Panel considers important in these deliberations.

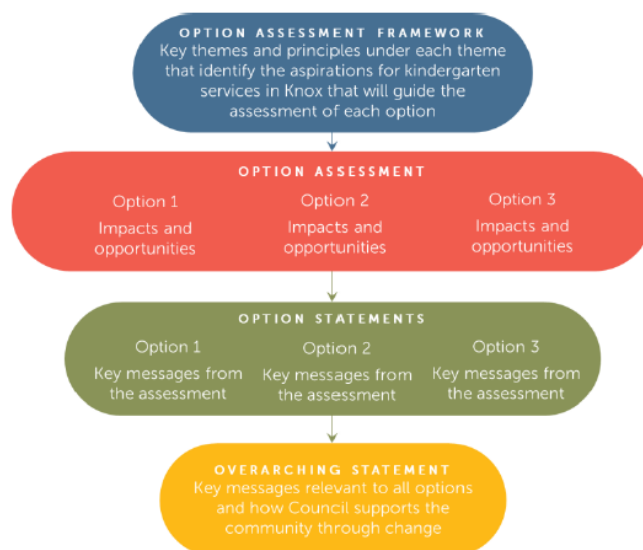
The Panel itself was made up of people from all over Knox including, people living with disability or caring for people with disability, people who identify as LGBTQIA+, residents born in Australia and overseas, those from a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds and people from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. It included past, current and future users of Knox kindergarten services. Details regarding how the Panel was established are included in Capire’s summary report, provided in Attachment 1 (see Pages 5-6).

**Figure 4 – Final Panel Member Make-Up**



Figure 5 (below) illustrates each of the outputs the Community Panel produced over the four sessions. The Options Assessment Framework developed by the Community Panel was a principle-based evaluation approach.

**Figure 5 – Community Panel Outputs**





### **2.4.2 Key Themes and Principles defined by the Community Panel**

In preparation of the assessment framework, the Panel undertook activities to define big themes and principles. The seven key themes and associated principles for each theme were:

1. Community Connection
  - Ensure families are informed and educated about kindergarten
  - Provide transparent information about kindergarten quality.
2. Local Access
  - Ensure all children have access to local kindergarten
  - Ensure vulnerable children have local, easy to access support
  - Continue to provide opportunities for co-location.
3. Responsive to Community Need
  - Ensure flexibility to continually respond to community need for sessional kindergarten
  - Ensure the voice of families is heard and responded to
  - Do what is best for the community before cost or profit.
4. Community Education
  - Ensure families are informed and educated about kindergarten
  - Provide transparent information about kindergarten quality.
5. Maintain Appropriate Facilities
  - Ensure facilities are of good quality and flexible to meet the kindergarten community needs and expectations
  - Proactively planning for kindergarten facility needs.
6. Choice for Families
  - Providing families with a range of local and accessible kindergarten options.
7. Service Quality
  - Monitor service quality and advocate to continuously strive to exceed minimum standards
  - Maintain and retain quality, motivated and progressive staff.

The above key themes and principles were used in the assessment of each option. Please refer to Attachment 1 (Section 5, pages 7-11) to view the Community Panel's identification of impacts and opportunities.

### **2.4.3 Community Statements**

The Community Panel was not asked to recommend an option, but rather prepared statements for each option along with an overarching statement, for Council's consideration. The Final Panel Report includes important impacts and opportunities for Council to consider in its deliberations. Attachment 1 (Section 5, page 11) includes the Panel's statements on each of the potential options and the Panel's overarching Community Statement (please refer to Attachment 1, Section 5, page 12). The statements summarise the key messages identified by the Panel through the assessment process.

The Community Panel's overarching statement notes that the Knox community takes pride in the fact that our kindergartens are run by Council and the quality of many of those services is rated as exceeding the National Quality Standard. The Community Panel noted that the community sees and feels the difference with kindergartens run by Council.

The Panel also highlighted the opportunities for Council should they consider leasing the facilities to other sessional service providers. These opportunities include but are not limited to:

- Role-modelling service excellence in the Hubs
- Centralising registrations
- Supporting families with information
- Creating professional networks and learning for teachers and educators working in the municipality, and
- Providing suitable community infrastructure.

## **2.5 Recommended Option and Rationale**

While none of the options available to Council will completely remove the risks presented by the reform, officers consider that Option 2 will provide an appropriate and reasonable balance between Council's responsibility for delivering social benefit for the community, and meeting community expectations that Council has a role to play in service provision, while managing the risks to council's financial and operational sustainability of the program in the longer-term.

In addition to the opportunities the Community Panel outlined regarding Option 2, considering this option and the potential to lease the sessional facilities to alternate community managed and not-for-profit providers while maintaining Council's provision of sessional programs in the two integrated Early Years Hubs, would mean that Council could refocus its strategic approach to how it supports access to quality kindergarten services for the community to more closely align with Council's legislative and other responsibilities.

The State Government's confirmation that "Free Kinder" will continue has a positive impact on the financial implications of the options under consideration by Council, as indicated in the financial modelling in Confidential Attachment 2. However, Council also needs to consider alongside this the inherent risks and challenges of remaining a service provider (as outlined in Section 2.3 of this report).

It should be noted that should Council formally consider Option 2 as defined in this report, this will trigger staff consultation in accordance with Council's industrial instruments. The outcomes of staff consultation will be presented to Council before a final decision on Council's future role in kindergarten service provision (scheduled for an SPC/Council Meeting in August 2023).

Option 2 would also require officers to progress preliminary discussions with the Department of Education to explore Council's role and obligations in an Expression of Interest process for identifying alternate providers, with the aim of Council leasing kindergarten stand-alone facilities (outside Council's two Early Years Hubs) to not-for-profit and community-managed service providers from January 2025.

Leasing the kindergartens facilities to not-for-profit sessional kindergarten providers would provide Council with an opportunity to respond to the community expectation that Council continue to support access to quality early learning and sessional kindergarten services in the municipality.

Maintaining direct provision of sessional kindergarten in the two integrated Early Years Hubs only and reviewing how best to manage these services to ensure they are providing value for the community, would mean Council could:

- Continue to lease/license early years infrastructure to external service providers
- Refocus on its strategic role in community planning for early years
- Provide opportunities for existing independent community providers/Early Years Managers to expand their services
- Continue to directly employ some teachers, educators and support staff
- Enhance service delivery in the hubs to explore how best to create 'centres of excellence' which showcase co-location and integration of universal and other allied health services
- Realign Council's support for and investment in early learning with our Local Government counterparts
- Continue to consider appropriate locations for co-located services like playgroups, Maternal Child Health and Allied health services
- Continue to assess planning applications from developers and service providers who can provide longer-hour programs and larger, more contemporary facilities for families who choose to access kindergarten integrated with longer hours of childcare.

### **2.5.1 Refocus on Municipal Planning in Early Years**

Refocusing Council's involvement in early learning away from the direct provision of sessional kindergarten services could potentially create opportunities for a more defined focus on strategic municipal planning and the coordination of a wider suite of social and family supports for the community.

Refocusing Council's strategic role as a community planner in early years provides opportunities, including but not limited to:

- Improving professional networks and professional development for the early years workforce across the range of service providers operating in the municipality.
- Building community connections and capacity in the early years through information sharing.
- Planning and coordination of supports for vulnerable children and families, supporting universal and allied health.
- Bridging intergenerational gaps (early years, young people, families and positive ageing)
- Expanding Council's focus on implementation of the Child Safe Standards for the municipality and the child's voice.
- Working in partnership with not-for-profit service providers to identify opportunities to access building blocks grants responsive to community needs.

Advocacy to State and Federal Governments and other key stakeholders on behalf of Council, early years programs, children and families.

- Supporting the Department of Education's desk top assessment of future infrastructure and service needs (Kindergarten Infrastructure and Service Plans) and continuing to advocate for the provision of kindergartens on school sites in the Knox municipality.

### **2.5.2 Continue to Support Access to High Quality Early Learning**

In Council's capacity as infrastructure owner, Council can continue to support community access to high quality sessional programs by leasing/licensing its suite of facilities to independent, not-for-profit providers who may be better positioned to provide innovative sessional kindergarten services into the future that are flexible and responsive to changing family needs. Not for profit, community focused early years managers, whose core business is the delivery of early years services, typically have lower overhead structures and more agile decision-making capacity than local councils, placing them well in the context of the reforms to deliver the kinds of services and flexibility valued by the community.

Remaining a sessional provider in the integrated Hubs gives Council the capacity to continue to directly offer some kindergarten places in a more sustainable and financially viable service offering, to help benchmark service excellence and the benefits of co-location and integration with the range of universal and specialist early years services Council provides – Maternal and Child Health, Preschool Field Officers, integrated kindergarten in Long Day Care, immunisations, playgroups, with the capacity to host allied health and other community services in integrated locations. Council would also continue to provide a range of other early childhood focused programs in the libraries, community events and public open spaces.

### **2.5.3 Expand the Mix of Services in Knox, Responsive to Community Needs and Trends**

Expanding the mix of early years management in Knox to include more alternate community managed and not-for-profit providers may give teachers, educators and local communities more capacity to respond to specific needs in local areas (for example: policy development would be less concentrated and could reflect individual services, communities and local places).

Community managed services or not-for-profit early years services may be better able to cater to local family preferences for sessions times and duration, wrap around care and bush kinder programs. The financial and operational context for Council as a Local Government provider has made responding to the community's desire for these flexible arrangements and innovative service models challenging to deliver within existing constraints.

While it is not possible to know definitively what any future "service mix" would look like, Council could potentially – as other Councils have done – also use this opportunity to endorse and stimulate the development of local Early Years Managers.

This would involve supporting existing committees of management and/or service providers to expand their portfolio of services to new clustered locations stimulating: a deeper service mix in the municipality, greater family choice about how they access kindergarten, and improving the economies of scale available to those providers.

#### **2.5.4 Potential for Expansion of the Not-for-Profit Sector in Knox**

Other not-for-profit Early Years Managers and service providers whose core business is to deliver kindergarten and children's services, are arguably better placed to flexibly adapt and respond to the changing policy and economic settings of the State Government as they have a less constrained operating environment.

Municipal planning and the provision of community infrastructure are core functions of Local Government. Direct provision of universal early childhood education and care, while historically provided by Knox Council and valued by the community, is not a core function or responsibility of Local Government, as evidenced by many Local Governments not providing this service.

Knox being the majority provider in the municipality has limited the growth and expansion of Community managed and not-for-profit providers. In addition to independent providers in Knox who may be ready to expand, there are other not for profit Early Years Managers who are providing quality sessional kindergarten and longer hour services. This is discussed further in Section 7 - Social Implications.

#### **2.5.5 Review the Hubs to Establish How to Support "Excellence" in Integrated Services**

Option 2 would enable Council to re-focus resources to enhance the sustainability of its Early Years Hubs with a focus on determining how the hubs can be developed into "centres of excellence" which offer a co-located/integrated suite of universal and targeted programs (childcare, sessional kindergarten, MCH (Maternal Child Health), playgroups, allied health) in one-stop community hub locations. Enhancing and strengthening the Hubs in Wantirna and Bayswater is a key component of implementation of this future role and Council's ongoing role in municipal planning. The Hubs were established not long before COVID and were heavily impacted by the Pandemic. The true capacity of these facilities as one stop Community Hubs and their potential capacity for integration of a range of universal, tertiary support and allied health services is yet to be realised.

#### **2.5.6 Realign Council's Service Offering with Local Government's Legislative Responsibilities**

Knox is an outlier in the Eastern Metro Group of Councils as a majority provider of kindergarten places in the municipality. While Knox has historically provided 30 kindergartens and is the third largest Local Government kindergarten service provider in metropolitan Melbourne, the only other Eastern Metro Council which is an Early Years Manager provides just three services – all of which are integrated childcare and kindergarten facilities like Knox's Early Years Hubs.

Many metropolitan Councils are not direct providers of kindergarten services. Instead, they lease facilities and play a municipal planning role which supports the community to maintain access to quality kindergarten programs through alternate community providers. This is an opportunity for Knox to refocus its strategic approach to supporting access to quality services (through municipal planning, centralised registration and facility lease/license arrangements) rather than directly providing kindergarten services.

While remaining the majority provider does position Council to have greater direct influence over service quality, there is also considerable opportunity for Council, as a facility owner and municipal planner, to develop partnerships and lease arrangements with alternate not-for-profit sessional kindergarten providers whose core business is the high-quality care and education of young children.

### **2.5.7 Why Not Option 1?**

Option 1 means Council is more exposed to financial and operational uncertainty.

- It is difficult for Council to reliably predict what the annual cost to Council of remaining a service provider will be past 2024.
- Achieving cost recovery is predicated on enrolments and utilisation over which Council has little control. Limiting the exposure to this by only providing services in the hubs which provide more flexible service options, limits the financial uncertainty of remaining a provider.
- More families are choosing to access kindergarten in integrated settings, rather than sessional programs, and the hubs have this capacity.
- The reform context means further change can be expected in the future which Council cannot control (for example, expansion of 4-year-old programs to 30 hours per week).

Option 1 reduces Council's capacity to address infrastructure challenges:

- Council's infrastructure is ageing and not suitable for the future vision of kindergarten in Victoria (longer days, more hours for more children)
- Council cannot cover the cost of expanding existing infrastructure to accommodate increased hours for 4-year-olds, particularly alongside its current level of service provision.

### **2.5.8 Why Not Option 3?**

Option 3 completely removes Council's capacity to employ kindergarten teachers and educators or showcase "service excellence" in the municipality.

The Hubs are more than just childcare services. They offer a suite of services as local community hubs which include childcare, kindergarten, playgroups, MCH and Allied Health. This suite of integrated services may be difficult to maintain with other providers operating from the same facility, some providers will not want to license facilities in which Council also offers services. Enhancing the Hubs to create sustainable service models and improve utilisation, particularly given the expansion of 4-year-old to include 30 hours for some children from 2026, will be a key component of implementing the change required for Council's operational model.

## **3. CONSULTATION**

### **3.1 Broad Community Engagement**

Broad community engagement was undertaken across November/December 2022 with children and families, to ascertain what they value about kindergarten in Knox, to inform Council about the value of its role and investment in kindergarten.

The consultation activities invited community members to indicate to Council the broad community benefits and things the community values about the kindergarten services in Knox. The outcomes of this broad community engagement were included in the February Council paper and are available on Council's Have Your Say Page/project update.

As a summary, the feedback from this broad consultation indicates that the community (both families currently using Council's kindergarten service and the wider community, children and adults) perceive that sessional kindergartens are valuable. Respondents emphasised that they value the quality of staff and relationships built within Council's services, the quality of the educational programs provided, and the local community feel of family and child-friendly communities created by the kindergarten program. Officers reported this feedback to Council for consideration as part of the Council report on 27 February 2023.

### **3.2 Engagement with the Kindergarten Staff**

Initial engagement sessions were held with staff which talked through the three options Council is considering as part of the Service Review. All current kindergarten staff were invited to information sessions, which were well attended with staff attending in-person and online.

The feedback from staff focused on key themes focused around the potential implications if Council decides to transition the services to alternate community providers including: who potential new providers may be, changes to employment conditions and redundancy arrangements, quality of learning in different service types, ongoing uncertainty in the sector for staff, families and children.

Kindergarten staff were keen to amplify the long-term benefits, not only the short-term costs of early learning to Council as it makes this decision.

### **3.3 Formal Consultation with Impacted Staff**

If Council determines to formally consider Option 2, this will trigger staff consultation under Council's industrial requirements. Staff have been notified of this report as part of the public meeting agenda and will be provided with relevant information. The consultation period will extend from 20 June to 21 July 2023 – this is an extended period as it includes the school holidays. Staff can ask questions and provide feedback in the holidays however this is at their own discretion. The required two weeks' period as per Council's industrial obligations will occur during the school term.

A subsequent report detailing the feedback from this consultation will be prepared for further consideration at a Strategic Planning Committee/Council meeting scheduled for August 2023.

## **4. CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS**

Officers have discussed the options being considered by Council with the Sustainable Futures Team who consider that implementation of the recommendations have no direct impact upon Council's Net Zero 2030 target, the Community Net Zero 2040, exposure to climate risks or climate change adaptation currently.

## **5. ENVIRONMENTAL/AMENITY CONSIDERATIONS**

Like many established Local Government areas in metropolitan Melbourne, Knox's early years infrastructure is ageing. Knox's facilities are predominantly small, single room, stand-alone services which are on average 50-70 years old.

In addition to its ongoing annual capital works budget, Council has invested over \$26M in early years infrastructure since 2014, receiving just \$2.1M in State Government capital grants during the same period. In November 2021, Council resolved that it is not in a position to support any further capital investment in new early years infrastructure without significantly increased State Government funding. In-confidence discussions with the Department of Education regarding a Building Blocks Partnership Agreement have been paused while Council considers its ongoing role in kindergarten service provision.

The State Government has continued to commit funding for infrastructure to support the reform, including increases in the Building Blocks funding in the recent budget (May 2023). At this time, none of the funding available through these grants is compatible with Council's infrastructure planning and delivery timeframes or the projects Council sites could feasibly accommodate. While greatly increased compared with the funding previously available, a significant Council contribution would still be required by Council toward the costs associated with potential infrastructure projects.

Recent cost increases in the construction sector make budget overruns a real risk for infrastructure projects. Unlike school infrastructure where these contingencies are managed by the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA), in the kindergarten infrastructure space, grant recipients are required to cover project overspends, as Building Blocks does not hold additional funding to meet cost overruns for capital projects. Council will resume discussions with the VSBA and Department of Education regarding a Building Blocks Partnership Agreement once Council has made a decision on its future role in service provision and as the review of the Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan makes clear the future demand for places in the context of the Pre-prep reforms, so that Council can be confident any agreement will meet the Knox community's kindergarten infrastructure needs sustainably in the future.

Regardless of whether Council continues as a direct provider of kindergarten services or not, Council will continue to make its early years infrastructure available for kindergarten provision by other providers through lease and license arrangements to support universal access to kindergarten for all eligible 3 and 4-year-old children in Knox – as set out in the Council Plan 2021-2025, and the Knox Child Youth and Seniors Plan 2021-2025.

### **5.1. Additional "Best Start Best Life" planning supports offered by the Department of Education**

The Department of Education has recently written to Council to offer additional funding to support planning and implementation of the Best Start Best Life reforms, including funding to; redevelop the Kindergarten Infrastructure and Service Plan (\$82K), support Early Years Manager workforce planning (\$166K) and Building Blocks planning grants to support late-stage facility design and construction (\$150K). Officers have reviewed the funding on offer, the criteria and timelines for expenditure.



## **5.2 Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan Grant**

Only the funding to support review of the KISP (\$82K) has criteria and delivery timelines suitable for Council. Officers have accepted this funding. The KISP is a public document that supports all providers of early years education and care in the Knox municipality to make informed decisions about infrastructure planning and development.

The Department of Education are planning to collaboratively undertake revisions of the Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plans (KISPs) in late 2023 and will be providing funding to each LGA who wishes to complete a KISP update. The KISP was previously completed in 2021 and Knox received \$70K to undertake this work.

Officers have received the Department of Education's initial information and are in the process of reviewing the kindergarten demand estimates and requesting further information to support this work. This supports Council to refocus its strategic approach on municipal planning for the early years and officers will provide the reviewed KISP to Council for endorsement via a future SPC/Council Meeting.

## **5.3 Building Blocks Planning Grant**

Council declined the recent offer of the Building Blocks Planning grant, as currently no pipeline of infrastructure has been agreed on through the Building Blocks Partnerships Agreement discussions. The criteria and timelines for this grant are not compatible with, nor manageable in terms of Council's processes.

## **5.4 Workforce Planning Grant**

Whilst Council is in the process of reviewing its ongoing role in kindergarten service provision, it would be imprudent to accept Department of Education funds for supporting its Early Years Manager role in workforce planning, so Council has declined this offer.

## **6. FINANCIAL & ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS**

The confidential attachment provides Councilors with a summary of the financial impact of each of the Service Review options on Council's Long Term Financial Position (LTFP), with sensitivity analysis of different funding scenarios.

The summary indicates that while Option 1 generates savings compared with current budget settings in the immediate and short term, over time (in the medium to long term) the savings reduce and the delivery cost of the service will again impact Council's financial position due to the expected widening gap between the State Government funding and the increasing service delivery costs to provide the kindergarten service.

Modelling has not yet considered the future financial impacts of providing 30-hours of 4-year-old kindergarten but based on the current facilities the likely outcome of the increase to 30-hours will be a reduction in overall kindergarten places offered requiring additional investment of rates for Council to maintain the kindergarten service.

Option 2 significantly reduces the cost of providing the kindergarten service as Council would operate only two sessional kindergarten sites in locations where Council could also generate revenue from the integrated long day care program. The sessional kindergarten in the Hubs are maximised in terms of efficiency and sustainably (fuller groups and optimal utilisation) which is estimated to generate revenue that increases the savings to Council in this option when compared with Options 1 and 3.

While it would seem that not providing any sessional kindergarten (Option 3) should return a greater cost saving than continuing to provide sessional kindergarten in the two hubs (Option 2), the four sessions of kindergarten provided in the hubs are fuller groups with high utilisation which generate adequate revenue that increases the savings to Council over the ten-year outlook when compared with Option 3.

In addition, the two Early Years Hubs have not had time to establish as fully integrated children's family and children's hubs with a full suite of universal and allied health programs, due to the timing and impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The community expectation that Council's considerable initial investment in developing the hubs (\$22 million) is supported with time to allow those services to fully establish is also a consideration in this decision.

Coupled with the Community Panel's indication that the Hubs through Council continuing to provide sessional kindergarten in Knox adds value, the fact that Option 3 does not improve the savings to Council's LTFP means Option 2 is the preferred option from both a community benefit and financial sustainability perspective. It is the most financially sustainable option with the least amount of financial risk to Council. Refer to confidential Attachment 2 for detailed financial modelling.

## **7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Early learning in Victoria is undergoing a period of significant challenge and reform. Each of the options Council has considered and referred to the Community Panel for their deliberations include social implications for stakeholders. The social implications of Option 2 are considered in terms of different stakeholder groups below.

### **7.1 Children and Families**

The kindergarten service model in Victoria is changing. If Council transitions its sessional kindergarten programs to alternate community managed and not-for-profit providers this represents a departure from Council being the major provider of kindergarten in the municipality.

If Council ceases being the service provider in the stand-alone sessional services, alternate community providers would need to be engaged through an Expression of Interest process and lease/license arrangements to support continued access to kindergarten programs for the community. Families and children would enrol with new service providers. This kind of change has the potential to impact vulnerable and less socio-economically advantaged families and children disproportionately. However, the State Government's "Free Kinder" initiative means that regardless of who is the provider, kindergarten will remain free for families in Knox.

The State Government’s Priority of Access criteria mean all licensed services, regardless of provider type, support the access and participation of high priority children and families. Council can further seek to mitigate risks for vulnerable children and families in its role as municipal planner, supporting the transition to new providers and potentially expanding the Central Registration and Enrolment System (CRES) to include non-council services. This would support Council to monitor how places are allocated by providers in the municipality to reduce barriers to access.

**7.2 Knox Kindergarten Workforce**

Council deciding to cease providing sessional kindergarten services outside the Hubs would result in redundancies and potentially changed employment conditions for the current kindergarten workforce. Knox staff have strong relationships with local families and are experienced and highly qualified kindergarten teachers and educators. The shortage of qualified teachers and educators means these staff would likely find alternative employment with other providers should Council determine to limit service provision to the two Early Years Hubs. If Council formally considers Option 2, an extended period of formal staff consultation will be undertaken and a report prepared for Council consideration. Council will work with all potentially impacted staff to ensure consultation and transition processes fulfil Council’s industrial obligations and legislative requirements.

**7.3 Quality and Educational Outcomes**

Families in Knox access kindergarten in a range of service types. The community consultation and feedback from the Community Panel indicate that the community value the quality and feel of Council’s kindergartens. At the same time, many families already access kindergarten in long day care and independent sessional kindergarten programs in Knox. This is evident in the declining enrolments in Council’s sessional kindergartens in recent years and the growth in both long day care providers and the enrolments in independent sessional programs. Figure 6 is based on National Quality data from the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). A nationally consistent and mandatory assessment and rating system. It indicates that many services in Knox are meeting and or exceeding the National Quality Standard.

**Figure 6 – Quality Profile by Service Type: Service Providers operating in Knox (2023)**

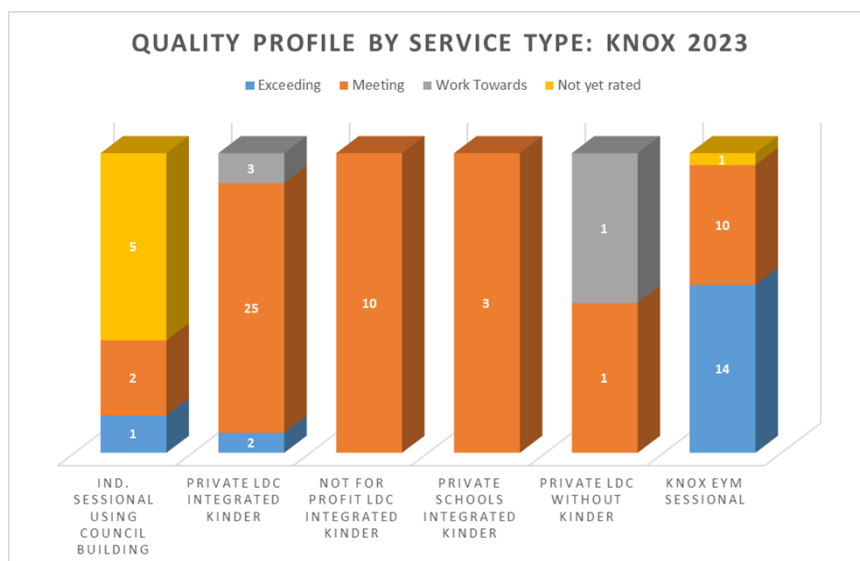
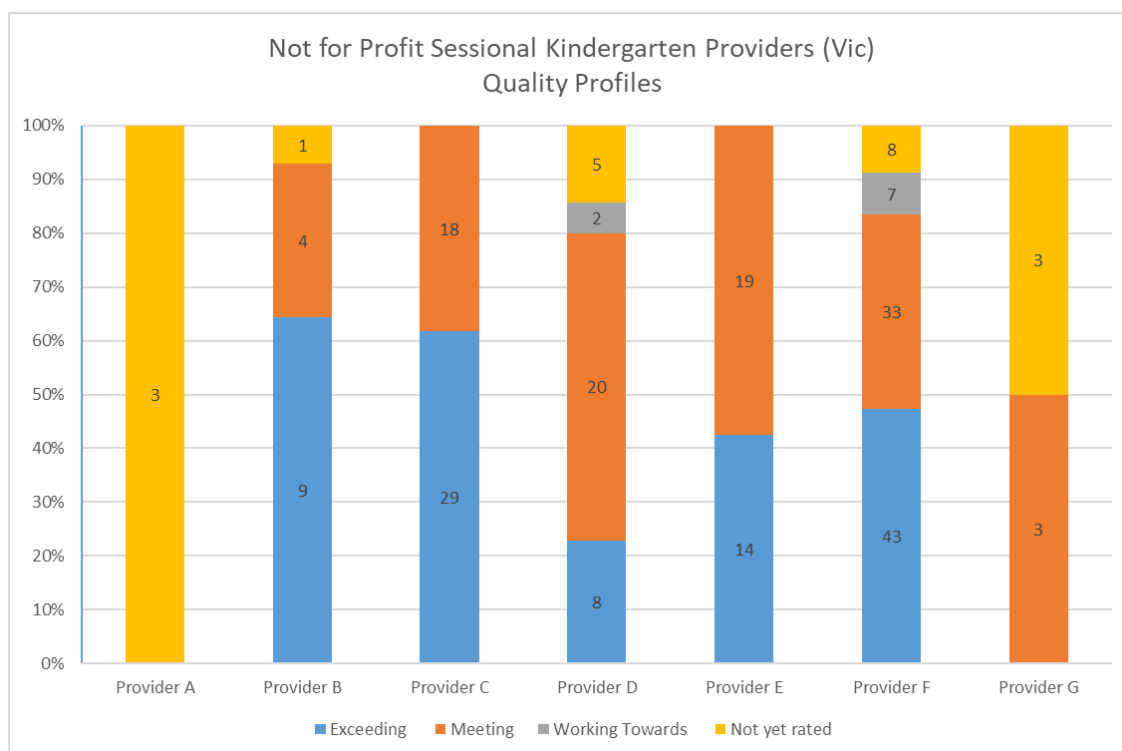


Figure 7, below, illustrates the quality profiles of not-for-profit Early Years Managers across Victoria. These Early Years Managers (EYM) manage between 3 and 91 services – including sessional programs with wrap around care and long day programs. Two of these EYMs (Provider F and G) are already operating sessional kindergarten services in neighbouring LGAs in Monash, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges. The quality profile of the services managed by not-for-profit EYMs is comparable to the quality profile of the services currently provided by Council, with the majority meeting or exceeding the National Quality Standard.

**Figure 7 – Quality Ratings: Not-for-Profit Early Year Managers with Sessional Kindergarten (Vic)**



While none of these providers are currently operating in Knox, these are the types of providers which an Expression of Interest Process would target. In recent weeks, officers have been contacted by not-for-profit providers keen to ensure they are notified should any Expression of Interest process arise from Council’s Kindergarten Service Review. These providers have indicated that they have the operational and strategic governance structures in place to support expansion in the context of reform and are poised to strengthen their sector presence leasing sessional facilities.

**8. RELEVANCE TO KNOX COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025**

**Opportunity & Innovation**

Strategy 1.2 - Encourage and support opportunities for skills development and lifelong learning for all people in Knox.

**Civic Engagement & Integrity**

Strategy 5.1 - Provide opportunities for all people in Knox to have their say.

Strategy 5.2 - Manage our resources effectively to ensure financial sustainability and improved customer experience.

Strategy 5.3 - Ensure our processes are transparent and decisions are accountable.

**9. CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The officers contributing to and responsible for this report have no conflicts of interest requiring disclosure under Chapter 5 of the Governance Rules of Knox City Council.

**10. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Attachment 2 to this report is included in the confidential agenda, as it contains confidential information pursuant to Council's Governance Rules and Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2020, as it relates to Council business that could prejudice Council's position when negotiating with alternative community providers if prematurely released.

**Report Prepared By: Early Years Strategic Projects Lead, Robyn Renkema**  
**Report Authorised By: Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley**

**Attachments**

1. Attachment 1 - Community Panel - Final report - 2023-04-12 [6.1.1 - 22 pages]

# Knox Kindergarten Review Community Panel



Final Panel Report  
Prepared by Capire Consulting Group Pty Ltd on  
behalf of Knox City Council

April 2023

# Giving every person a voice.

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Wurundjeri people and  
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For the purpose of program delivery, and on behalf of our clients, we collect personal information from individuals, such as e-mail addresses, contact details, demographic data and program feedback to enable us to facilitate participation in consultation activities. We follow a strict procedure for the collection, use, disclosure, storage and destruction of personal information. Any information we collect is stored securely on our server for the duration of the program and only disclosed to our client or the program team. Written notes from consultation activities are manually transferred to our server and disposed of securely.

Comments recorded during any consultation activities are faithfully transcribed however not attributed to individuals. Diligence is taken to ensure that any comments or sensitive information does not become personally identifiable in our reporting, or at any stage of the program.

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**Consultation**

Unless otherwise stated, all feedback documented by Capire Consulting Group and any person(s) acting on our behalf is written and/or recorded during our program/consultation activities.

Capire staff and associates take great care while transcribing participant feedback but unfortunately cannot guarantee the accuracy of all notes. We are however confident that we capture the full range of ideas, concerns and views expressed during our consultation activities.

Unless otherwise noted, the views expressed in our work represent those of the participants and not necessarily those of our consultants or our clients.

**Definitions**

**Community:** Broadly defined as those who have an interest in or are affected by the business of Council and the way it operates and includes: residents and landowners, businesses, workers, organisations and visitors.

**Community engagement:** Any process that values and facilitates community input to help Council make better-informed decisions. It recognises that if the community is going to be affected by a decision, it needs to be engaged in the decision-making process in some way.

**Integrated long day care:** Services that provide funded kindergarten places in a long day care setting called childcare. They typically operate for around 10 hours per day. They are funded by the state and federal governments.

**Sessional kindergarten:** Services that offer sessional kindergarten program at either five or 7.5 hours per day, predominantly funded by the state government.



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# 1 Introduction to the Knox Kindergarten Review Community Panel

**Knox Council must continually engage with its community on what services are needed and how best to deliver them. This is an important part of being a responsible authority.**

Councils play a significant role in ensuring communities can access the services they need locally. There are different ways Councils can do this. Councils can provide services directly, they can advocate and provide support for other services to start operating locally, and they deliver services in partnership with other providers. Council-collected rates help pay for its different roles in service and facility delivery.

There are some community services that Councils are required to deliver, such as maternal and child health services and others that Council chooses to deliver in response to community needs. Kindergarten is a service that Councils are not required to deliver. Ensuring children have access to kindergarten in the years before they start primary school is a State Government responsibility. Councils help State Government by identifying and planning for the needs of families. In some instances, they can also help by providing kindergarten services directly.

Knox City Council (Council) is one of a few Councils in Victoria that delivers sessional kindergarten services. Council delivers approximately 50% of funded kindergarten services in Knox.

Over the last decade, state and federal government reform has significantly changed how kindergarten services are delivered. These changes have led Council to continually review and assess its services to ensure it is delivering them effectively and sustainably. In 2020, the State Government announced the introduction of two years of funded kindergarten. This is the largest-ever reform of the early childhood sector. The announcement triggered Council to undertake a comprehensive review of the future of council-delivered kindergarten services in Knox. The comprehensive review includes a review of costs, opportunities and risks associated with Council's kindergarten service and consultation with staff and the community.

The topic is challenging and complex, but involving those impacted by any decisions made following the review is critical. Impacted people are those who need the services currently or might need them in the future and those who are helping to fund the services through their rates. Because of the complexities, the public needs the support and time to build their understanding and capacity to share informed inputs. A community panel process provides Council with a unique opportunity to work closely with a representative sample of the community over a series of sessions to do just that. Having a representative sample helps to give Council the confidence that if they were to repeat the process multiple times across the municipality it would gather similar results.

In late 2022, Council began recruitment for the Knox Kindergarten Review Community Panel. The Panel met over four sessions across March and April 2023, totalling 13 hours of deliberations. This report provides an overview of the Community Panel journey and its outputs. The Community Panel's work will be a critical input into Council's decisions about the future of Council-run kindergarten in Knox and how it ensures families can continue to access quality sessional kindergarten locally.

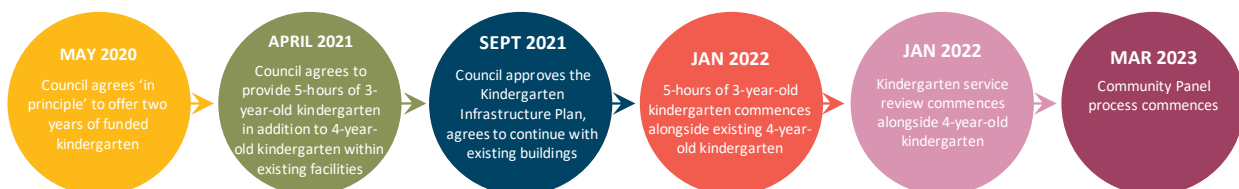


Figure 1. The story so far

## 2 Establishing the Community Panel

Council engaged Capire Consulting Group (Capire) to lead the independent recruitment of the Community Panel and facilitation of the sessions. The following section summarises the activities undertaken to form the Community Panel.

### 2.1 Seeking expressions of interest

In December 2022, Council randomly distributed invitations to approximately one in every ten households across the municipality (a total of 6,000 households).

Detailed in the invitation was a high-level summary of the Kindergarten Review and the Community Panel process. Community members were then invited to express their interest by completing an online form. The letter shared Capire's details for community members to ask questions and get support with completing the expression of interest form.

The expression of interest form asked for personal information about the respondent to support Capire in ensuring a diverse range of voices are included in the Community Panel. Questions included:

- Gender
- Age
- Household characteristics
- Social and economic diversity type questions
- Connection to kindergarten services
- Perceived conflicts of interest.

The form also gathered contact details and any support the respondent might need to participate in the sessions.

A total of 70 people completed an expression of interest form.

### 2.2 Participant selection

From those who completed the expression of interest form, Capire randomly selected respondents to match the target criteria.

Council and Capire developed the target criteria to:

- match the demographic profile of the Knox community
- ensure geographic spread
- ensure a mix of connections to kindergarten services.

To be selected, respondents needed to be able to attend all sessions and have no conflicts of interest.

The selection process happened over two stages:

1. Capire undertook the random selection and contacted 32 community members offering them a place on the Community Panel. Through this process, several selected participants were no longer able to participate.
2. Capire undertook further selection to fill in gaps left by stage one.

A total of 29 people were recruited to form the Community Panel. By the final panel session, the panel membership had reduced to 24. It is not unusual for there to be some drop-off by participants. In the case of this process, several panel members could not continue due to health and family commitments.



Figure 2 Panel members discussing the principles for assessing the options

### 2.3 Final panel member make-up



**29**  
Panel members



**20/9**  
Women/men



**4**  
People living with a disability or caring for someone with a disability



**10**  
Suburbs represented



**23**  
Past, current and future service users

## 3 Community Panel remit

Council tasked the Community Panel to deliberate on how it can manage the changes needed to kindergarten services to provide the best value to the whole community.

To support the Community Panel's deliberations, Council shared a set of negotiables and non-negotiables. The negotiables illustrate the elements of Council's decision-making process that the community can influence. The non-negotiable elements illustrate the elements the Community Panel cannot influence due to other factors, such as legislative and regulatory requirements and financial sustainability.

**Negotiables:**

- Whether Council continues to run kindergarten and to what extent (in line with the three options presented)
- How Council might manage change
- How Council supports families as a municipal planner i.e. what role Council plays in kindergarten if not as a provider

**Non-negotiables:**

- Staying as we are – the service cannot continue as it has previously
- Fees – Council cannot charge fees or increase rates to cover costs of running kindergarten
- Compliance with regulatory requirements and standards
- Planning scheme requirements
- How Council consults staff
- Operational matters of planning kindergarten such as:
  - o Group sizes – fuller groups are required
  - o Hours – 15-hour programs will be required
  - o Which kindergarten sites change

Alongside the negotiables and non-negotiables, Council also prepared a series of three options to help demonstrate the different roles Council could play in delivering sessional kindergarten services in Knox. Panel members explored the impacts and opportunities of each option to help them prepare their overarching statement to Council. The three options were:

1. Remain a kindergarten provider (with some service consolidation)
2. Continue hub kindergarten services only
3. Cease providing kindergarten services

Figure 3 provides further detail on the three options.

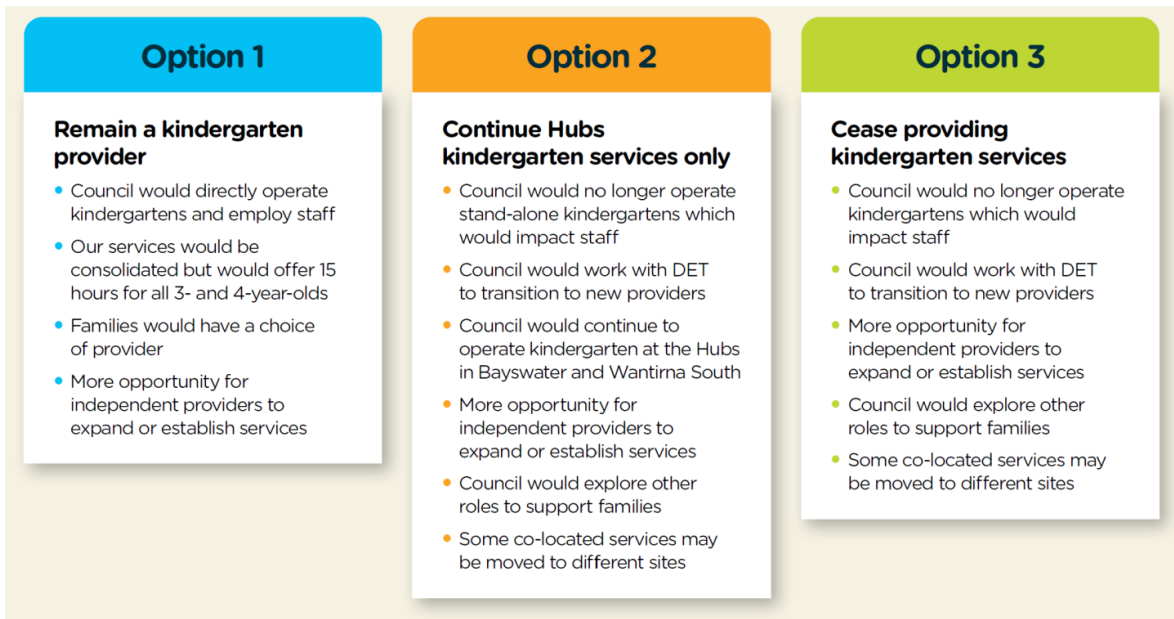


Figure 3. Options presented to the Community Panel

The final deliverables that Council tasked the Community Panel with preparing were an impact and opportunities assessment of each option and an overarching statement to support Council's decision-making.

Council's committed to the Community Panel is based on the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum. This spectrum is an industry-recognised tool to help decision-makers understand different levels of public participation and influence in decision-making processes<sup>1</sup>. The spectrum includes five levels of public participation. The Community Panel sits on the **Collaborate** level. The promise to the Panel was that Council will work closely with them to provide clear and detailed information to enable statements to be informed. Council will strongly consider the Panel's statement and advice in its decision-making.

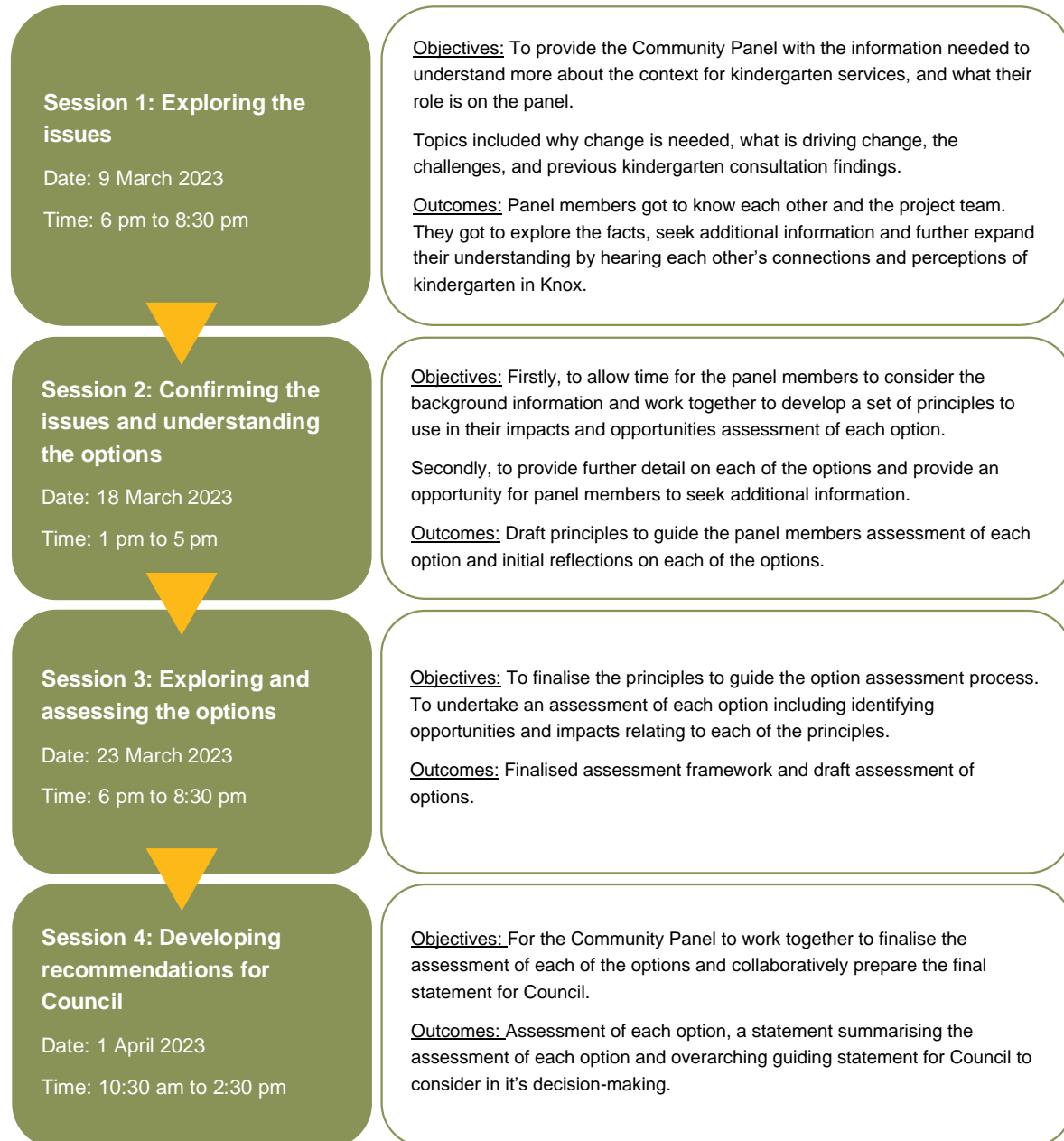
This level of engagement is considered appropriate due to the following project realities:

- The complexity of the topic will mean that there will be some intersecting elements or trade-offs that the Panel will not deliberate on to the depth required to inform the necessary decisions, e.g. the detailed financial modelling of different options.
- The need to ensure deliberations do not impact Council's requirements regarding staff consultation.
- There are unknowns regarding further regulatory changes and potential funding in the near future.

<sup>1</sup> See <https://iap2.org.au/>

## 4 Session overview

The following diagram summarises the journey the panel members were taken on through the four sessions, including the objectives and outputs of each session.



## 5 The Knox Community Panel outputs

Over the four sessions, the Community Panel were tasked to prepare a series of outputs that would lead them to develop the final output – the overarching statement.

The outputs included:

1. The options assessment framework
2. An assessment of each option
3. Key messages from the options assessment
4. The overarching statement.

Figure 4 illustrates each of the outputs the Community Panel produced. The following section details the process for preparing the outputs and the outputs in detail.

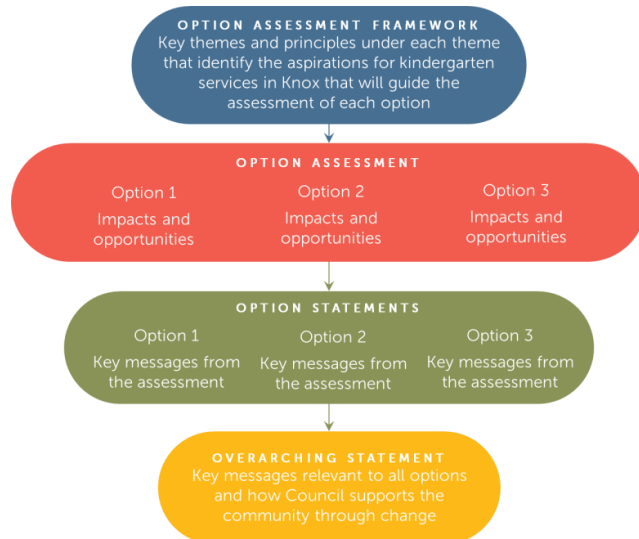


Figure 4. Summary of Community Panel outputs

### 5.1 Options assessment framework

The options assessment framework was a principles-based evaluation approach. Principles guide moving towards a desired outcome based on norms, values, beliefs, experience, and knowledge. They are particularly useful in complex projects and when there are unknowns that could create forks in the road at a later stage. The principles can continue to guide the project beyond the initial assessment of options.

The Community Panel undertook the following activities to prepare the options assessment framework:

1. Defining the big themes/topics: Following an introduction to the project history, key information on the kindergarten review and hearing each other's personal experiences, panel members worked together to define the big themes or topics they want to ensure they consider during the options assessment.
2. Defining the principles under each theme: Panel members brainstormed values, aspirations and needs under each theme and then refined them to a set of principles.

#### 5.1.1 Defining the big themes

At their tables, Panel members brainstormed the themes and then worked together to converge them into one set of themes, including:

- |                                    |                        |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Community connection            | 5. Local access        |
| 2. Responsive to community need    | 6. Community education |
| 3. Maintain appropriate facilities | 7. Choice for families |
| 4. Service quality                 |                        |

The Panel identified two additional themes as important, but they were outside the scope of the group's deliberations:

- Staff redundancies: In exploring the themes, panel members regarded staff redundancies as an important issue. Council is currently undertaking a separate pre-consultation process with staff to understand potential impacts. Staff feedback will be delivered alongside the Community Panel's statement for Council's



consideration in its final decision-making. Depending on Council's final decision, Council may need to undertake further staff consultation in line with industrial relation obligations.

- Impacts on rates: While some panel members are concerned about the impacts on rates, Council cannot increase rates to subsidise kindergarten service provision.

### 5.1.2 Defining the principles under each theme

At session 2, each table was given a theme to focus on and prepare the draft principles for. Tables were then able to review each other's work and provide feedback. Between sessions 2 and 3, Capire converged the feedback and made some suggestions for the panel's consideration.

The panel members then worked as a group to refine the following principles.

#### **Community education**

- Ensure families are informed and educated about kindergarten
- Provide transparent information about kindergarten quality

#### **Responsive to community need**

- Ensure flexibility to continually respond to community need for sessional kindergarten
- Ensure the voice of families is heard and responded to.
- Doing what is best for the community before costs or profit

#### **Service quality**

- Monitor service quality and advocate to continuously strive to exceed standards
- Maintain and retain high-quality, motivated and progressive staff

#### **Local access**

- Ensure all children have access to local kinder
- Ensure vulnerable children have local, easy-to-access support
- Continue to provide opportunities for co-location

#### **Maintain appropriate facilities**

- Ensure facilities are of good quality and flexible to meet the kindergarten community's needs and expectations
- Proactively planning for kindergarten facility needs

#### **Choice for families**

- Providing families with a range of local and accessible kindergarten options

#### **Community connection**

- Fostering connections and relationships through a range of services and activities (for children, families and community)

## 5.2 Assessment of each option

Through the Community Panel's initial reflections on each option, many of the impacts and opportunities they identified for options 2 and 3 were similar. As such, the Community Panel's assessment of options 2 and 3 was combined, and they identified any differences between the two options.

The assessment process involved each table focusing on a theme and its associated principle/s and assessing the impacts and opportunities for each option. The themes were then rotated around to each table, allowing further contributions.

Panel members then worked to refine the options assessment in the final session.

Table 1. Option 1 assessment

Principle	Impacts	Opportunities
<b>Community education</b>		
Ensure families are informed and educated about kindergarten	Additional cost to Council to deliver community education programs.	Consolidate information about Council-run early years services such as MCH and kindergarten. Services know the local community, and that knowledge can be used to tailor communications.  Promote sessional kinder services to attract more families
Provide transparent information about kindergarten quality	Council's ability to provide transparent information about all kindergarten services may be impacted by the perception that Council, the public and other service providers might see Council being biased toward its own services.	Council can easily access and share information about its own services, which is a large proportion of what is available.  Utilise existing channels through other Council services (e.g. MCH, play groups and kindergartens) to easily share and promote information about kindergartens including quality standards and the benefits of sessional kindergarten.
<b>Responsive to community need</b>		
Ensure flexibility to continually respond to community need for sessional kindergarten.	Cost of service delivery can change each year, e.g. staff to child ratios and changes in demand.  It may be difficult to ensure ageing buildings are maintained to a level that supports the flexibility to accommodate future increases in demand.	Through Council's ongoing municipal planning role, Council can monitor and report on shifts in demand and respond accordingly.  Council has the flexibility to adapt its services to deliver services in line with community values (e.g. providing a nurturing start to education) and in response to changing community needs through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class sizes</li> <li>• Staffing</li> <li>• Number of facilities operating services</li> <li>• Council funding</li> </ul>
Ensure the voice of families is heard and responded to.	Cost to Council to deliver community engagement.	Council has greater control over meeting community expectations and needs.  Families continue to have access to services exceeding service quality standards delivered in Council-run sessional kindergartens, which is what families want and are currently satisfied with.  Council can facilitate opportunities for families to participate in kindergartens, such as parent committees.

Principle	Impacts	Opportunities
Doing what is best for the community before costs or profit	<p>The continued need to subsidise the provision of kindergarten services and that subsidy can fluctuate.</p> <p>Cost of continuing to involve the community in how Council allocates resources and costs.</p>	<p>Council subsidises the provision of kindergarten to meet community needs and allow families to access high-quality sessional kindergarten.</p> <p>Council delivering multiple services over multiple sites brings cost efficiencies.</p> <p>Council can take a municipal view, rather than looking at individual sites, which means it can make more strategic choices on how to maintain standards and meet community need. Families will feel supported to stay or move to Knox and children will have access to quality early education.</p>
<b>Service quality</b>		
Monitor service quality and advocate to continuously strive to exceed standards	<p>The costs associated with maintaining the high-quality service standards that the community will continue to want and expect.</p> <p>Council may be vulnerable to future changes that could impact the cost of providing quality services, such as population growth, government policy changes and funding.</p>	<p>Remaining a provider and early years manager allows Council to monitor service quality and directly demonstrate excellence to other providers.</p> <p>Council's commitment to service quality isn't driven by profit.</p>
Maintain and retain high-quality, motivated and progressive staff	Vulnerable to risks and costs relating to staff, including staff shortages as staff retire and skill development to continue to meet quality expectations.	<p>Retention of existing skilled and valued staff and fewer redundancies.</p> <p>Existing skilled staff help set the foundation for future staff.</p> <p>More control in providing a work environment that appeals to staff, e.g. working preferences.</p>
<b>Local access</b>		
Ensure all children have access to local kinder	<p>A reduction in services means Council will have a reduced ability to respond to changes in community need.</p> <p>Community's where sites are closing will have reduced access to kindergarten locally.</p>	<p>Families will have continued certainty about being able to access local sessional kindergarten.</p> <p>Less sites means fuller classes to maximise funding.</p>
Ensure vulnerable children have local, easy-to-access support	The closure of particular sites may impact vulnerable children and force families to travel further to access kindergarten.	<p>Council has the opportunity to ensure staff are trained in working with vulnerable children and ensuring that have the support needed to access kindergarten.</p> <p>Increased ability to ensure vulnerable children have priority access to kindergarten.</p>
Continue to provide opportunities for co-location	Closure of some sites might impact existing co-location arrangements.	<p>In identifying which sites to close and maintain Council can consider which services are best for co-location – these may already have co-located services or opportunities for future co-location.</p> <p>Consider proximity to primary schools when identifying sites to retain, as this supports local kids and families connecting.</p>
<b>Choice for families</b>		

Principle	Impacts	Opportunities
Providing families with a range of local and accessible kindergarten options	Council is vulnerable to competition and the need to compete for enrolments.	Providers greater certainty to families that they can continue to access a range of kindergarten services, including sessional kindergarten across a spread of suburbs.  Council can promote its point of difference to other councils as a way of attracting young families to move to Knox.
<b>Maintain appropriate facilities</b>		
Ensure facilities are of good quality and flexible to meet the kindergarten community's needs and expectations	Ongoing cost to Council to maintain sites.  Cost to Council to upgrade ageing buildings to maintain larger class sizes and safety standards.	Council has control in ensuring facilities are high quality for both staff and children, and inline with community values.  Opportunity to repurpose sites that will be closed for other community needs.
Proactively planning for kindergarten facility needs	Will require continued Council resources to assess existing facilities and plan future needs and changes.  Council is vulnerable to changes in costs of maintaining facilities such as aging buildings, class sizes and enrolments etc.	Sale of excess buildings could be used to offset the costs of maintaining or upgrading buildings.  Reduction of sites should reduce cost, but could also increase some maintenance costs.  Council has greater control in providing high quality work environments for staff.
<b>Community connection</b>		
Fostering connections and relationships through a range of services and activities (for children, families and community)	Closing some sites might mean that existing community connections around those sites are lost.  Council bears the cost of providing services and activities to support community connections.  May reduce other opportunities for Council to deliver services that foster connections.  Lots of connections are made through parent groups/committees, but getting parents to join Parent Groups and volunteer is difficult.	Opportunity to support families to establish new connections as sites are consolidated.  Council can capitalise on co-located services to support location-based relationships and connections.  Continuing to provide sessional kindergarten ensures parents and families who live in the same area have a better chance of making and maintaining connections with their local community, which can continue through to primary school.  Council to facilitate Parents Groups/Committees to support opportunities for community connection.

Table 2. Option 2 and 3 assessments

Principle	Impacts	Opportunities
<b>Community education</b>		
Ensure families are informed and educated about kindergarten	For-profit providers have a greater budget for marketing and are less transparent.	Great opportunity for Council to provide impartiality in guiding families on accessing kindergarten.
Provide transparent information about kindergarten quality	Independent providers may not be as transparent with their service quality rating.	Council taking the lead in educating families on what quality kindergarten means and the quality standards.  Advocating to State Government to make the information provided on service quality transparent for all providers.
<b>Responsive to community need</b>		

Principle	Impacts	Opportunities
Ensure flexibility to continually respond to community need for sessional kindergarten.	Higher risk that independent providers will make decisions based on cost rather than community need.	Council can take the lead in ensuring the voice of families is heard and share findings with providers.
Ensure the voice of families is heard and responded to.	Higher risk of having independent providers that might not see they have a role in engaging with and responding to the needs and desires of the wider community.	Explore the effectiveness of MOUs where there is a lease/license agreement to drive providers to engage and deliver on community needs.
Doing what is best for the community before costs or profit		
<b>Service quality</b>		
Monitor service quality and advocate to continuously strive to exceed standards	Higher risk that the service quality of session kindergarten will reduce with independent providers.	As a municipal planner for early years, Council can facilitate networks between providers to knowledge share.
Maintain and retain high-quality, motivated and progressive staff	Higher risk that high-quality, motivated and progressive Council staff are not retained by new incoming independent providers.  Higher risk that Council's existing pool of knowledge and expertise on providing kindergarten to Knox families is lost.	The hubs (option 2) can demonstrate service excellence.  Council could provide capacity-building support to encourage community-run providers to establish in Knox.
<b>Local access</b>		
Ensure all children have access to local kinder	Less certainty that all children will have access to local kindergarten.	Explore the effectiveness of how centralised enrolment can help Council to ensure children have access to local kinder.
Ensure vulnerable children have local, easy-to-access support	Higher risk that vulnerable children will fill up the places at the Hubs (option 2).	Explore the effectiveness of MOUs and centralise enrolment will help Council to ensure providers are delivering to priority access requirements.
Continue to provide opportunities for co-location		Hubs set the standard for other providers on how to ensure families can easily access services and information about services (option 2).  As a municipal planner for early years, Council can continue to consider opportunities for colocation in the future as a result of changes in funding, land availability or new schools.
<b>Choice for families</b>		
Providing families with a range of local and accessible kindergarten options	Less certainty that children will have local access to different kindergarten options.	The possibility that new providers will bring new service offerings.
<b>Maintain appropriate facilities</b>		
Ensure facilities are of good quality and flexible to meet the kindergarten community's needs and expectations	Less State Government funding for facility maintenance.	
Proactively planning for kindergarten facility needs	Less control over the quality of facilities exceeding compliance.	
<b>Community connection</b>		

Principle	Impacts	Opportunities
Fostering connections and relationships through a range of services and activities (for children, families and community)	Higher risk of having independent providers that might not see they have a role or value in fostering wider-community connection.	Council to consider need for additional ways community connection can be fostered and lead delivery.  Council to take on the role of a virtual hub provider that connects services and programs to the kindergarten community.

### 5.3 Option statements

Once panel members completed the options assessment, they worked in groups to prepare draft statements. These draft statements were then shared and refined with all panel members. The statements summarise the key messages identified through the options assessment.

#### 5.3.1 Option 1

Option 1 means that Council retains greater control of maintaining high service quality and delivering services that meet the expectations and changing needs of the local community.

It provides communities with a strong, continuing involvement in how resources and costs are being allocated for the benefit of the wider community. It strengthens connections and engagement at a more local level.

Maintaining a balance between council-run and private providers provides choice and flexibility for local communities, including supporting vulnerable children.

#### 5.3.2 Option 2 and 3

Options 2 and 3 provide the community with less certainty about being able to locally access high-quality services and facilities.

There are higher risks that new providers have less focus on creating community benefit and value. There are higher risks that the existing knowledge and expertise within Council in providing kindergarten for the Knox community is lost.

There are opportunities for Council to take on new roles. Such as increased community engagement, centralised enrolment, educating families, establishing networks between providers and staff, and looking at new ways to build community connection for the kindergarten community.

Specifically for option 2, the remaining Council-run sessional kindergarten can help benchmark service excellence and the benefits of co-locating services.

## 5.4 Overarching statement

Developing the overarching statement included a small group drafting key messages. These key messages were then shared with the whole Community Panel. Panel members then worked to refine the statement through a facilitated process collaboratively.

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Kinders are where children play, make friends, learn to share, discover and explore. They offer a unique life experience.

The Community Panel is very aware that we are advocating for the voice of the child, and we want to make clear that children are our future. Investment in social interaction, education, and opportunities to thrive from birth to 5 years old is a crucial time for development and gives children a head start in life. Council can play a role in advocating for the needs of vulnerable children. The child and families should always drive decision-making regardless of profit.

Children are more engaged in sessional kindergarten as it is a more structured program when compared to long day care. Council can play a role in communicating the benefits of these kindergartens. For families and children, the benefits include building connections and relationships from early childhood onwards.

Sessional kindergartens are the birthplace of communities. Council understands our community and our local children. Independent providers may not have the same knowledge and motivation. Therefore, community connection may be lost, which concerns us. We want to make sure there is a grassroots commitment to kindergarten that still applies regardless of Council's role in service provision.

It's not just about the child. It's also about a parent's connection to kinder, education and community. Council has the ability to empower communities to be more hands-on and play an active role in kindergartens. Regardless of the outcome, we want Council to continue to engage with parents and enable opportunities for them to connect.

There's been a lot of historical work to get kindergartens in Knox to the point they are now, it would be devastating to lose this given the community advocacy that has occurred. The quality this has led to is felt by our community.

Knox community takes pride in the fact that our kindergartens run by Council are exceeding the quality standards. We need to celebrate and communicate this fact. It's not just a tick box exercise. Community sees and feels the difference.

We recognise that with change comes opportunity. We want community facilities that may be no longer used for kinder to sustain their value for the community based on current needs.

Choice of opportunities and consistency should remain regardless of the approach or who is in Government. We are asking Council to be transparent around any further changes and involve community as a key voice in decision making.

Our panel deliberations began and ended with the benefits to the child, and we should not lose sight of this as a community.

We want to make sure that the wider community know that the Community Panel did not have final decision-making power.

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## 6 Measuring the success of the Community Panel

The following section details the evaluation of the Knox Kindergarten Reform Community Panel from the perspective of participants.

Evaluation of the participants experience happened over the following two activities:

- **The pre-session survey:** This asked Panel members to identify their current content knowledge and perceptions of Council.
- **The post-session survey:** This asked the same questions as the pre-session survey to capture the panel process's impact and included an evaluation survey that asked panel members to provide feedback on the overall process and their experience.

The follow section details the findings from these surveys.

### 6.1 Pre and post perceptions

For the pre and post perceptions survey, panel members were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements:

- I have a positive relationship with Knox Council
- I trust that Knox Council actively supports community involvement in making decisions
- I understand how Know Council plans and delivers services
- I feel like I have the skills to contribute to Council's decision making
- I feel connected to the Knox community

Figure 5 details the average level of agreement for the statements in the results of both the pre-session survey and the post-session survey and how average shifted between the two. The survey results show growth across all statements, besides 'I feel like I have the skills to contribute to Council's decision making' which showed no change in results across the two surveys. The area that received the greatest growth was 'I understand how Know Council plans and delivers services'.

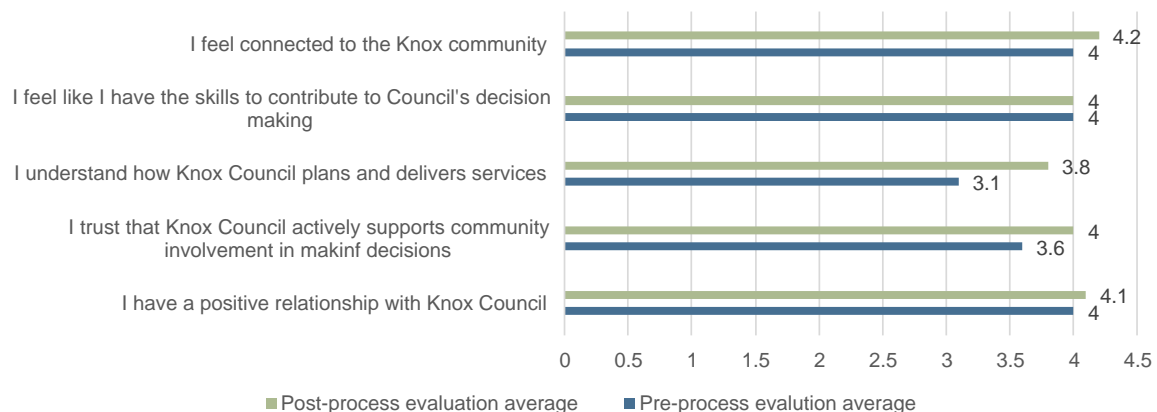


Figure 5. Pre- and post-process perception results



## 6.2 Motivation to join

The pre-session survey asked panel members to share what motivated them to join the Community Panel. Many participants relayed having a vested interest in the early childhood services provided by Knox Council with many being former, current or future users. Participants were also interested in learning more about decision-making processes at Knox Council, and being able to contribute to these processes for the benefit of their community.

## 6.3 Value of community panel processes

The post-session survey asked panel members to identify what is most valuable about community panel process like this one. Participants valued the ability to bring a diverse range of people together and participate in decision-making processes to consider a broad range of perspectives. Participants gained trust regarding Council processes as it allowed community to be involved in a meaningful process which reflects community values.

## 6.4 Evaluation of the process

The post-session survey asked panel members to provide feedback on how the panel process was delivered. The survey asked panel members to rate their level of agreement with the following statements:

- I felt the recruitment process was clear
- I have many opportunities to express my opinions and views
- I felt the quality of information provided assisted me to form an opinion
- I enjoyed my time on the community panel
- I would like to take part in similar processes
- My participation in this panel was worthwhile.

Figure 6 illustrates the results. Overall, panel member feedback was positive with 71% of panel members strongly agreeing with the statement 'I enjoyed my time on the community panel'. No statements received responses of 'strongly disagree' or 'disagree'.

The survey also invited panel members to share any other comments they had on the process. Overall, the comments were positive with panel members taking the opportunity to further share their enjoyment of the process and their appreciation to Council for the opportunity. Others shared how this process has helped them feel valued as a resident of Knox and they were grateful for the opportunity to provide back to the community through their participation. Several identified the desire for the Community Panel to have taken a vote or worked to reach a consensus on the preferred option as they felt this would have provided more value to Council in its decision-making.

“I am interested in contributing to my community and I strongly value early years education.”

PANEL MEMBER

“Community gets a voice to communicate what is important and of value to us as a collective.”

PANEL MEMBER

“Word gets out to Knox residents and owners that the council really does value the opinions of it's people.”

PANEL MEMBER

“I wish we could have taken a vote so that council knows exactly what the majority of the community wants.”

PANEL MEMBER

“It was an exciting, interesting and valuable experience. I feel like I have given something back to the local community that I have lived in for more than 40 years.”

PANEL MEMBER

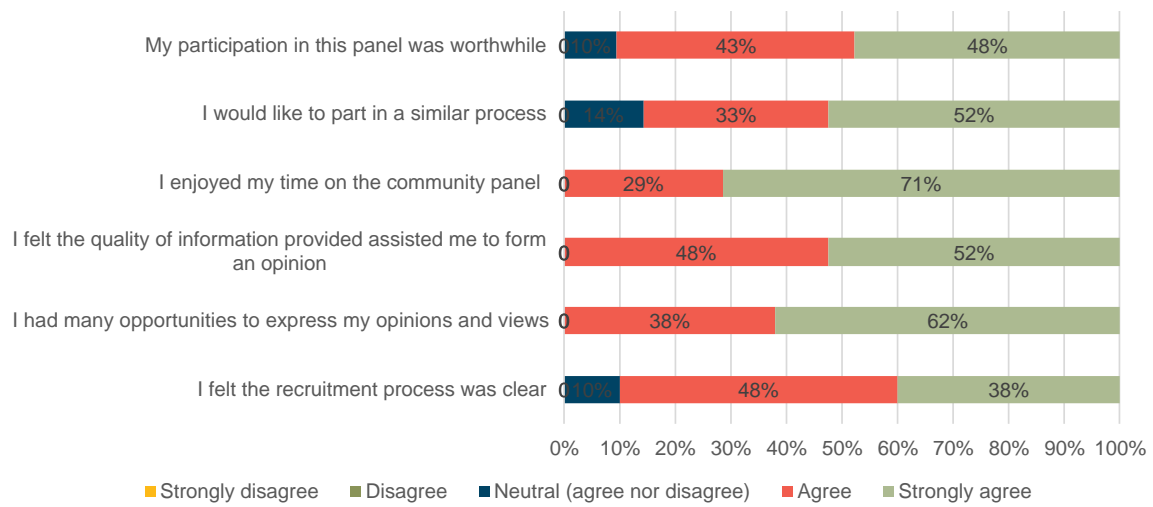


Figure 6. Panel member process evaluation results

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Capire acknowledges  
and deeply respects the  
Wurundjeri people and  
the Traditional Owners  
of the Victorian land.



capire

## 6.2 ICT Capital Works

### SUMMARY:

**The ICT Capital Works Report shows projects on Council's ICT Capital Works Program and indicates the monthly status of each project.**

### RECOMMENDATION

**That Council receive and note the ICT Capital Works Report, as at 19 May 2023.**

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

This report summarises Council's ICT Capital Works Program for the 2022/2023 financial year. The aim of this report is to provide a regular and succinct status summary of each project over the last month.

The ICT Capital Works Report is included as an attachment. Key updates in the ICT Capital Works Report include:

- DCCT Program Ph-2 Intranet Redevelopment: Design and discovery workshops are underway with our build vendor WebVine across May and will be completed in early June ahead of the vendor working through the build tasks. Our content writers have been holding content co-workshops and drafting new content pages that follow best practice writing guidelines. The dependency on the accuracy of People Data has been escalated and is being reviewed to confirm timelines.
- Asset Management Information System project: This project is facing a number of challenges, including resource constraints within the Asset Strategy team, and cost and scope pressures which have resulted in a red health status. Senior-level meetings have taken place between Council and the vendor to ensure that there is the necessary commitment from the vendor in delivering the Confirm solution for Phase II and III. For the most part, an agreement has been reached on the key issues.
- The project has continued to make progress in the areas of testing and process design. The RAG (Red, Amber, Green) health indicators will remain Red until:
  - Commercial / vendor: new contract in progress, awaiting signing from vendor.
  - Resources: on-boarding new Project Manager at the vendor (closed).
  - Cost and scope: Adjusted cost variation to be approved by the steering committee in June the vendor, resourcing, cost, and scope issues have been signed off.
- Master Data Management: A new baseline has been established and agreed - returning the project to green status. Key milestones have been set with the first being technical review of existing conditions (complete), EMT session & SMT sessions in May 2023, and business case with options in Aug 2023. In parallel, regular project board meetings are starting along with work efforts in the areas of data validation & quality; and sizing foundational infrastructure. The project name will change in Aug 2023 from MDM to Data Enablement Program.

## **2. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidential information is contained in Attachment 1 in the confidential agenda, in accordance with Sections 3 and 66 of the *Local Government Act 2020* as the information relates to contractual matters; and the premature disclosure of the information could be prejudicial to the interests of Council or other persons.

**Report Prepared By: Portfolio Office Lead, Elly Liu**

**Head of Portfolio Office and Enterprise Change, Sophie Binks**

**Report Authorised By: Manager Strategy and Transformation, Liesl Westberry**

### **Attachments**

1. Council Report SPC June [6.2.1 - 7 pages]

Project Name & Status	Status
<p><b>In progress - On track</b></p> <p><b>Asset Management Information System</b></p> <p>Council’s current Asset Management Information system ‘Lifecycle’ is a critical tool to manage Council Assets. This project is to replace the current Lifecycle system with 'Confirm' a contemporary, modern, well supported and compliant system equivalent that meets Council’s current and future needs.</p> <p>Monthly highlights: The Proof of Concept (POC) for the data migration has moved to the middle of June 2023 due to the initial POC not meeting our expectations. The system configuration will be completed first and the POC will be done on this. This change has directly delayed the publishing of the overall project live implementation dates; however, it does not delay the project end date as configuration was always part of the project.</p> <p>The “get to green” actions for the RAG status:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Commercial / vendor: new contract in progress, awaiting signing from vendor</li> <li>- Resources: on-boarding new Project Manager at the vendor (closed)</li> <li>- Cost and scope: Adjusted cost variation to be approved by the steering committee in June</li> </ul> <p>Anticipate the project to move to AMBER in the next reporting cycle</p>	Red
<p><b>Corporate Reporting Solutions</b></p> <p>The Corporate Reporting project will replace Interplan with a new system, Pulse, to manage strategic, risk and audit reporting, improving transparency, efficiency and ability to make data and risk-based decisions. Pulse will also give better visibility of the delegations and policies that</p>	Amber

Project Name & Status	Status
<p>apply to staff. Pulse will be rolled out in 2023 in the following phases; Audit - February, Corporate Reporting - April, Risk - June, Corporate Indicators - July and Polices &amp; Delegations - August.</p> <p>The rollout of the Corporate Reporting module for the Quarter 3 Council Plan reporting went smoothly and was very well-received by end users. The project is amber as there has been a delay to starting the final module, Delegations, due to the dependency on the People Data which needs to confirm delivery dates. A new Project Manager has been recruited and is currently onboarded to the project.</p>	<p>Amber</p>
<p><b>DCCT Program - Ph-2 Intranet Redevelopment</b></p> <p>This project replaces the current staff intranet with a contemporary digital solution, enabling staff to efficiently connect with colleagues, information, ideas and systems across Council. The project will be delivered in three stages: Stage 1 due September 2023, includes rewriting content and provision of core functionality such as staff directory, news hub, and the ability for staff to access the intranet without having to log into Council's network. Stage 2 due December 2023 includes improvements to complex forms and movement of information from obsolete functionality. Stage 3 due March 2024 includes staff collaboration functionality.</p> <p>Design and discovery workshops are underway with our build vendor WebVine throughout May and will be completed in early June. The vendor will then work through the build tasks. Our content writers have been holding content co-workshops and drafting new content pages that follow best practice writing guidelines. The dependency on the accuracy of People Data has been escalated and awaiting confirmation of delivery dates.</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p><b>Early Years Platform</b></p> <p>The Early Years Project will review service requirements, ensuring the correct solution is in place to meet process and technical requirements whilst delivering a better experience for our Kindergarten and Childcare communities. The Project delivered the core system for the ongoing Early Years solution (Phase 1) in late 2022. A second phase will deliver Sign In / Sign Out and the decommissioning of existing systems will conclude the project outcomes in mid-2023.</p> <p>Implementation of EnrolNow is now complete. The project has been completed under budget and ahead of time. Decommissioning activities for legacy systems, Knox Early Years System (KEYS) and KN Enrol, are underway and are targeted to be complete by 30 June 2023. Discussions are underway with the Corporate Information team regarding the Audit Trail record requirements. The extracted data from KN Enrol is ready for user verification.</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p><b>Enterprise Integration Platform</b></p>	<p>Green</p>

Project Name & Status	Status
<p>The Enterprise Integration Project will develop an organisational capability which can enable the sharing of data easily between systems, reducing the risk of integration failure and disruption to business, and enabling Knox City Council’s transformation and customer experience goals. The project conducted a Proof of Concept in 2022, which proved the use of the Mulesoft Platform for complex integration between two core legacy systems (Document Management KX and Pathway).</p> <p>Contract negotiations are currently underway with the selected vendor Pernix and are scheduled to complete in May 2023. A project kick-off meeting with KCC and Pernix is scheduled for the end of May 2023. The integration backlog prioritisation model was approved by the Project Sponsor and the finalisation of the backlog list is in progress.</p>	Green
<p><b>Master Data Management</b></p> <p>Master Data Management (MDM) is a cultural change program focused on the collaborative effort between service areas, people, systems and processes to form a common understanding of how the Council will maintain and support key datasets.</p> <p>A new baseline has been established and agreed - returning the project to green status. Key milestones have been set with the first being technical review of existing conditions (complete), EMT session &amp; SMT sessions in May 2023, and business case with options in Aug 2023. In parallel, regular project board meetings are starting along with work efforts in the areas of data validation &amp; quality; and sizing foundational infrastructure. The project name will change in August 2023 from MDM to Data Enablement Program.</p>	Green
<p><b>Project Management Office</b></p> <p>Project Management Office oversees quality aspects of the overall Portfolio of ICT. The PMO is used for PMO resource costs, and non-project specific charges, including annual leave and admin/team activities.</p> <p>The budget for this function continues to be managed according to plan.</p>	Green
<p><b>Project Management Office - ICT Governance</b></p> <p>This budget allocation is to cover costs associated with ICT governance including independent members of the ICT Governance Committee.</p> <p>The allocation continues to track to plan.</p>	Green
<b>On hold</b>	
<p><b>Cloud Migration</b></p> <p>This project aims to detail, prioritise and migrate systems from On-Premises to the Cloud. Cloud solutions increase operation and storage</p>	Amber



Project Name & Status	Status
<p>flexibility of our IT systems, improves business continuity risk, improves staff accessibility, and ensures ease of regular automatic updates. Cloud solutions reduces maintenance cost of hardware, software, resource and energy costs. A review of network architecture was conducted in early 2022 as a precursor to the project.</p> <p>Workshop to determine project scope undertaken with key stakeholders on 3 March 2023. Resignation of two key project resources will impact on project progress, including completion of Project Initiation Document.</p>	Yellow
<p><b>Spatial Capability</b></p> <p>Spatial information is all about the location of people, properties, and objects. Council uses spatial information to better understand its community, assets and resources and ensure that it provides the high-quality services, policies, and programs. This project centres on how to increase spatial capabilities across a range of functions throughout council. Existing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) were successfully upgraded in June 2020, with the business users now taking advantage of improved functionality for Intramaps and QGIS.</p> <p>In late 2022 vendor negotiations were finalised, and a new contract put in place to extend the current On-Premises Intramaps arrangement until June 2025. Recommencement of the spatial capabilities scope will now be considered in the context of the ICT Strategy refresh which is in development. The project is red as the budget won't be spent this financial year and it will need to be carried forward.</p>	Red
<b>Not started</b>	
<p><b>Customer Relationship Management</b></p> <p>Customer Relationship Management refers to all strategies, techniques, tools, and technologies used by Council for effectively servicing our community-based customers.</p> <p>This project is scheduled to commence in 2025 as identified in the Customer and Performance Enablement Roadmap.</p>	Grey
<p><b>DCCT Program - Ph-3 Integration Phase</b></p> <p>This phase will expand on earlier delivery of the Digital program, with the implementation of a secure portal to Knox staff, a Knox business hub and additional integration with Knox systems.</p> <p>The phase will commence 2023.</p>	Grey
<p><b>Facilities Booking Solution - Phase 2 Community Facilities Booking Solution</b></p> <p>This project is the second phase of the facilities booking project. Phase 1 deployed the Primavira solution and this second phase will be to extend</p>	Grey

Project Name & Status	Status
<p>the booking solution to the community for facilities booking, including access to 300+ facilities such as halls, pavillions, ovals etc.</p> <p>This project will commence when resource capacity becomes available from the Asset Management Project over the next 12 months.</p>	
<b>Completed</b>	
<p><b>Business Intelligence</b></p> <p>The Business Intelligence Project aims to build and continually improve Council’s business intelligence capability, and work with the business to develop BI solutions which provide crucial insights to drive improved strategy development, evidence based planning and business improvement.</p> <p>This project was completed in 2021. The Business Intelligence (BI) Project has finalised its set objectives to enable Council teams with BI and Analytics capability by implementing a structured approach to address BI and data related requests. Through the project implementation a total of 16 use cases across 11 departments were delivered over the last 12 months. Power Users were identified and provided with advanced training on BI tools. The Strategy and BI team will continue to support business on BI and Analytics requirements following project closure in July 2021.</p>	Green
<p><b>Community Engagement Platform</b></p> <p>Assisting Strategy and Business Intelligence to deliver a centre-led community engagement approach, which includes effective processes, tools, data management and technology integration. This will be supported by a new community engagement digital platform to facilitate external and internal engagement. Together the project will deliver improved outcomes to the community, by ensuring that the community voice is included in decisions made by Council.</p> <p>This project was completed in February 2021, when the Knox "Have Your Say" platform went live. The solution underpins the policy and framework for Knox's engagement with the community on decision making that affects them. Additional staff awareness sessions and on-demand training are available to support the ongoing use of the tool.</p>	Green
<p><b>DCCT Program - Ph-1 Website Redevelopment</b></p> <p>Digital Customer Channels Transformation Program. The project replaced the existing website, with a new digital solution which delivers a quick, convenient and rewarding digital interactions with Council. Content on the site was refreshed and a new operating model agreed to ensure the website meets Community expectations into the future.</p> <p>This project was completed in June 2021 following the successful deployment of Council's new website. Ongoing support has been handed over to the newly established Digital Experience Team. All final project tasks including the decommissioning of the old website have been completed.</p>	Green

Project Name & Status	Status
<p><b>Facilities Booking Solution - Phase 1 Staff Room Bookings</b></p> <p>The project has successfully implemented a contemporary facilities booking solution called Primavira, to facilitate staff bookings of Civic Centre function rooms, fleet vehicles, staff meeting rooms and staff meeting rooms in Knox Community and Leisure Centres (50+ additional rooms available for staff reservation).</p> <p>This project was successfully completed in 2019.</p>	Green
<p><b>HR Systems</b></p> <p>The Enhancing our People Systems project is made up of three work packages 1. PageUp Recruitment, Learning, Variations and Onboarding (delivered in 2020), 2. Humanforce Time &amp; Attendance and (delivered in 2021) 3. PageUp Performance and Succession (delivered in 2021)</p> <p>This project was completed in 2021. New systems are in place and formal handover has occurred with People &amp; Culture.</p>	Green
<p><b>Pathway Program</b></p> <p>This program delivers enhancements to the Pathway system, which manages customer requests and enquiries, rates, payments, infringements, animal registrations and permit and renewal applications. The key outcomes include developing online services with an improved customer experience, enable seamless integration between systems, and optimise the use of available functionality within Pathway such as dashboards and electronic document delivery.</p> <p>The ICT funding for Pathway enhancements has concluded and ongoing development transitioned to BAU operations in September 2021. The program has delivered significant benefits to Council. IT will continue to support Pathway and ePathway development as a core application at Knox.</p>	Green
<b>Removed</b>	
<p><b>Active Aging System Platform</b></p> <p>This project reviewed Carelink Plus, the key system, and related processes currently used by Community Access and Support, to assess their experience and optimise the data shared with other systems.</p> <p>Initiation phase found the Carelink Plus application is broadly meeting business needs and is now used by only a small number of users. An upgrade is required and some improvement opportunities were identified for the Community Transport team. A change request was endorsed by the ICT Steering</p>	

Project Name & Status	Status
Committee in November to descope this project from the ICT program and instead manage delivery of the changes by Technical Services as part of their regular upgrade cycle.	
Green	

## 6.3 Capital Works Program Report

**SUMMARY: Coordinator, Capital Works, John Bixby**

**The Capital Works Program Report shows projects on Council's Capital Works Program and indicates the status of each project as of 9 June 2023.**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council receive and note the Capital Works Program Report, as of 9 June 2023.**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This report summarises Council's Capital Works Program for the 2022/23 financial year.

The aim of this report is to provide a regular and succinct status summary of each project over the last month. The Capital Works Report, as of 9 June 2023, is attached as Attachment A.

Highlights of the Works Report as of 9 June 2023 include:

- Lakesfield Reserve Carpark construction completed
- Lewis Park Wantirna South, Floodlighting project works completed.
- Schultz Reserve Wantirna Shade Structure completed
- Fairpark Reserve Ferntree Gully Safety Netting works completed with positive feedback from the club received.
- Guy Turner Reserve and Schultz Reserve Cricket Net Renewal works completed.

Council has a number of projects well progressed and nearing completion. Several projects are presently out to quote/tender and under construction, with expectation of reaching completion by end of financial year. It is noted that many projects were delayed earlier in the year due to wet weather, material and labour shortages.

### **2. CONFIDENTIALITY**

There are no items of a confidential nature in this report.

**Report Prepared by: Acting Coordinator – Capital Works, John Bixby**

**Report Authorised by: Director Infrastructure, Grant Thorne**

### **Attachments**

1. Capital Works Program - Works Report as at 9 June 2023 - Attachment A [6.3.1 - 17 pages]

## Knox City Council Project Status Report

09-Jun-2023

Project Number	Project Name	Total Adjusted Budget
<b>1</b>	<b>Bridges Renewal Program</b>	<b>\$855,820</b>
All Wards	The on-site construction works of Brenock Park Drive pedestrian bridge commenced in May and will be completed in June. A bridge maintenance package that includes works to 30 bridge structures is in progress and will be completed by the end of June.	
<b>4</b>	<b>High Risk Road Failures</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>
All Wards	Road failure currently being repaired in Kent Street Knoxfield. Replacement of high friction surface treatment in Francis Crescent scheduled for early June.	
<b>7</b>	<b>Road Surface Renewal Program</b>	<b>\$4,187,200</b>
All Wards	Program scheduled to be completed first week of June.	
<b>8</b>	<b>Drainage Pit and Pipe Renewal Program</b>	<b>\$2,600,000</b>
All Wards	Drainage renewal works are in progress at various locations including pipe relining works at Wantirna Reserve and drainage works at Messmate Road Ferntree Gully.	
<b>9</b>	<b>Footpath Renewal Program</b>	<b>\$2,430,850</b>
All Wards	Footpath renewal works are in progress at various locations across the municipality. The program is on schedule for completion by June 30.	
<b>10</b>	<b>Bicycle and Shared Path Renewal Program</b>	<b>\$688,000</b>
All Wards	Renewal works recently completed along Ferny Creek Trail near Brenock Park Drive. Works are about to commence along Stud Road near Bladon Street Wantirna South and at Carrington Reserve. The program is on schedule for completion by June 30.	
<b>16</b>	<b>Building Renewal Program</b>	<b>\$3,959,251</b>
All Wards	Expenditure is on track. Works commencing and/or to be completed over June include Wattle Senior Citizens bathroom renewal, HV Jones kitchen, Eildon Park Tennis Pavilion - Kitchen renewal, Rowville Library - Painting, Bayswater Senior Citizens - Painting, HVAC renewal at Rowville Community Centre, Marie Wallace Cricket Pavilion renewal works, Gilbert Park Softball Pavilion renewal works and Civic Centre electrical substation civil works	
<b>17</b>	<b>Playground Renewal Program</b>	<b>\$1,509,500</b>
All Wards	Knox Playspace Renewal 2022-23: Stud Park Playground renewal tender has been awarded with works to commence in June. Community consultation on the Tim Neville Arboretum Playground draft concept design has now closed. Commencing tender documentation.	
<b>22</b>	<b>Fire Hydrant Replacement Program</b>	<b>\$147,000</b>
All Wards	Expenditure is not likely required until late June.	
<b>24</b>	<b>Carpark Renewal</b>	<b>\$560,000</b>
All Wards	Works recently completed at Mountain Gate SC carpark and Dobson Reserve carpark.	

## Knox City Council Project Status Report

09-Jun-2023

Project Number	Project Name	Total Adjusted Budget
<b>25</b>	<b>Plant &amp; Machinery Renewal Program</b>	<b>\$2,260,000</b>
All Wards	Fleet renewal program underway. Expected delays due to ongoing supply issues across manufacturing. To date Council has 76% of funds committed and 42% of funds expended.	
<b>26</b>	<b>Street Tree Replacement Program</b>	<b>\$524,519</b>
All Wards	Program funds fully committed with majority of bulk tree planting completed.	
<b>31</b>	<b>Stamford Park Redevelopment</b>	<b>\$6,000,000</b>
Tirhatuan	Construction - Concrete footings and structures are well underway. Some wet weather delays have been experienced however progress on site is still ahead of schedule.	
<b>104</b>	<b>Roadside Furniture Renewal Program</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
All Wards	Program completed for 2022/23 financial year.	
<b>147</b>	<b>Energy Retrofits for Community Buildings</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>
All Wards	Car Park lighting upgrades and heat pump projects are expected to be completed by June.	
<b>229</b>	<b>Building Code Australia Compliance</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>
All Wards	Program for 22/23 works are completed.	
<b>345</b>	<b>Asbestos Removal</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>
All Wards	Small asbestos removal jobs completed or nearing completion at Scoresby Reserve Tennis, Rosa Benedikt, Dobson Park Pavilion and Gilbert Park Softball Pavilion. Program expected to be completed by mid June.	
<b>347</b>	<b>Miscellaneous Industrial Roads - Pavement Rehabilitation</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>
All Wards	Program completed for 2022/23 financial year.	
<b>409</b>	<b>Parks Furniture Renewal</b>	<b>\$72,000</b>
All Wards	Final furniture renewals for financial year underway.	
<b>410</b>	<b>Parks Signage Renewal</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>
All Wards	Final works for financial year underway.	
<b>412</b>	<b>Water Sensitive Urban Design Renewal</b>	<b>\$178,000</b>
All Wards	Majority of civil work for Juniper pond expansion and Yarrabing desilt has been completed. To be finalised in June.	
<b>441</b>	<b>Significant Municipal Site Renewal</b>	<b>\$313,559</b>
All Wards	Garden bed renewals scheduled to occur start of June.	

**Knox City Council Project Status Report**

09-Jun-2023

<b>Project Number</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Total Adjusted Budget</b>
<b>443</b>	<b>Reserves Paths Renewal</b>	<b>\$75,000</b>
All Wards	Concrete path works completed at Eildon reserve.	
<b>492</b>	<b>Food Act Compliance - Kitchen Retrofitting</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>
All Wards	Minor works required for Kings Park Baseball Pavilion and Schultz Reserve Pavilion now complete. Refit for HV Jones Soccer Pavilion kitchen with contractor appointed and completion expected by late June.	
<b>536</b>	<b>Parkland Asset Renewal</b>	<b>\$74,995</b>
All Wards	Retaining wall replacement completed at Val Boyde reserve.	
<b>537</b>	<b>Roadside Plantings Renewal</b>	<b>\$62,005</b>
All Wards	Plant orders completed for roadside garden renewals awaiting delivery	
<b>566</b>	<b>Artwork Renewal</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>
All Wards	Renewal projects planned FTG Placemaking Totem, First Nations Tiriki Onus restoration, Alley Oop, Knox Skate Park Restoration, Bird Song sculptures at Arthur Kleinert Reserve and other minor repairs and improvements to civic and public artworks. Budget will be fully expended 30 June.	
<b>576</b>	<b>Emergency Warning Systems in Early Years Facilities</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
All Wards	All intended projects expected to be complete by early June.	
<b>675</b>	<b>Public Art Project</b>	<b>\$317,000</b>
All Wards	Variety of major public art project delivered and in progress 22/23, including contingency and contributions to major public artwork contracts including: FTG placemaking project, Erica Ave Public Art Project, Knox Library public art, Stamford Park (2 major public artworks), Boronia Library Mural, Boronia Light boxes. This allocation also funds the two Council Plan Items - Public Art Trail and Arts Link. Some major projects are held up by the delays in infrastructure projects (public art is the last item for installation). May to June will see major public art spending for Stamford Park, Knox Regional Netball Centre and FTG Village contracts, Tim Neville Arboretum Mural & Rowville Library Mural. Not all contracted projects will be fully realised by EOFY, and a carry forward will be required.	
<b>708</b>	<b>Cricket Run Up and Goal Square Renewal Works</b>	<b>\$70,000</b>
All Wards	All funds committed.	
<b>717</b>	<b>Knox Central Package</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>
Dinsdale	The purchase of the parcel of land to enable the future road corridor has been finalised. The review of the masterplan will confirm the nature and location of the road corridor.	
<b>746</b>	<b>Revegetation Plan</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
All Wards	Final stages of the preparation of the site has been completed, including the mulching of the site. Planting to begin in June.	



**Knox City Council Project Status Report**

09-Jun-2023

<b>Project Number</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Total Adjusted Budget</b>
<b>755</b>	<b>Talaskia Reserve, Upper Ferntree Gully - Masterplan Implementation Stage 2</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>
Dobson	Talaskia Masterplan Implementation works completed.	
<b>834</b>	<b>Oversowing of Sports Fields</b>	<b>\$70,000</b>
All Wards	All funds to be spent by 30 June.	
<b>837</b>	<b>Westfield Library (Permanent) - Design and Fitout</b>	<b>\$3,444,205</b>
Dinsdale	Negotiations with Scentre Group complete, report to go to Council in June.	
<b>867</b>	<b>Knox Regional Netball Centre Extension</b>	<b>\$4,010,722</b>
Dobson	Construction of the new facility is complete and refurbishment works of the existing facility are progressing. This includes an upgrade of the existing netball centre's administrative areas, foyer, amenities and installation of a lift.	
<b>868</b>	<b>H V Jones, Ferntree Gully - Masterplan Implementation Stage 3</b>	<b>\$835,000</b>
Friberg	Delivery of Stage 3 of the HV Jones Masterplan includes upgrades to the netball courts and extension of the existing carpark. Construction has commenced. Currently constructing the paving of the netball courts.	
<b>869</b>	<b>Gilbert Park, Knoxfield - Masterplan Implementation Stage 3</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>
Friberg	Consultation on the draft design has now concluded. Currently consolidating the findings from the consultation. The consultant has developed a final concept and now proceeding with tender documentation phase.	
<b>871</b>	<b>Energy Performance Contract Implementation</b>	<b>\$218,065</b>
All Wards	Reviewing documentation for a number of final projects along with fine tuning of solar projects underway. Measurement and Verification Program to commence in June.	
<b>935</b>	<b>Scoresby (Exner) Reserve - Tennis Court Renewals</b>	<b>\$38,900</b>
Tirhatuan	(1) Discussions and negotiations with original contractor and Council's insurer continuing around surface defect issue. Insurance claim on surface issues submitted and accepted in principle by Council's insurer. Investigations related to remedial treatment proposals along with costings from Contractor has been assessed by independent industry expert with final recommendation report presented to Council's insurers for assessment. Separate plumbing investigations could not locate source of excessive moisture; (2) Detailed Design completed.	
<b>941</b>	<b>Knox Regional Netball Centre - Court Renewals</b>	<b>\$129,600</b>
Dobson	On target to complete by June 30.	
<b>944</b>	<b>Knox Central (Former Operations Centre)</b>	<b>\$350,000</b>
Dinsdale	The final report has been drafted and is under review by the Auditor.	

## Knox City Council Project Status Report

09-Jun-2023

Project Number	Project Name	Total Adjusted Budget
<b>948</b>	<b>Modular Building Program</b>	<b>\$1,757,000</b>
All Wards	<p>(1) Lakesfield Reserve Carpark - Project combined with Rowville Recreation Reserve Carpark. Contract works completed. Associated and additional footpath/ramp works about to commence once design is clarified due to level issues. Additional footpath works anticipated to be complete around mid-late June 2023. Total works 90% completed.</p> <p>(2) Marie Wallace Modular completed and Marie Wallace Junior Football Pavilion refurbishment expected to be completed/handover by end of May/early June.</p> <p>(3) Gilbert Park Modular Pavilion completed. Construction is progressing on existing Pavilion refurbishment with completion expected by mid June</p>	
<b>950</b>	<b>Family &amp; Childrens Services Buildings &amp; Facilities</b>	<b>\$350,000</b>
All Wards	Project is completed and handed over.	
<b>951</b>	<b>Community Toilet Replacement Program</b>	<b>\$277,000</b>
All Wards	Carried forward project - Chandler Park - Currently out to tender with tender close on Friday 9th June, 2023. Anticipate to appoint contractor in mid June and construction to commence from July.	
<b>995</b>	<b>Peregrine Reserve, Rowville - Masterplan Implementation Stage 2</b>	<b>\$381,126</b>
Taylor	Construction of the new Junior BMX pump track and outdoor gym equipment now complete and officially open.	
<b>997</b>	<b>Llewellyn Reserve, Wantirna South - Masterplan Implementation</b>	<b>\$31,606</b>
Scott	Works scheduled for the 22/23 FY have been completed. Any future masterplan implementation works will occur subject to the budget process.	
<b>999</b>	<b>Lewis Park, Wantirna South - Masterplan Implementation - Stage 1 - Waterways</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>
Dinsdale	Construction - Melbourne Water is delivering these works.	
<b>1003</b>	<b>Wantirna Reserve, Wantirna - Masterplan</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>
Collier	Site stakeholders consultation completed. The consultant is currently in the process of finalising the masterplan, incorporating the comments gathered from the stakeholders. The revised and improved masterplan will serve as the basis for the next phase of community consultation, scheduled to commence in mid-June 2023	
<b>1054</b>	<b>Knox Regional Sports Park - Stages 2 and 3 (VARMS)</b>	<b>\$1,528,456</b>
Scott	The expansion of the State Basketball Centre is being managed by the State Government through Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV) and Development Victoria (DV) on behalf of stakeholders including Council as project partner. The new VARMS (Victorian Association of Radio Model Soaring) clubhouse and runway are complete and in operation, with asphaltting to the new left turn lane entry from Stud Road completed in May.	
<b>1119</b>	<b>Wantirna Reserve, Wantirna - Tennis Court Renewals</b>	<b>\$1,646,389</b>
Collier	Contract works completed and successfully handed over to Club. Practical Completion inspection completed and Practical Completion Certificate issued. Testing of lighting has occurred and awaiting lux report. 3 Months contract maintenance period underway.	

**Knox City Council Project Status Report**

09-Jun-2023

<b>Project Number</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Total Adjusted Budget</b>
<b>1123</b>	<b>Public Tennis / Netball / Basketball Court Renewals</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
All Wards	Project Completed.	
<b>1124</b>	<b>Sportsfield Fencing Renewals</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>
All Wards	On track to spend all funds by 30 June.	
<b>1162</b>	<b>Templeton Street, Wantirna - Linemarking and Intersection Treatments</b>	<b>\$39,557</b>
Collier	Construction work is complete.	
<b>1163</b>	<b>Renou Road, Wantirna South - Intersection Treatments</b>	<b>\$106,577</b>
Collier	Construction work is complete.	
<b>1173</b>	<b>Quarry Reserve, Ferntree Gully - Masterplan Implementation Stage 3</b>	<b>\$527,428</b>
Dobson	Quarry Reserve City Skyline lookout: Temporary fence has been installed and construction has commence. Project is expected to be completed by the end of August 2023.	
<b>1176</b>	<b>Solar in Community Facilities</b>	<b>\$130,000</b>
All Wards	Solar installation at Wally Tew Reserve due to commence in early June. Design for Solar Projects for 23/24 year to commence in Mid June. Approximately \$50,000 to be carried forward into next financial year.	
<b>1180</b>	<b>Forest Road to Koolunga Reserve, FTG - Wetland Construction</b>	<b>\$386,000</b>
Chandler	Final consultation of the Future Directions Plan has closed. A report is being prepared for the July meeting of Council.	
<b>1184</b>	<b>Egan Lee Reserve - Wetland Construction</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>
Scott	Modelling report received - report findings to inform design of wetland.	
<b>1238</b>	<b>BAMP Facility Upgrades</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>
All Wards	Project brief development by early June with few proposals to be provided by mid-late June and consultant appointed in late June	
<b>1262</b>	<b>Cultural Facilities - Knox Pop Up Events Trailer &amp; Kit</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>
All Wards	Ongoing renewal of Council's community event trailer and kit for use by Community and Council run events. Damaged gear has been replaced, some items to be tagged and tested, and purchase of storage boxes to improve logistics of the kit will see full spend by EOFY. This is an ongoing renewal budget requirement to support safe use of the kit and protection of Council assets.	
<b>1265</b>	<b>Park Crescent Children and Family Centre, Boronia - Refurbishment Scoping</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>
Baird	Concept plan is completed. Detailed design is expected to be completed by End of June if the project goes ahead.	

## Knox City Council Project Status Report

09-Jun-2023

Project Number	Project Name	Total Adjusted Budget
<b>1267</b>	<b>Early Years Facilities - Landscaping Upgrades</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
All Wards	Liberty Avenue play space upgraded completed. Shade structure delayed due to material shortages with installation to be completed in June. Work to remove unsafe play space structures across all Early Years Facilities have commenced.	
<b>1269</b>	<b>Rosa Benedikt Community Centre, Scoresby - Minor Upgrade</b>	<b>\$52,288</b>
Tirhatuan	This project is now fully completed.	
<b>1281</b>	<b>Ferntree Gully Road, Knoxfield (O'Connor Road and Henderson Road) - Shared Path</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>
Tirhatuan	Consultation is being sought with the private landowners.	
<b>1297</b>	<b>Amesbury Avenue, Wantirna - Intersection Treatments</b>	<b>\$43,094</b>
Collier	Construction work is complete.	
<b>1300</b>	<b>Parking Management Plan Implementation</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>
All Wards	Parking surveys for The Basin, Mountain Gate and Rowville have been conducted by the consultant in early February. We have received their report for The Basin, Mountain Gate and Rowville. The reports, including consultation feedback is being reviewed. Minor parking changes were made in line with existing parking plans.	
<b>1308</b>	<b>Kevin Ave, Ferntree Gully Flood Investigation - Scoping</b>	<b>\$167,000</b>
Dobson	Currently investigating the benefits of including an additional main drain outfall into the design. Based on modelling, the original design intent was not fit for purpose.	
<b>1309</b>	<b>1825 Ferntree Gully Road - Flood Mitigation Works</b>	<b>\$56,390</b>
Friberg	Consultant appointed to investigate alternatives to improve flooding issues south of Burwood Highway.	
<b>1310</b>	<b>Flood Mitigation Reactive Complaints Upgrade Works</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
All Wards	Quote received for McDonald Crescent, projects sitting with Knox Construction Group for delivery this financial year.	
<b>1311</b>	<b>Major Roads LED Streetlight Replacement</b>	<b>\$126,587</b>
All Wards	Lighting field audit is set to commence in June in preparation for stage 2 and 3 of the Major Road Lighting Replacement Program. Still awaiting design approval for the 7 new lights along Dorset Rd between Oak Ave and Olive Grove.	
<b>1315</b>	<b>Fairpark Reserve - Pavilion Upgrade (incorporating U3A extension)</b>	<b>\$8,363,296</b>
Baird	Construction update - Completion of window frame installation, solar panel installation, erection of structural steel permanent canopy. Continuation of brickwork, services rough in, internal lining and southern car park and associated drainage works.	

**Knox City Council Project Status Report**

09-Jun-2023

<b>Project Number</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Total Adjusted Budget</b>
<b>1316</b>	<b>Rowville Recreation Reserve - Car Park Upgrade</b>	<b>\$317,736</b>
Taylor	Contract works combined with Lakesfield Reserve Carpark. Carpark contract works essentially completed with only minor works (install a gate) remaining. Practical Completion inspection to follow at the end of May 2023.	
<b>1319</b>	<b>Gilbert Park Reserve, Knoxfield - Batting Cage Renewal</b>	<b>\$121,175</b>
Friberg	Project completed.	
<b>1320</b>	<b>Eildon Park Reserve, Rowville - Tennis Court Renewals</b>	<b>\$445,104</b>
Taylor	Works well underway. Decommissioning of lights and court surface complete along with Installation of new fence posts. Installation of new light poles under way with works around 40% Complete. Estimated completion of tennis court renewal - late July 2023, with carry forward funds likely required.	
<b>1322</b>	<b>Glenfern Park (FTGTC) - Tennis Court Renewals</b>	<b>\$77,628</b>
Dobson	(1) Courts 5 & 6 - Contract works completed. Practical Completion Inspection has occurred and minor defects identified. (2) Courts 1 - 4 - Detailed Design completed with minor modification to be included followed by final review.	
<b>1363</b>	<b>Lupton Way Shared Zone Construction and Public Art Lighting</b>	<b>\$336,528</b>
Baird	All works are complete.	
<b>1386</b>	<b>Parks - New Tractor</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>
All Wards	Tractor now due for arrival in June.	
<b>1389</b>	<b>Egan Lee Reserve Renewal - Top Oval Renewal</b>	<b>\$1,373,948</b>
Scott	Re-design completed. Project is currently out to tender.	
<b>1391</b>	<b>Knox Hockey Facility Development</b>	<b>\$3,270,000</b>
Collier	Construction - Nearing completion with practical completion in the coming weeks. Exposed aggregate, DDA carpark, shelters and footpaths are complete. Viewing mound and grass areas to be hydroseeded closer to Spring due to wet ground conditions.	
<b>1406</b>	<b>Miller's Homestead - Upgrade</b>	<b>\$141,061</b>
Chandler	Stage one works are in progress and expected to be completed by end of June.	
<b>1411</b>	<b>Mountain Hwy, Bayswater, (Scoresby Road to Jersey Road) - Shared Path</b>	<b>\$172,605</b>
Baird	Construction work is complete.	
<b>1413</b>	<b>Kings Park Reserve, Upper Ferntree Gully - Masterplan Implementation</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>
Dobson	Consultation on the draft masterplan has now closed. Currently in the process of consolidating feedback from the consultation. Soon to commence report for Council endorsement.	

**Knox City Council Project Status Report**

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<b>Project Number</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Total Adjusted Budget</b>
<b>1414</b>	<b>Cardiff Street - Flood Mitigation Works</b>	<b>\$688,000</b>
Baird	Flood modelling results expected within the next 2 weeks. Results will be used to inform changes to the retarding basin outlet next financial year.	
<b>1415</b>	<b>Olivebank to Underwood &amp; Alexander Reserve, FTG - Wetland Treatment - Scope &amp; Analysis</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>
Dobson	Quotes received, survey to start in the following week.	
<b>1422</b>	<b>Gilbert Reserve - Wetland (Scoping &amp; Analysis)</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>
Friberg	Consultant engaged to design interface between upgraded skate park and proposed wetland. Wetland design is progressing.	
<b>1426</b>	<b>The Basin Triangle Masterplan</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>
Chandler	Project on-hold while the Basin Parking Management Plan project is being conducted. Council Officers will re-engage with the community for both projects once they are ready for Consultation.	
<b>1437</b>	<b>1000 Steps Car Parking and Shared Use Path Bridge</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Dobson	Federal Government is arranging final project payment to Council.	
<b>1439</b>	<b>Mossfield Avenue, Ferntree Gully - Construction</b>	<b>\$375,000</b>
Baird	Construction delayed due to lead-time delay in supply of drainage pipes. Construction is now nearing completion with kerb & channel and drainage works completed and asphaltting planned for early June. Works around 80% complete and anticipated to be completed by early June 2023. Temporary road closure in place to accelerate construction progress.	
<b>1440</b>	<b>Mountain Gate Drive, Ferntree Gully - Construction</b>	<b>\$615,000</b>
Friberg	Construction works essentially completed and final line-marking is imminent. Practical Completion Inspection anticipated by late June 2023.	
<b>1441</b>	<b>Studfield Shops, Rear Laneway, Wantirna South - Construction</b>	<b>\$375,000</b>
Dinsdale	Construction works completed and Practical Completion inspection imminent.	
<b>1442</b>	<b>Avalon Road, Rowville - Construction</b>	<b>\$835,000</b>
Tirhatuan	Construction nearing completion following delay in pipe supply - with works approximately 85% complete. Kerb & channel and Drainage works completed. Asphaltting underway and anticipate this to be completed by late May. Temporary road closure in place in order to accelerate construction.	
<b>1444</b>	<b>Adele Avenue, Ferntree Gully - Construction</b>	<b>\$370,000</b>
Friberg	Works completed - Practical Completion Inspection imminent.	
<b>1445</b>	<b>Marlborough Road, Bayswater - Construction</b>	<b>\$160,000</b>
Dinsdale	Asphalt works completed and line-marking to follow. Practical Completion inspection imminent.	

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<b>Project Number</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Total Adjusted Budget</b>
<b>1448</b>	<b>Fairpark Reserve, Ferntree Gully - Netball Court Renewals</b>	<b>\$178,126</b>
Baird	Project Completed.	
<b>1450</b>	<b>Reta Matthews Reserve, Ferntree Gully - Tennis Court Renewals</b>	<b>\$592,747</b>
Baird	Contract works completed.	
<b>1455</b>	<b>Talaskia Reserve, Upper Ferntree Gully - Cricket Net Renewal</b>	<b>\$194,477</b>
Dobson	Project is completed.	
<b>1456</b>	<b>Dobson Park, Ferntree Gully - Cricket Net Renewal</b>	<b>\$194,477</b>
Baird	Project is completed.	
<b>1459</b>	<b>Lewis Park, Wantirna South - Oval 1 Floodlighting</b>	<b>\$129,666</b>
Dinsdale	Project now complete with lux report received.	
<b>1460</b>	<b>Templeton Reserve, Wantirna - Floodlighting Upgrade</b>	<b>\$128,101</b>
Collier	Project now complete with lux report received.	
<b>1461</b>	<b>Kings Park, Upper Ferntree Gully - Oval 1 - Floodlighting</b>	<b>\$171,337</b>
Dobson	Project now complete with lux report received.	
<b>1462</b>	<b>Knox Athletics, Knoxfield - New Shade Structures</b>	<b>\$95,874</b>
Friberg	Shade Structure is a component of larger refurbishment project, including track renewal and lighting. The project has been requested to be carried forward to next financial year, as a redesign of the athletic field is required.	
<b>1464</b>	<b>Schultz Reserve, Wantirna - Pavilion Refurbishment</b>	<b>\$75,000</b>
Collier	Tendered works to both ground and first floor have been completed.	
<b>1465</b>	<b>Knox Park Athletics, Knoxfield - Lighting to Track</b>	<b>\$382,400</b>
Friberg	Tender responses received and higher than expected. Internal conversation around redesign and re-tender are underway.	
<b>1466</b>	<b>Schultz Reserve, Wantirna - Shade Structure</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>
Collier	Shade structure complete.	
<b>1467</b>	<b>Fairpark Reserve, Ferntree Gully - Safety Netting (Southern End)</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>
Baird	Netting works complete with positive feedback received from the club.	

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<b>Project Number</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Total Adjusted Budget</b>
<b>1470</b>	<b>Electronic Entry to Sporting Pavilions.</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>
All Wards	We will be attributing \$20k to each of Gilbert Park and Marie Wallace Pavilions for the Electronic Locking component of the pavilion refurbishment works currently underway. Both will be completed by mid June. The remaining funds will be attributed to Liberty Avenue Reserve Pavilion, to be completed in June.	
<b>1472</b>	<b>Wally Tew Reserve, Ferntree Gully - Car Park Upgrade</b>	<b>\$77,295</b>
Dobson	Project Completed.	
<b>1476</b>	<b>Community Placemaking Program - Murals and Lighting</b>	<b>\$55,000</b>
Dobson	FTG Creative Placemaking Plan is in implementation stage. Complemented with funding through Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions \$110,000 (grant expenditure over two years until June 2024). Artworks include murals, lightboxes and creative elements for retail and train station precinct, laneways and parklets. This project is 100% complete.	
<b>1478</b>	<b>Locker Program - Council Kindergartens</b>	<b>\$43,000</b>
All Wards	Project has fully completed.	
<b>1479</b>	<b>Liberty Avenue, Rowville Kindergarten - Verandah Replacement</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
Taylor	Project complete.	
<b>1492</b>	<b>Francis Crescent, Ferntree Gully - Footpath Construction</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>
Dobson	Construction work is complete.	
<b>1494</b>	<b>1726 Ferntree Gully Road, Ferntree Gully - Footpath Scope</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>
Friberg	Initial scoping discussion has occurred and resident consultation to be carried out. On hold until the land is sold and/or redeveloped. Once consultation is completed and scope confirmed design will commence. It is likely that consultation will not be resolved this year.	
<b>1495</b>	<b>Ferntree Gully Road, Scoresby - Footpath Construction</b>	<b>\$49,765</b>
Tirhatuan	Construction work is complete.	
<b>1496</b>	<b>Short Street, Boronia - Footpath Construction</b>	<b>\$51,785</b>
Baird	Construction work is complete.	
<b>1499</b>	<b>Buckingham Drive, Rowville - LATM Treatment</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>
Taylor	Construction work is complete.	
<b>1500</b>	<b>Liberty Avenue, Rowville - LATM Installation</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>
Tirhatuan	Construction work is complete.	
<b>1505</b>	<b>Mountain Highway, Boronia - Shared Path - Design</b>	<b>\$76,255</b>
Chandler	Design is underway. Underground cable and pipe locating being carried out.	



**Knox City Council Project Status Report**

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<b>Project Number</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Total Adjusted Budget</b>
<b>1514</b>	<b>Carrington Park, Knoxfield - Masterplan Implementation</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>
Friberg	The construction of the Carrington path has completed.	
<b>1515</b>	<b>Major Crescent Reserve, Lysterfield - Landscape Plan Implementation</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>
Taylor	Detailed Design documentation for the Major Crest Reserve landscape plan implementation is 90% complete.	
<b>1518</b>	<b>Schultz Reserve, Wantirna - Landscape Plan Implementation</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>
Collier	Feedback received that cricket nets are to be located within the carpark area - construction of the cricket nets underway. Awaiting completion of cricket nets interface with carpark, so that finished level can be incorporated in the carpark design. Awaiting completion of additional edge strip variation works for cricket nets in order to continue carpark design with updated survey levels. Detail design around 80% complete. Review anticipated for around early June 2023.	
<b>1521</b>	<b>Erica Avenue Streetscape Renewal</b>	<b>\$598,971</b>
Baird	Construction of Stage 1 (north eastern side of the street) has been completed. Preparation of the Stage 2a&b tender currently being prepared. Finalisation of overall design package (landscape/civil/electrical) scheduled for completion in June with tender period in July. Estimated construction commencement in August.	
<b>1522</b>	<b>Essex Court - Design</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>
Dinsdale	Detailed Design completed.	
<b>1523</b>	<b>Harley Street North - Design</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>
Friberg	Detailed Design completed.	
<b>1524</b>	<b>Harley Street</b>	<b>\$34,000</b>
Friberg	Detailed Design completed. Project aggregated as part of Road Renewal tender package for 2023/24 and currently being advertised for tender, with tenders closing on 13 June 2023.	
<b>1525</b>	<b>Allister Close</b>	<b>\$33,000</b>
Friberg	Detailed Design completed. Project aggregated as part of Road Renewal tender package for 2023/24 and currently being advertised for tender with tenders closing on 13 June 2023.	
<b>1526</b>	<b>The Haven - Design</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>
Dinsdale	Detailed Design completed. Project aggregated as part of Road Renewal tender package for 2023/24 (as a provisional project subject to available funds) and currently being advertised for tender with tenders closing on 13 June 2023.	
<b>1527</b>	<b>Richards Avenue</b>	<b>\$90,000</b>
Friberg	Detailed Design completed. Project aggregated as part of Road Renewal tender package for 2023/24 and currently being advertised for tender with tenders closing on 13 June 2023.	

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Project Number	Project Name	Total Adjusted Budget
<b>1528</b>	<b>Chandler Road - Design</b>	<b>\$48,000</b>
Chandler	Direction received from Boronia Renewal Strategy panel. Project scope identified and now includes 'Greenspine' shared path project between Tormore Reserve and Albert Avenue, along with road renewal from Dorset Road to Albert Avenue. Survey completed. Design commenced and is 30% complete. Aim is for Design & Estimate work to be completed by September 2023 in order to submit Grant application to State Government for potential construction funds.	
<b>1529</b>	<b>Knox Athletics Track Renewal &amp; Upgrades</b>	<b>\$3,250,000</b>
Friberg	Re-design has commenced.	
<b>1531</b>	<b>Guy Turner Reserve - Sportsfield Renewal</b>	<b>\$1,425,000</b>
Dinsdale	Project complete with small carry forward required for turf establishment.	
<b>1532</b>	<b>Batterham Reserve Oval 1 - Sportsfield Renewal</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>
Chandler	Project completed.	
<b>1533</b>	<b>Kings Park 1 - Sportsfield Renewal</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>
Dobson	Project completed.	
<b>1534</b>	<b>Bayswater Oval - Sportsfield Renewal</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>
Dinsdale	Project completed.	
<b>1535</b>	<b>Templeton Reserve - Fencing Renewal</b>	<b>\$37,000</b>
Collier	Project completed.	
<b>1536</b>	<b>Knox Gardens Reserve Oval 1 - Fencing Renewal</b>	<b>\$55,000</b>
Scott	Project completed.	
<b>1537</b>	<b>Bayswater Oval - Cricket Net Renewal</b>	<b>\$350,000</b>
Dinsdale	Re-design has commenced.	
<b>1538</b>	<b>Guy Turner Reserve - Cricket Net Renewal</b>	<b>\$336,000</b>
Dinsdale	Project completed.	
<b>1539</b>	<b>Schultz Reserve - New Cricket Nets</b>	<b>\$261,278</b>
Collier	Project completed.	
<b>1540</b>	<b>Pickett Reserve - Cricket Net Renewal</b>	<b>\$11,000</b>
Baird	Project completed.	

**Knox City Council Project Status Report**

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<b>Project Number</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Total Adjusted Budget</b>
<b>1541</b>	<b>Golf Practice Nets</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>
All Wards	Project is completed.	
<b>1543</b>	<b>Sportsfield Infrastructure program replacement</b>	<b>\$0</b>
All Wards	Funds transferred to the Guy Turner Cricket Net Renewal project.	
<b>1544</b>	<b>Irrigation Infrastructure Program Replacement</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>
All Wards	On track to spend all funds by 30 June.	
<b>1545</b>	<b>Walker Reserve - extension of safety netting</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>
Scott	Scope and cost investigations progressing, redesign in progress.	
<b>1546</b>	<b>Rowville Recreation Reserve - DDA and Baby Change Facilities Upgrade</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>
Taylor	Architect completed first draft of concept design. Copy forwarded to the club for review and comments. Architect has taken their comments and is continuing to further develop the design for completion by end of June	
<b>1547</b>	<b>Kings Park (Baseball) - Floodlighting Upgrade</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>
Dobson	Developing Project Plan to prepare tender docs and scheduled to advertise tender in April. Tender evaluation in May and appoint contractor in early June. Anticipate to complete project in 23/24 therefore bulk of funds to be carried forward.	
<b>1548</b>	<b>Guy Turner Reserve - Floodlighting Upgrade</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>
Dinsdale	Developing Project Plan to prepare tender docs and scheduled to advertise tender in April. Tender evaluation in May and appoint contractor in early June. Anticipate to complete project in 23/24 therefore bulk of funds need to be carried forward.	
<b>1549</b>	<b>Boronia Bowls Club - Green Lighting</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>
Dinsdale	Works continue to remain on schedule with an end of April completion date still expected.	
<b>1550</b>	<b>Park Ridge Reserve Existing Pavilion Refurbishment - Design</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>
Taylor	Architect appointed. Commenced concept design development with view to produce by mid-late June and progress to detailed design/tender documents by end of July.	
<b>1551</b>	<b>Knox Community Art Centre Theatre Equipment Renewal</b>	<b>\$15,186</b>
Dinsdale	Final purchase of Piano microphone planned for June	
<b>1552</b>	<b>Knox Community Arts Centre - Seating Bank Upgrade</b>	<b>\$204,814</b>
Dinsdale	Installation of the new system is ahead of schedule, full completion expected by Tuesday 30 May.	

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<b>Project Number</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Total Adjusted Budget</b>
<b>1553</b>	<b>FW Kerr Bathroom Upgrade</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>
Dobson	Drafted concept design has been accepted, final version of concept drawings are expected to be completed by Mid-June.	
<b>1554</b>	<b>The Basin Community House - portico</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>
Chandler	Scope of works changed, updated design is expected to be ready by end of May with tender/quotation to occur in June.	
<b>1555</b>	<b>Community Facilities Signage - Upgrades</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>
All Wards	Delivery and installation anticipated to occur June.	
<b>1556</b>	<b>Rose Street - Footpath Design &amp; Construction</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>
Dobson	Construction is underway.	
<b>1557</b>	<b>Sundew Avenue, Iris Crescent and Herbert Street, Boronia - LATM Treatment Design</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>
Tirhatuan	Draft local area traffic management plan is being reviewed internally.	
<b>1558</b>	<b>Napoleon Road Stage 4 - Shared Path Construction</b>	<b>\$330,000</b>
Taylor	Design is progressing. Onsite meeting carried out. Tree removal to be investigated. Drainage details to be amended.	
<b>1559</b>	<b>Upper Ferntree Gully Rail Link - Shared Path Construction</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>
Dobson	A full Metro Trains Melbourne/VicTrack engagement and approval process is needed through a works application submission. Preliminary planning works on the information needed for the application has now started.	
<b>1560</b>	<b>Liverpool Road west side Salvation Army to Retarding Basin - Shared Path Design</b>	<b>\$160,000</b>
Chandler	A first draft of the detailed design has been received and reviewed. Amendments are being made to the design. The Salvation Army has confirmed that the path can be diverted onto their land. Underground cables and pipes being located. Road Safety Audit being carried out.	
<b>1561</b>	<b>Harold Street Onroad Bicycle Facilities - Design</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Collier	Reviewing data from survey for use of existing cycle links. Design of cycle link along Harold St to be linked with reconstruction of Templeton Street.	
<b>1562</b>	<b>Meridian Parade - Onroad Bicycle Facilities - Construction</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>
Taylor	Concrete work is complete. Linemarking to be completed in June.	
<b>1563</b>	<b>Stud Road Onroad Bicycle Facilities - Design</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>
Taylor	Concept design completed and presented to Traffic & Transport. Awaiting outcome of consultation with owners/stakeholders. Once completed, feedback to be provided and detail design will commence.	

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<b>Project Number</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Total Adjusted Budget</b>
<b>1564</b>	<b>Victoria Road - school crossing kerb outstands</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>
Dobson	Construction works are mostly complete. Some drainage works is still to be done.	
<b>1565</b>	<b>Napoleon Rd - Electronic 40km/h signs at school crossings</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>
Dobson	Community consultation to be reported to Council for direction when applying to Department of Transport & Planning for approval of speed reduction.	
<b>1566</b>	<b>Brenock Park Drive Footpath and Bus Stop works</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>
Dobson	Awaiting advice from Department of Transport regarding possibility of removing/modifying the bus indent.	
<b>1567</b>	<b>193 Forest Rd, Boronia Stormwater Upgrades - Design</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>
Dobson	Funding variation has been approved, with survey to commence within the next 2 weeks.	
<b>1568</b>	<b>EV Charging stations in Council facilities for fleet charging</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>
All Wards	EV Charging stations for Council Fleet Vehicle Charging has been completed. Commissioning of the EV Charging station at Knox Operations Centre and the public Knox Netball Centre charging stations will complete this project for 2022/23.	
<b>1569</b>	<b>Knox Regional Netball Centre, Ferntree Gully - Masterplan Implementation</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>
Dobson	The carpark works have been completed as part of the Netball Centre upgrade works.	
<b>1571</b>	<b>Lewis Park, Wantirna South - Masterplan Implementation - Stage 2 - Sport &amp; Play Hub</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>
Dinsdale	Lewis Park upgrades which incorporates the sport pavilion and skate park have been deferred within the forward capital program for at least 5 years. This has been a difficult decision, and will be disappointing for everyone who has been involved and was looking forward to the upgrades. Design of the upgrades will be paused immediately to avoid rework that maybe required in the future resulting from the planning and building permit process.	
<b>1572</b>	<b>Community Gardens Facility - scope</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>
Dinsdale	Construction - completion of works due end of May 2023.	
<b>1573</b>	<b>Lupton Way Future Public Art Lighting</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
Baird	Earmarked fund for public art lighting along Lupton Way, State Government commitment. Unable to deliver 22/23 until Erica Ave redevelopment is complete, and the Boronia Station Masterplan timeline and scope is understood. Carry forward required to complete project as per agreement with Victorian Government.	
<b>1574</b>	<b>Fairpark Reserve, Ferntree Gully - Cricket Net Renewal</b>	<b>\$13,000</b>
Baird	The design has been pushed back as the pavilion will not be demolished until July/August. Funds will need to be carried forward.	

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Project Number	Project Name	Total Adjusted Budget
1575	<b>Templeton Reserve, Wantirna - Cricket Net Renewal</b>	<b>\$13,000</b>
Collier	Project completed.	
1576	<b>Ambleside Homestead Upgrade Review</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>
Dobson	Concept design has been presented to the stakeholders and feedback have been received. Heritage consultant have been engaged to consider trees on site, which affects design of the resource centre.	
1577	<b>Tormore Reserve Pavilion - Concept Design</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>
	Concept Design progressing well. Extensive consultation has been carried out with stakeholders. Revised concept layouts to be presented first week June, with final concepts and cost plan due second week June.	

7 Supplementary Items

8 Notices of Motion

9 Urgent Business

10 Questions Without Notice

11 Confidential Items