

MINUTES



Meeting of Council

Held at the

Civic Centre

511 Burwood Highway

Wantirna South

On

Monday 14 August 2023

The Agenda for the Meeting of Council, Monday 14 August 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.

PRESENT:

<i>Cr M Timmers-Leitch (Mayor)</i>	<i>Collier Ward</i>
<i>Cr Y Allred (Via Zoom)</i>	<i>Baird Ward</i>
<i>Cr J Dwight</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 (Via Zoom)</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 M Kelleher</i>	<i>Director - City Livability</i>
<i>Ms J Chalkley</i>	<i>Director – Connected Communities</i>
<i>Mr J Rashed</i>	<i>Chief People Officer</i>
<i>Mr A Dowling (Via Zoom)</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

Nil.

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 Monday 24 July 2023. There being none, the Chairperson declared the Minutes be confirmed.

4 Public Question Time

Question Time commenced at 7:08pm.

The following questions were raised with Council:

4.1.1 Question One – Catherine Mewett

To access kinder through childcare providers, families must pay for a minimum of 3 days per week to be eligible for this service.

More than half of the families in the City of Knox, access free council kinder.

Many families do not send their children to wrap around services. Can Knox Council guarantee that under the new proposed kinder structure, that sessional kinder will remain free and that enough spaces will be available, for the 50-60% of families that wish to access them, in the same proximity to schools?

As kinder is not free through childcare and other early learning providers.

During my time on the community panel, we were asked to digest a lot of data and it has been used as an explanation, by panel members for voting Option 2.

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- The Victorian Government has committed from 2023 to Free Kinder to all 3 and 4 year old children participating in both sessional and long day care services.
- Sessional Kinder this year was presented as an opt in option for this year but there is no information for next year provided.

- Should Council make the decision to proceed with Option 2 tonight, officers would work in partnership with the Department of Education to identify alternate providers to meet the demand for sessional kindergarten in Knox.

4.1.2 Question Two – Catherine Mewett

As a Business Analyst, I felt like a lot of the data presented, was circumstantial, skewed or temporary, used solely as a justification in Knox's decision to exit sessional kinders.

While there was small drop in registrations over a 2 year period, this also happened to coincide with a global pandemic. Organisations around the world saw changes in trends in both directions and while the rest of the world view this data as an outlier and excludes it from forecasting, (as it skews the data), Knox Council have chosen to use this as a projection.

During this time, families with vulnerable household members, opted to forgo or delay these services to protect loved ones. Maternal health appointments went from face to face, to a phone call, (not even a video call). This resulted in, posters not been read, information packs and pamphlets not given, and conversations not happening like they would if they were face to face, so many parents were not told of Council Kinder Services.

The ageing population of Knox, was also sighted as a reason to exit this service. I'm not sure why, as this is not a long term view of the area.

The cross representation of residents of Knox, in the Community Panel, held this service in high regard and still strongly value Council-run Session Kinder above that of alternatives in the area.

50-60% of families still want to access this service, for their high quality, ability to connect families and communities, proximity to schools, quality of teaches, group sizes and the easy of transition for children from kinder to school with their peers.

We all know services cost money to run and with the exception of bin collections, residents value the services that support the most vulnerable in our community.

With the State Government offering financial support to Knox Council to assist with upgrading facilities, I would like to know what service is more important - the Early Education that Knox Council will be funding instead?

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- Council appreciates the time that both the submitter and other residents dedicated to the Community Panel.
- 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 community consultation, to consider the next steps.
- There were many factors considered, including the decline in registration numbers over the last 5 years.
- Regardless of any decision made by Council tonight, there is an ongoing need to review its financial resources each year to ensure Council is meeting the needs of the community and its emerging needs. Budget allocations to services are determined each year by Council.

- It is noted that the State Government's Building Blocks grants have increased in its recent budget. Council will continue to look to the State Government for funding associated with kindergarten infrastructure projects.

4.1.3 Question Three - Kaye Pryor

When I first received an invitation from Knox City Council to participate in a Community Panel to consider the future of kindergarten services provided by the council, I was genuinely excited at the prospect of being able to make a positive contribution to something that I held in very high regard.

I have four children who all greatly benefitted from the high quality kindergarten services that were provided by the Knox City Council.

I believe that a strong sense of community spirit and a clear understanding of our responsibility to engage in the consultative process with due diligence was clearly evident amongst all of us who were members of the Community Panel.

I felt that we, as panel members, put all our energy, intellect and analytical skills into understanding and evaluating the many and complex considerations (financial, social, ethical and legislative) regarding the future viability of the Council continuing to deliver kinder services.

I think many of us on the panel had underlying leanings towards Option 1, based upon our positive personal experiences of the high quality of the Knox Council run kinder services that our children have received.

But I also know that we all worked hard to set aside any personal preferences we may have held and to work through each evaluative task put before us in an unbiased and impartial manner.

However, during the course of our meetings, I believe that there was a clear intention to steer away from serious consideration of Option 1. I believe that there was also strong underlying messaging that Options 2 and 3 were in fact the only viable options.

It made me wonder why Option 1 had even been presented to us.

The Community Panel wrote a final, highly detailed 'cost benefit' style analysis of each Option, under the rigorous guidance and support of the panel facilitators. We also wrote a very heartfelt statement about the high value and importance that our local community, who we represented, places upon the high-quality kindergarten services that Knox City Council has long provided.

My first Question is, in fact, to ask why, after reading the report from the Community Panel, was Option One ultimately rejected by Knox Council in favour of Options 2 and 3? On what grounds was Option One rejected?

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- While none of the options available to Council will completely remove the risks presented by the reform, officers have recommended 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.

4.1.4 Question Four - Kaye Pryor

A key issue that was presented to the Community Panel by members of the Knox Council Early Years Strategic Team is the concern that Knox Council has about the future financial burden of maintaining, upgrading and improving its kindergarten services infrastructure such as buildings and grounds.

It was put to us that Knox Council has a portfolio of kindergarten buildings that are old and may not be fit for purpose as they continue to age and deteriorate over time. The information presented to the Community Panel was that, based on current funding arrangements for kindergartens and also due to the fact that a lot is still unknown about future changes to State Government policy and funding arrangements for 3 and 4 year old kindergartens, Knox Council believes it is highly likely that building and grounds structural repairs and improvements will no longer be financially viable in years to come.

My second question is this: This is not a situation that is unique to Knox Council as a provider of kindergarten services. It affects all providers of such services as they are all subject to State Government policy and funding arrangements. Why does Knox Council feel that it will not be able to run financially viable kindergarten services in our local area, especially given that they have the natural cost benefits of being a large provider which already owns suitable properties and employs a team of highly experienced kindergarten teachers and assistants?

And if Knox Council were, under Options 2 and 3, to become, in effect, just a property owner/manager/landlord of most of its current portfolio of kindergarten buildings and grounds then how would this make it a more financially viable proposition than if they were to continue to run kindergarten services from those properties? Surely, under either option, Knox Council will ultimately have to bear the costs of future structural repairs and upgrades to its ageing buildings and grounds.

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- Officers also considered the opportunities the Community Panel outlined regarding Option 2, with 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. This 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.
- It is noted that further information on the reasoning was also included in the 19 June Council report when this matter was previously considered by Council.

The Chief Executive Officer, Bruce Dobson responded:

- 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.

- The financial cost of providing kindergarten services relates to both the operational costs of the services and costs associated with infrastructure.
- 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 or licence arrangements.
- We note that the State Government's Building Blocks grants have increased in its recent budget. Council will continue to look to the State Government for funding associated with kindergarten infrastructure projects.

4.1.5 Question Five - Brenda Ammann

How can Knox Council support local residents to lobby the Victorian State government and hold them accountable for ensuring sessional preschool in Knox is accessible, of high-quality and experienced early childhood teachers are retained?

The transition away from being a kindergarten provider offers a unique opportunity for a large group of preschools in Knox to pilot new models of management that may improve integration with primary schools. Is Knox Council open to negotiating and exploring innovative models of kindergarten management with the State Government?

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- Should Council proceed with the proposal of Option 2, it could refocus its role on Municipal Planning of Early Years. This could provide an opportunity for advocacy to the State Government on quality and accessible early years programs in Knox. In the first instance, Council would work with the Department of Education to identify alternate providers for sessional kindergarten in Knox. National Quality Standards exist which service providers are assessed against. There are many Early Years managers running sessional kindergarten whose quality ratings meet or exceed these standards.
- In focusing on early years planning, Council could include conversations with the Department of Education on innovative models of Kindergarten management, that may improve integration with primary schools.

4.1.6 Question Six - Nicky Bathols

Why is Knox Council not listening to the kindergarten panel and report? 90% of people in the panel wanted option one.

We pay rates and why isn't money being used for essential services such as kindergarten? Especially after the lockdowns where many children need socialisation.

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- Council values the time and effort that the submitter and their fellow panellists spent on the Community Panel and to develop statements that could be part of the information needed for Council to make an informed decision.
- Regardless of any decision made by Council tonight, there is an ongoing need to review its financial resources each year to ensure Council is meeting the needs of the community and

its emerging needs. Council provides many essential services where there are no other market providers – most of Council’s waste management services are an example of this.

- Council understands the importance of the provision of sessional kindergarten in Knox. There are other early years managers that also run these services. If Council decides to proceed with option 2, Council would work with the Department of Education to identify alternate providers to meet the demand for sessional kindergarten in Knox.

Question Time Concluded at 7:27pm.

5 Officer Reports

5.1 Kindergarten Service Review

SUMMARY: Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley

At the Council Meeting held on 19 June 2023, Council made the decision that:

Having completed a comprehensive review of the kindergarten service and Council's role in kindergarten service provision, inclusive of broad community engagement, pre 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*
- 8. "3-year-old Kindergarten Expansion", and 2022 reform "Free Kindergarten and Pre-Prep" is primarily the responsibility of the State Government.*
- 9. 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.*
- 10. 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.*
- 11. 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.*

As this proposal represents a major change to Council's role in kindergarten service delivery, formal consultation with potentially affected staff was undertaken in accordance with Council's industrial agreements. Consultation provides a valuable opportunity for staff to provide their views on the proposed change, including any potential impacts or any ideas. This report provides the outcome of this consultation with full details in Confidential Attachment 3 – Consultation Feedback, for Council consideration.

Knox City Council currently delivers 3-year-old kindergarten (five hours/week) and 4-year-old kindergarten (15 hours/week). Once approved by Department of Education, Council intends to expand this to include 15 hours per week for 3 and 4-year-olds in 2024.

Council supports the intention of the State Government Early Years 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 on 31 December 2024, it is timely that Council determine what its role in kindergarten service provision will be into the future.

Following consideration and analysis of feedback received from staff during the consultation process, this report recommends Council resolve to proceed with Option 2 - to remain a service provider in the two Early Years Hubs only from 1 January 2025, and cease to be a provider from the remaining sessional kindergarten services at the conclusion of 2024. Alternate providers would be sought to operate the remaining sessional kindergarten services in Knox and Council has the option to lease stand-alone kindergarten facilities to other service providers.

Officers consider this recommended option provides the greatest balance between Council's responsibility for delivering social benefit for the community, while managing risk and financial sustainability into the future. It would allow Council to re-align its role in direct service provision, aligning with many of our Local Government counterparts, along with its broader and legislative responsibilities under the Local Government Act 2020.

As part of Council's ongoing roles as municipal planner and infrastructure owner, Knox City Council can, like other municipalities who provide limited direct services, continue to partner with non-Council providers to support continued access to quality early childhood education for the children and families of Knox.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- A. Thank the Kindergarten staff for the feedback and the insight that they provided as part of the consultation process.
- B. Note receipt of a petition organised by the Australian Education Union and containing 2255 names, urging Council to act to ensure that kindergarten services in the City of Knox continue to be delivered by the Council.
- C. Having completed a comprehensive review of the kindergarten service and Council's role in kindergarten service provision; as well as staff consultation and consideration of the feedback provided, resolve to:
 1. Remain a sessional kindergarten provider within its two Early Years Hubs only and cease to be a provider for all other sessional kindergartens, from 1 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.
2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person as the Chief Executive Officer selects) to:
 - a) Notify the Department of Education of Council's decision in accordance with the current kindergarten service agreement.
 - b) Notify the affected employees of Council's decision and the impact of the change, in accordance with Council's relevant industrial agreements.
 - c) Notify all active kindergarten families and children (current service users), including new families that have enrolled for 2024, of Council's decision and the impact of the change.
 3. Note that officers will progress discussions and work with the Department of Education to identify alternate providers, with the option of Council leasing sessional kindergarten stand-alone facilities to such providers from January 2025 onwards.
 4. Note that officers will provide Councillors with periodic updates regarding the implementation of the above resolutions; including the progress of services transitioning to new providers and capacity to meet ongoing demand for sessional kindergarten in Knox.
 5. Officers will continue to update service users and impacted staff as the process of identifying alternate providers progresses.

MOTION

MOVED: Councillor Grasso

SECONDED: Councillor Laukens

That Council:

- A. Thank the Kindergarten staff for the feedback and the insight that they provided as part of the consultation process.
- B. Note receipt of a petition organised by the Australian Education Union and containing 2255 names, urging Council to act to ensure that kindergarten services in the City of Knox continue to be delivered by the Council.
- C. Having completed a comprehensive review of the kindergarten service and Council's role in kindergarten service provision; as well as staff consultation, and considered the level of Community engagement provided, including the feedback from the kindergarten staff at a meeting on 7 August 2023, that Council resolve to:
 1. Remain a sessional kindergarten provider and create a more sustainable service by consolidating 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.
 2. Note that this Option (Option 1) would result in significant savings and 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.
- D. Note the above outcome will result in the retention of the majority of Council's sessional kindergarten services and minimise potential job losses when compared to the alternative options.

- E. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person as the Chief Executive Officer selects) to notify the Department of Education, Council staff, kindergarten families, and the broader Knox Community of Council's decision.

LOST

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Timmers-Leitch

SECONDED: Councillor Pearce

That Council:

- A. Thank the Kindergarten staff for the feedback and the insight that they provided as part of the consultation process.**
- B. Note receipt of communication organised by the Australian Education Union and containing 2255 names, urging Council to act to ensure that kindergarten services in the City of Knox continue to be delivered by the Council.**
- C. Having completed a comprehensive review of the kindergarten service and Council's role in kindergarten service provision; as well as staff consultation and consideration of the feedback provided, resolve to:**
- 1. Refocus Council's role as Municipal Planner, while balancing the operational and financial risks of being a provider with the social benefits and returns of investing in early learning by remaining a sessional kindergarten provider within its two Early Years Hubs only and cease to be a provider for all other sessional kindergartens from 1 January 2025.**
 - 2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person as the Chief Executive Officer selects) to:**
 - a) Notify the Department of Education of Council's decision in accordance with the current kindergarten service agreement.**
 - b) Notify the affected employees of Council's decision and the impact of the change, in accordance with Council's relevant industrial agreements.**
 - c) Notify all active kindergarten families and children (current service users), including new families that have enrolled for 2024, as well as the broader Knox Community, of Council's decision and the impact of the change.**
 - 3. Note that officers will progress discussions and work with the Department of Education to identify alternate providers, with the option of Council leasing sessional kindergarten stand-alone facilities to such providers from January 2025 onwards.**
 - 4. Note that officers will provide Councillors with periodic updates regarding the implementation of the above resolutions; including the progress of services transitioning to new providers and capacity to meet ongoing demand for sessional kindergarten in Knox.**
 - 5. Note that officers will continue to update service users and impacted staff as the process of identifying alternate providers progresses.**

PROCEDURAL MOTION

MOVED: Councillor Seymour

SECONDED: Councillor Baker

That Councillor Pearce be permitted an extension of time to speak under Section 42 of the Governance Rules of Knox City Council.

CARRIED

PROCEDURAL MOTION

MOVED: Councillor Baker

SECONDED: Councillor Cooper

That Councillor Seymour be permitted an extension of time to speak under Section 42 of the Governance Rules of Knox City Council.

CARRIED

The substantive motion was put and CARRIED.

A Division was called by Councillor Grasso

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

5.2 Knox Arts and Culture Committee Representation

SUMMARY: Coordinator Arts and Cultural Services, Elissa Bates

At its Meeting held on 22 May 2023, Council endorsed a process to re-establish the Arts and Culture Committee and adopted a revised Terms of Reference (please refer to Attachment 1).

Since that time, an expression of interest process has been undertaken to seek new members for the Knox Arts and Culture Committee.

This report seeks Council approval to appoint a total of 16 members (maximum allocation) to the Arts and Culture Committee for a two-year period concluding in August 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Appoint the applicants as presented in Confidential Attachment 2 to the Arts & Culture Committee, to serve a two-year term concluding on 14 August 2025.
2. Thank the outgoing members of the Knox Arts & Culture Committee for their valuable contributions.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Dwight

SECONDED: Councillor Grasso

That Council:

1. Appoint the applicants as presented in Confidential Attachment 2 to the Arts & Culture Committee, to serve a two-year term concluding on 14 August 2025.

Name:	Category:
1. Marie Allaman	Industry Representative
2. Marten Visser	Industry Representative
3. Larry Parkinson	Industry Representative
4. Shane Hulbert	Industry Representative
5. Amy Calvert	Community Representative
6. Mark Grondman	Community Representative
7. Heather King	Community Representative
8. Melanie Lindupp	Community Representative
9. Bree Ogden	Community Representative
10. George Thompson	Community Representative
11. Daniel van Bergen	Community Representative
12. Michelle Kemp	Community Representative
13. David Woods	Community Representative
14. Andrea Cobern	Community Representative
15. Elizabeth Birch	Community Representative
16. Felicity Kaye	Community Representative

- 2. Thank the outgoing members of the Knox Arts & Culture Committee for their valuable contributions.**

CARRIED

5.3 Early Years Advisory Committee - Appointment of New Members

SUMMARY: Strategic Projects Officer, Suzy Bennett

The role of the Early Years Advisory Committee is to provide advice to Council on early years issues and to promote greater awareness and understanding in the local community of early years services and the life of children and families in the Knox community through the lens of Council's Child, Youth and Seniors Plan 2021-2025.

The membership term for two members of the Early Years Advisory Committee concluded at the end of June 2023. An expression of interest process was conducted in accordance with the Knox City Council Committee Policy. This report seeks approval to appoint the recommended Committee Members as outlined in Confidential Attachment 1.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

1. Thank outgoing Committee Members for their contribution over the last four years.
2. Appoint the recommended Committee Members to the Early Years Advisory Committee for the period July 2023 to June 2025 as presented in Confidential Attachment 1.

Name:	Category:
1.	Professional Representative
2.	Professional Representative

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Timmers-Leitch

SECONDED: Councillor Cooper

That the Committee:

1. Thank outgoing Committee Members for their contribution over the last four years.
2. Appoint the recommended Committee Members to the Early Years Advisory Committee for the period July 2023 to June 2025 as presented in Confidential Attachment 1.

Name:	Category:
1. Deborah Norfolk	Professional Representative
2. Debbie McNamara	Professional Representative

CARRIED

5.4 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.

This report represents the second-to-last report for ICT Capital Works Program based on the 2017 ICT Strategy, before the implementation of the new Customer and Performance governance framework that reflects the new capital budget project commitments for FY 23/24.

A briefing to the Council is scheduled for the 21st of August to discuss the new Customer and Performance (C&P) Governance Framework, including enhanced reporting, which is scheduled to commence from September 2023.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the monthly ICT Capital Works Report.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Laukens

SECONDED: Councillor Allred

That Council receive and note the monthly ICT Capital Works Report.

CARRIED

5.5 Proposed Motions to the October 2023 MAV State Council

SUMMARY

This report seeks Council's formal endorsement of a motion for submission and consideration at the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) State Council Meeting in October 2023, in relation to library funding.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the following motion and supporting rationale (as set out in this report) for submission to the MAV State Council Meeting in October 2023:

- That the MAV call on the Victorian Government to reverse its decision to freeze the level of grants for public libraries in 2023/24 and commit to restoring its funding contribution to 50% of the service cost.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Laukens

SECONDED: Councillor Timmers-Leitch

That Council endorse the following motion and supporting rationale (as set out in this report) for submission to the MAV State Council Meeting in October 2023:

- That the MAV call on the Victorian Government to reverse its decision to freeze the level of grants for public libraries in 2023/24 and commit to restoring its funding contribution to 50% of the service cost.

CARRIED

6 Supplementary Items

Nil.

7 Notices of Motion

Nil.

8 Urgent Business

Nil.

9 Confidential Items

Nil.

MEETING CLOSED AT 8:35pm

Minutes of Meeting confirmed at the
Meeting of Council
held on Monday, 28 August 2023

.....
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 14 August 2023 at 7:00 PM

This meeting will be conducted as a hybrid meeting

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Bruce Dobson
Chief Executive Officer

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 24 July 2023

4 Public Question Time

5 Officer Reports

5.1 Kindergarten Service Review

SUMMARY: Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley

At the Council Meeting held on 19 June 2023, Council made the decision that:

Having completed a comprehensive review of the kindergarten service and Council's role in kindergarten service provision, inclusive of broad community engagement, pre 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*
8. *"3-year-old Kindergarten Expansion", and 2022 reform "Free Kindergarten and Pre-Prep" is primarily the responsibility of the State Government.*
9. *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.*
10. *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.*
11. *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.*

As this proposal represents a major change to Council's role in kindergarten service delivery, formal consultation with potentially affected staff was undertaken in accordance with Council's industrial agreements. Consultation provides a valuable opportunity for staff to provide their views on the proposed change, including any potential impacts or any ideas. This report provides the outcome of this consultation with full details in Confidential Attachment 3 – Consultation Feedback, for Council consideration.

Knox City Council currently delivers 3-year-old kindergarten (five hours/week) and 4-year-old kindergarten (15 hours/week). Once approved by Department of Education, Council intends to expand this to include 15 hours per week for 3 and 4-year-olds in 2024.

Council supports the intention of the State Government Early Years 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 on 31 December 2024, it is timely that Council determine what its role in kindergarten service provision will be into the future.

Following consideration and analysis of feedback received from staff during the consultation process, this report recommends Council resolve to proceed with Option 2 - to remain a service provider in the two Early Years Hubs only from 1 January 2025, and cease to be a provider from the remaining sessional kindergarten services at the conclusion of 2024. Alternate providers would be sought to operate the remaining sessional kindergarten services in Knox and Council has the option to lease stand-alone kindergarten facilities to other service providers.

Officers consider this recommended option provides the greatest balance between Council's responsibility for delivering social benefit for the community, while managing risk and financial sustainability into the future. It would allow Council to re-align its role in direct service provision, aligning with many of our Local Government counterparts, along with its broader and legislative responsibilities under the Local Government Act 2020.

As part of Council's ongoing roles as municipal planner and infrastructure owner, Knox City Council can, like other municipalities who provide limited direct services, continue to partner with non-Council providers to support continued access to quality early childhood education for the children and families of Knox.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- A. Thank the Kindergarten staff for the feedback and the insight that they provided as part of the consultation process.**
- B. Note receipt of a petition organised by the Australian Education Union and containing 2255 names, urging Council to act to ensure that kindergarten services in the City of Knox continue to be delivered by the Council.**
- C. Having completed a comprehensive review of the kindergarten service and Council's role in kindergarten service provision; as well as staff consultation and consideration of the feedback provided, resolve to:**
 - 1. Remain a sessional kindergarten provider within its two Early Years Hubs only and cease to be a provider for all other sessional kindergartens, from 1 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.**
 - 2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person as the Chief Executive Officer selects) to:**
 - a) Notify the Department of Education of Council's decision in accordance with the current kindergarten service agreement.**
 - b) Notify the affected employees of Council's decision and the impact of the change, in accordance with Council's relevant industrial agreements.**
 - c) Notify all active kindergarten families and children (current service users), including new families that have enrolled for 2024, of Council's decision and the impact of the change.**
 - 3. Note that officers will progress discussions and work with the Department of Education to identify alternate providers, with the option of Council leasing sessional kindergarten stand-alone facilities to such providers from January 2025 onwards.**
 - 4. Note that officers will provide Councillors with periodic updates regarding the implementation of the above resolutions; including the progress of services transitioning to new providers and capacity to meet ongoing demand for sessional kindergarten in Knox.**
 - 5. Officers will continue to update service users and impacted staff as the process of identifying alternate providers progresses.**

1. INTRODUCTION

This report provides an overview of the consultation process and the themes that emerged. It also provides an overview of the key information presented to Councillors over the last 12 months regarding the Kindergarten Service Review. Some of this information was previously presented to Council at the Council Meeting of 19 June 2023 but is included in this report also for completeness. At that meeting, Council adopted the recommendation to formally consider a major change to its role in kindergarten service provision at the expiry of the current Service Agreement on 31 December 2024.

While the Kindergarten Service Review is responding in part to the challenges of remaining a kindergarten service provider in the context of the State Government's kindergarten reforms, the proposed change is also being considered in the wider landscape of challenges confronting Council in its role as service provider, for example, the changing demand for Sessional Kindergartens, uncertain operating environment for Local Government Providers and infrastructure challenges.

The State Government Kindergarten Expansion and Best Start Best Life reforms are fundamentally changing the way that kindergarten services operate – with programs increasing to 15 hours for 3-year-old children (full implementation for all 3-year-old children from 2029) and 30 hours for 4-year-old children (from 2026 with full implementation for all children by 2032).

Non-Council providers are better placed to respond to these dynamic reforms with agility and flexibility, more easily than Local Government providers. Council must balance service delivery while also providing a range of other community services and facilities. Councils are limited in their capacity to grow (i.e., to increase enrolments) beyond municipal boundaries, while non-council providers can leverage their capacity to work across multiple municipalities to create better economies of scale and innovative programs responsive to a range of community needs.

Notwithstanding the increased State Government funding associated with the reforms, which has improved the financial position of the kindergarten service, this landscape still presents a range of challenges for Council.

As detailed in previous reports these changes impact Knox more than other councils, because unlike other councils, Knox is a direct provider of 29 kindergarten services – making it the largest kindergarten provider in the Eastern Metropolitan Region and one of the few Local Governments in Victoria who still directly provide so many kindergarten services. It is notable that other councils that provide services on a similar scale are located in growth corridors with young and growing populations and more affordable greenfield sites for facility expansion.

On the basis of a detailed analysis of the options available, on 19 June 2023 Council determined to formally propose a major change to its role in kindergarten service provision on the expiration of the current kindergarten Service Agreement (of 31 December 2024). This would mean limiting the number of sites in which Council would operate sessional kindergarten to its two Early Years Hubs at Wantirna South and Bayswater while exiting the remaining sites and working with the Department of Education to identify suitable alternate providers to which Council could lease its kindergarten facilities.

2. DISCUSSION

The Kindergarten Service Review has investigated the options available to Council in considering its ongoing role in kindergarten service provision.

The service review process has included:

- an initial service analysis which identified three potential options for Council to consider;
- pre-consultation with staff (beyond any industrial requirement);
- broad community engagement with service users and the wider community multiple times through the review process;
- a detailed deliberative Community Panel process with a demographically representative group of residents; and
- formal consultation with affected kindergarten staff.

Should Council determine to progress with the proposed change, Council officers would notify the Department of Education that Council will remain a service provider in the two Early Years Hubs only and exiting from the remaining sessional kindergarten services by 1 January 2025. Council would work in partnership with the Department to develop a detailed Expression of Interest process and suitable transition plan that ensures the continuity of quality care and education for children and families in Knox.

This path of action would allow Council to refocus its investment in early learning to further enhance municipal community planning for children and families to support access to high quality kindergarten.

As outlined in the report to Council on 19 June 2023, there are not-for-profit Early Years Managers with similar quality rating profiles to Council services, that have indicated they are interested in expanding.

Formal consultation with the kindergarten workforce has been finalised and the information reviewed. The submissions included both questions and comments from staff. Officers carefully considered all submissions and provided a response to each of the staff who provided their feedback. A brief synopsis of the key themes is summarised in Section 3 of this report with full details provided in the Confidential Attachment 3 – Consultation Feedback. The themes that emerged as part of the staff consultation process were generally matters that have been considered through different stages of the review process. There were also questions and comments made regarding the impacts of the proposal such as those relating to redundancies and the process that would follow should Council decide to proceed with Option 2.

2.1 Recommendation and Rationale

While none of the options available to Council will completely remove the risks presented by the reform, officers remain of the view that Option 2 will provide an appropriate and reasonable balance between Council's responsibilities for delivering social benefit for the community, 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.

Leasing the kindergarten facilities to 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;
- Re-align 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; and
- Continue to assess planning applications for early learning facilities can provide longer-hour programs and larger, more contemporary facilities for families who choose to access kindergarten integrated with longer hours of childcare.

2.2 Refocus on Municipal Planning in Early Years

Refocusing Council’s involvement in early learning away from the direct provision of sessional kindergarten services creates 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 year's 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.

2.3 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 available facilities to 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.

2.4 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 within existing constraints.

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. This was 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 2023 Council report 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 Formal Consultation with the Kindergarten Staff

Initial engagement and formal consultation sessions have been undertaken with the kindergarten staff in accordance with Council's relevant Industrial instruments.

Officers facilitated formal consultation with potentially affected coordination and educational kindergarten staff (131) over a four-week period (inclusive of two-weeks of school holidays) undertaken from 26 June to 21 July 2023.

A change proposal letter of 21 June 2023 informed staff of why the change was proposed and what the proposed change would mean for them. This included guidance material in the context of understanding the impact of the proposed change, for staff to consider and provide their feedback to Council on the proposed change. Staff were advised that, Council was on schedule to make the final decision following consideration of the feedback received regarding the proposed change on 14 August 2023.

Formal letters were also provided to both relevant unions, Australian Education Union (AEU) and Australia Services Union (ASU), following staff notifications.

Information Sessions were provided for all kindergarten staff on Tuesday, 20 July 2023; a Q&A session with the Kindergarten Coordination Team on Wednesday, 5 July 2023; and a Q&A session with the kindergarten educational team Friday 12 July.

There was a total of 19 submissions received from staff, which are included in confidential Attachment 3. This represents 15% of the 131 staff affected by the potential change. It is noted some submissions were stated to be made on behalf of multiple staff members but the numbers in them are unknown. Council also received a letter from the AEU of behalf of its members. This is included in Attachment 1, along with an officer response.

The feedback from staff included both questions and comments, and focused on key themes around:

- Redundancy and Transfer of Business details (15 statements).
- Consultation and Communication (6 statements).
- EOI Process with DE and/or the Change proposal (8 statements).
- Reflections on the Kindergarten Service (8 statements).
- Quality of Programs (7 statements).
- Disagreement with proposed change (3 statements).

Each submission was reviewed and considered by a panel, which consisted of Director Connected Communities, Early Years Strategic Project Lead and the Workplace Relations Lead. Genuine consideration was given to the matters raised in each submission. Officers noted that the matters raised in the submissions were generally matters that have been identified and considered by officers through different stages of the review process. There were also questions and comments made regarding the impacts of the proposal such as those relating to redundancies and the process that would follow should Council decide to proceed with Option 2. Officers provided a

response to each person who provided feedback or asked questions. It is recognised that detailed information regarding timeframes and the process around transition to new service providers cannot be provided at this stage. Should Council make a final decision to proceed with Option 2, then officers will work with the Department of Education regarding this process. Officers would then keep staff updated with as much information as possible on a timely basis as the process moves forward. Officers have sought to support staff impacted by the change to date and will continue to do so.

The AEU requested an opportunity for members to meet with Councillors in order to provide their feedback directly to the decision-makers. This request was agreed to and on 7 August 2023, the Mayor and some Councillors met with an AEU official, and members nominated by the AEU to attend to hear their feedback with regards to the proposed change, which included impact to staff and families. At that meeting the AEU submitted a hard copy of an online petition (Attachment 2) containing 2255 names. The Petition “urges (Council) to act to ensure that kindergarten services in the City of Knox continue to be delivered by the council.” A copy of the petition has been circulated separately to all Councillors.

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 at this time.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL/AMENITY CONSIDERATIONS

Previous reports to Council since 2020 have detailed that like many established Local Government areas in metropolitan Melbourne, Knox’s early years infrastructure is ageing. Knox’s facilities are small, single room, stand-alone services which are on average 50-70 years old.

It is important to note that should Council proceed with Option 2, Council would 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.

6. FINANCIAL & ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations outlined in this report, if implemented, would significantly reduce 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. Financial modelling was previously provided to Council as an attachment to the 19 June 2023 Council report.

7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Early learning in Victoria is undergoing a period of significant challenge and reform. The social implications of the recommendations in this report are considered in terms of different stakeholder groups below.

7.1 Children and Families

The kindergarten service model in Victoria is changing. Should Council decide to proceed with Option 2, 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 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

Should Council determine to proceed with option 2, Council is committed to supporting staff through the process of transitioning the kindergarten service to alternate providers. Once alternate providers are identified, and the terms and conditions on which they take on the service are known, the direct impacts on staff in terms of potential redeployment or redundancy will be clearer. Officers will continue to update staff as the process of identifying alternate providers progresses. 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 through 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 as detailed in previous reports to Council and the growth in both long day care providers as well as the uplift in enrolments in independent sessional programs. As detailed in the Council report on 19 June 2023, National Quality data from the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), a nationally consistent and mandatory assessment and rating system, indicates that many services in Knox are meeting and or exceeding the National Quality Standard.

Some Early Years Managers are already operating sessional kindergarten services in neighbouring LGAs (Monash, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges). As detailed in the Council report of 19 June 2023, 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.

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

This report contains confidential information pursuant to Council's Governance Rules and Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2020. Confidential Attachment 3 is included in the confidential agenda, as it relates to personal information, information that reveals a person's identity that would be unreasonable to disclose in a public report.

Report Prepared By: Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley

Report Authorised By: Chief Executive Officer, Bruce Dobson

Attachments

1. Attachment 1 - Australia Education Union Submission & Response [5.1.1 - 6 pages]
2. Attachment 2 - Australian Education Union Petition [5.1.2 - 1 page]



**AUSTRALIAN
EDUCATION
UNION**
Victorian Branch

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#A3017

21 July 2023

John Rashed
Acting Chief Executive Officer
Knox City Council
By email: [REDACTED]

Dear John,

Please see below AEU member feedback re: Option 2 to remain a sessional kindergarten provider in two early years hubs from January 2025.

Genuine Consultation

Members would like to refer Council to clause 10 under the EEEA 2020 on consultation. Consultation is not the perfunctory advice on what is about to happen, consultation is providing the individual, or other relevant persons, with a bona fide opportunity to influence the decision maker.

Members highlight that although the Q&A session on Friday July 14 was an opportunity to ask questions around their employment, they have not been genuinely consulted nor given the opportunity to share their views on option 2 and the impact this will have on them if endorsed. Members want Knox to know how undervalued and disrespected they felt when only one day after councillors formally voted to consider option 2, they received redundancy estimates after it was publicly acknowledged that the workforce would be consulted on option 2. Members noted that this has given them the impression that a decision has already been made without genuine consultation occurring and without formal processes being followed.

1. Meeting with councillors

Members are formally requesting a meeting with Knox Councillors as the decision makers about the future of kindergarten services in Knox.

Members strongly believe that they must be given the opportunity to meet with and share their views about the future provision of Knox kindergarten services. Councillors making this significant decision should be hearing directly from the workforce about the impact this will have not only on them as kindergarten employees, but also for the children and families of Knox. Educators are best placed and have the greatest understanding of the family's needs as they have developed strong relationships with their local families.

Members want Knox councillors to know that they do not endorse option 2 and believe that the delivery of kindergarten services should remain with Knox as the provider and employer. Members also want councillors to know that families also do not support option 2 and agree that Knox should remain the provider of all Knox kindergartens.

Activate. Educate. Unite.

Members want a detailed timeline of when and how Knox will continue to consult members as part of any decision making processes.

2. OH&S

Members want Knox to provide responses as to how they will continue to meet their responsibilities under the OH&S Act whilst this process is being undertaken.

Members overwhelming highlighted the impact these potential major changes and uncertainty is having on their mental health. Members are frustrated that the only current response from management if they have raised concerns that they are struggling is to access the EAP. This is an insufficient response. Members want to remind Knox that they continue to hold duties under the OH&S Act

Under the OH&S Act, an employer has a duty to provide a workplace that is safe and without risks to health as far as is reasonably practicable (s21(1)). Employers also hold a duty to provide safe systems of work (s 21((2)(a)). Employers are also required to monitor the health and safety of their staff (22(1)(a)) and to consult with staff when they are making changes that are likely to impact their health and safety (35(1)(f)). Employers should be proactive (s4(3)) and foresee hazards before they impact health.

As the employer of AEU members Knox must endeavour, as far as is reasonably practicable, to mitigate the risks before they impact staff.

3. Additional support for members

Members would like Knox as their employer to be completely transparent about the process, any decisions made or changes to decisions previously made.

If members are asking questions of Knox as their employer they want prompt, accurate and transparent answers that go to all staff, even if an individual has asked the question. This can be achieved by regularly updating the Q&A fact sheet.

In the weekly bulletins that staff receive, they want weekly updates to be included in the bulletins about the progress of the process.

Once the feedback has been received members would like to see the feedback collated and shared to ensure that the feedback accurately reflects what they have shared and highlighted.

4. Family engagement

Members want to know how Knox are communicating with families about the potential major changes to the delivery of Knox kindergarten services.

Will the families attending 3yo kindergarten in 2024 be made aware that there may be changes to how their children will access 4yo kindergarten in 2025?

Members want Knox to share frequent, transparent and accurate communications with current and future families about the potential changes to Knox kindergartens. Families must be kept informed so they can make informed decisions about the choices and options they have regarding access to kindergartens programs for their children.

It has become apparent to members that many families and the broader community are not aware of the fact that councillors are formally considering significant changes to the delivery of kindergarten services by Knox. This information must be shared widely and now.

Members want all families enrolled in Knox kindergartens next year but also for subsequent years to be sent communications about the potential changes to how Knox kindergartens may be delivered and that they could potentially be operated by another provider. Current communications appear ambiguous. The NQS results of Knox kindergartens show that educators are delivering high quality education which is why local families choose to enrol in Knox kindergartens. Members want this information to be made available for families, as we know high quality education equates to higher educational outcomes for all children.

Members also want families to know that as educators they are opposed to any changes occurring to the delivery of Knox kindergartens. Current publications are inferring that members have a strong influence in the final decision to cease Knox kindergarten services. Members feel strongly that this is a misrepresentation of their views.

Up until now, members have not been able to propose and trial possible changes to the delivery of their kindergarten services. Whilst numbers of children in Knox may be declining, the need for two years of free kindergarten hours is increasing. Members want to take part in trials to see how varied delivery models could be introduced and provided for children and families. Members are best placed to be responsive to the needs of their local families, 2024 is a great opportunity for members to be consulted on different model delivery options.

Sincerely,



AEU, Victorian branch

1 August 2023

[REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 AEU, Victorian Branch

Via Email: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]



Kindergarten Service Review

Thank you for your letter of 21 July 2023 and particularly for conveying the sentiments and views of your members. We appreciate this information and aim to address these issues moving forward.

We share your understanding of the meaning and importance of consultation. All written information, including potential redundancy pay estimates, has been provided with the aim of facilitating the ability of employees to understand the potential impacts of the proposed change in order to provide their feedback to Council. We are committed to being as transparent as possible in respect of these matters and will take on your feedback about how members are currently feeling regarding the consultation process.

Meeting with Councillors

While a meeting with Councillors is not contemplated nor required by the EEEA 2020, after raising this matter with the Mayor and Councillors, we will facilitate a meeting which will allow employees and their representatives to directly provide their feedback to Councillors regarding the proposed change. The details of the meeting are as follows:

- The AEU will be invited to nominate 6 individuals (including members, delegates and representatives) to attend the special meeting. We will also extend the invitation to nominate attendees to 4 employees who are not members of the AEU, and the ASU.
- Confirmed attendees will be asked to provide their feedback to the Mayor and Councillors in attendance. Please note that this is not an opportunity for debate or Q&As.
- The meeting will run from 5.00 pm to 5.45 pm on Monday, 7 August 2023 and will be held at 511 Burwood Hwy, Wantirna South, 3152, The Civic Centre, Function Room 3.

Please advise [REDACTED] (Workplace Relations Partner) who will be attending on behalf of the AEU and its members by COB Thursday, 3 August 2023.

Health and Safety; Additional Support

Thank you for drawing our attention to the mental health concerns that have arisen following the commencement of the consultation process. Our priority is to ensure the health and safety of our employees and we would like to take further steps to support staff during this time.

As you mention, we have been encouraging staff to access counselling through EAP. While this is a valuable resource, we recognise that it may not be suitable or helpful for all employees. We have also attempted to provide staff with as much certainty as possible by providing detailed written information and holding the Q&A session.

In our correspondence to the AEU earlier this year, we informed you that additional support was being provided. We continue to look towards enhancing this support throughout the change process.

We also committed to all educators at the last Q&A session on Friday, 14 July 2023 that we would continue to provide timely updates via subsequent Q&A sessions at staff meetings as new information became available.

We will also ensure that periodic updates include any new information regarding the process and point employees to the various information already available and the support available.

We welcome any other suggestions you or your members have regarding how we can best support our employees, in particular around minimising any impact on their mental health.

Family Engagement

Knox is actively engaging with families in accordance with our community engagement plan to ensure that community input is considered as part of Council's decision making. This has been the case since Council commenced the review into kindergarten services. Engagement has taken place via:

- Emails through Educa to families updating them on the reasons for the review, its progress and Council's decision to formally consider ceasing kindergarten services other than at the two Early Learning Hubs;
- A community panel made up of a demographically representative group of local community members, including some individuals with children attending a kindergarten service. Over a two-month period, the panel considered issues and raised questions that arose regarding different options. The panel gave feedback to Council regarding all three options;
- Inviting families to provide individual feedback via the "Have Your Say" website (<https://haveyoursay.knox.vic.gov.au/kindergarten-service-review>), postcards distributed at kindergartens and libraries and community pop up sessions; and
- Forums which have been held with several families to understand what issues are important to them and what their concerns were.

In light of the above engagement and the regular information that we have provided in the Knox newsletter which is provided to all households in the municipality, we are confident we have taken all reasonable steps to ensure that families are aware of the kindergarten service review and of the proposed change that Council is currently considering.

In the event that the proposed change goes ahead and Council offers kindergarten services from its two Early Learning Hubs only from January 2025, families whose children are enrolled in 3-year-old kindergarten in 2024 will be informed of the changes with plenty of time for them to consider the various options for accessing 4-year-old kindergarten in 2025.

Delivery Models

Over the past 12 months, we have considered a number of different delivery models, including rotational sessions, larger groups and combined 3 and 4-year-old groups. Key issues identified which limit the application of these delivery models are:

- The limited size of some of the sessional kindergarten rooms restricts the number of children to less than the class size recommended by the Department of Education (28 children per room). This limits Council's ability to provide the above delivery models;
- In respect of those centres which would be able to offer increased class sizes, Educators have raised concerns that increasing the number of children in each class is not consistent with best educational outcomes. To this point class sizes have been capped at 30 children for 4-year-olds and 22 children for 3-year-olds; and
- Educators have raised concerns regarding delivery models which result in not having consistent enrolments in each session.

Notwithstanding the above, we have already previously explored other options with all options considered and in 2024 will be providing some combined 3 and 4-year-old groups.

I trust the above information addresses the matters raised in your letter.

Yours sincerely



Judy Chalkley
Director Connected Communities

Enquiries: [REDACTED]
Document ID: D23-226059

Wording of the Australian Education Union Petition received 7 August 2023

The below petitions was submitted in hard copy to Council with 2255 names.

“Dear Knox Mayor Marcia Timmers-Leitch, Knox CEO Bruce Dobson and Knox Councillors,

I am gravely concerned that the City of Knox is considering walking away from delivering over 30 sessional kindergartens.

If Knox Council abandons kindergarten programs, it would mean that the families of 3- and 4-year-old children in the Knox area would no longer be able access Knox Council delivered free kindergarten programs. Currently the Council delivers high-quality play-based early childhood education.

We know that children benefit from local kindergarten services that reflect the context and makeup of the local community. Families rightly expect their local council to provide kindergarten programs as part of the services they deliver. Why should the children of Knox miss out?

I urge you to act to ensure that kindergarten services in the City of Knox continue to be delivered by the council.”

5.2 Knox Arts and Culture Committee Representation

SUMMARY: Coordinator Arts and Cultural Services, Elissa Bates

At its Meeting held on 22 May 2023, Council endorsed a process to re-establish the Arts and Culture Committee and adopted a revised Terms of Reference (please refer to Attachment 1).

Since that time, an expression of interest process has been undertaken to seek new members for the Knox Arts and Culture Committee.

This report seeks Council approval to appoint a total of 16 members (maximum allocation) to the Arts and Culture Committee for a two-year period concluding in August 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Appoint the applicants as presented in Confidential Attachment 2 to the Arts & Culture Committee, to serve a two-year term concluding on 14 August 2025.**
- 2. Thank the outgoing members of the Knox Arts & Culture Committee for their valuable contributions.**

1. INTRODUCTION

The function of the Council's Advisory Committees is to facilitate stakeholder engagement which supports quality decision making and in turn, the achievements of Council's goals and strategies under the Community and Council Plan.

The Knox Arts and Culture Committee (the Committee) is an advisory committee that provides Council with strategic advice on issues relating to the advancement of arts and culture in Knox. It assists in promoting greater awareness and understanding of arts and cultural services in Knox, and the value of arts and culture in supporting community health and wellbeing, celebration, community safety, cultural tourism, economic development and placemaking. The Committee also provides Council with direct insight into the local needs, interests and trends in arts, culture and creative industry development in Knox, thus guiding the priorities for service delivery.

At its Ordinary Meeting held on 22 May 2023, Council approved the process for seeking new members for two-year term on the Arts and Culture Committee until 14 August 2025.

The Terms of Reference stipulates the following membership structure:

- A maximum of 12 community members
- A maximum of four industry members
- A maximum of three Councillors, with two confirmed members, being Councillor Jude Dwight and Councillor Sorina Grasso.

Relevant Council officers also participate in meetings, and offer advice, governance and general support to the group.

Meetings take place between four and six times per year, and the Committee operates alongside a Terms of Reference (located in Attachment 1).

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Expression of Interest Process

Council sought expressions of interest from community and industry representatives to submit applications for Committee membership using the following promotional platforms:

- Direct invitation email to arts, events, multicultural, youth, education and community services databases.
- Social media posts on Council and Arts and Events Facebook and Instagram pages.
- Digital promotions shared to local newspaper, community, arts and cultural groups via their Facebook and Instagram pages by direct message or posts to page where possible.
- Circulation via all available Council eNews bulletins.
- Advertising within Arts Hub Volunteer and Better Impact Volunteer platforms.
- Targeted emails to groups and individuals within local arts and cultural networks within Knox.

Promotional activities directed interested parties to Council's Arts and Culture Committee website (<https://www.knox.vic.gov.au/acadvisorycommittee>) where information was provided about the role and purpose of the Committee, the Terms of Reference, the selection criteria, key dates, the process for application and Panel assessment, and a link to the online submission portal, Better Impact, which is Council's volunteer management system.

2.2 Applications and Assessment

A total of 20 applications were received via an online application form comprising five questions that directly related to the selection criteria as outlined in the Committee Terms of Reference, including the option to upload a current resume and Linked In profile.

Of the 20 applications received, all were considered eligible for assessment as they met the essential eligibility criteria, being that they must "Live, work or study in Knox, or regularly participate in Knox Arts and Cultural activities". All applicants indicated that they had read the Committee's Terms of Reference, which was also an essential part of the online application process.

Applications were assessed by a Panel comprising Councillor Susan Laukens; Paul Reading, Acting Manager Active and Creative Communities; and Elissa Bates, Coordinator Arts and Cultural Services, in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

The Panel assessed each of the 20 applications alongside the following comparative selection criteria using a weighted scoring matrix:

- Demonstrate an interest and knowledge of Arts and Cultural activities within Knox, including services, events, venues, programs, projects and initiatives offered through Council, Community and local Businesses;
- Contribute specialist skills and experience in one of more areas of Arts and Culture, including but not limited to Cultural Development, Arts Management, Public Art, Arts Facilities, Programming, Arts Education, Event Management, Placemaking, Cultural Tourism, Arts Marketing, Community Engagement, Creative Industry Development, Arts Funding, Performance or Creative Arts Practice; and

- Offer insight into the social, cultural, environmental and economic factors impacting the Arts in Knox.

Each applicant was assessed using a systemic approach for review, and received a total score out of 30, with each of the above criteria weighted at ten points. Those with the highest Panel scores have been selected for inclusion in the 2023-2025 Committee. Please refer to Confidential Attachment 2: Knox Arts and Culture Committee 2023-2025 Recommendations, which provides the Panel scoring assessment for each applicant.

The recommended selection of applicants for membership to the 2023-2025 Arts and Culture Committee represent twelve local community members and four arts industry professionals, and together they represent a diverse range of skills, interests, disciplines and demographics.

2.2.1 Resubmitting Applicants

The Terms of Reference stipulates that membership is for a two-year term, however, “All members will be eligible to re-apply for appointment, however continuous membership for longer than four years will not be considered, unless otherwise recommended by the Committee Chair and endorsed by Council on a case-by-case basis”.

Resubmitting members from the 2021-2023 Committee, were required to apply using the same online application process as new members, ensuring that the process for reviewing all applications was consistent irrespective of if the applicant was a new or resubmitting applicant.

Council received a total of seven returning member applications from the 2021-2023 Committee, all of whom were eligible to reapply as they have not exceeded a consecutive four-year term. Of these seven resubmitting members, six have been recommended for extension for a further two years, whilst one has not, based on Panel scores.

2.2.2 New Applicants

Council received a total of thirteen new member applications, who applied in the same manner as re-applying members, via the online portal, and assessed alongside the same selection criteria, using the same weighted scoring matrix, as described in Item 2.2.

Of the new applicants, ten have been recommended for inclusion in the 2023-2025 Committee based on Panel scoring results.

Of those recommended new members, two are former 2019-2021 members, treated as new applicants as they have had a gap period in their membership and are now eligible to apply once again for a new term.

In summary, a total of four industry representatives and twelve community representatives have been recommended based on the total Panel scores, offering a mix of resubmitting applicants from the 2021-2023 Committee and a strong suite of new applicants.

2.3 Membership Categories

The proposed members fall into the following categories as defined within the Terms of Reference:

2.3.1 Councillor Representatives

- Councillor Jude Dwight
- Councillor Sorina Grasso

Please note that Councillor Susan Laukens participated in the Knox Arts Assessment Panel (AAP) which forms part of the responsibilities of this Committee as per the Terms of Reference. Participation of an additional Councillor in the AAP is supported by the Committee Terms of Reference.

2.3.2 Community and Industry Representatives

Refer to Confidential Attachment 2 for the Recommended 2023 Panel Assessment Summary and list of Recommended Members of the 2023-2025 Committee.

3. CONSULTATION

Expressions of interest for the Arts and Culture Committee were sought through a variety of promotional platforms as detailed in Item 2.1, with a period of public exhibition being a total of six weeks. The Better Impact Volunteer management platform was used to manage the online application process and inform a consistent best practice approach to engaging with new and returning member applications.

4. CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS

Implementation of the recommendation is considered to have no direct implications or has no direct impacts upon Council's Net Zero 2030 target, the Community Net Zero 2040, exposure to climate risks or climate change adaptation.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL/AMENITY CONSIDERATIONS

There are no environmental or amenity issues related to this process.

6. FINANCIAL & ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

The cost to Council to support the Arts Committee is approximately \$2,000 per annum and is provided within Council's annual budget. This sum is made up of costs for catering and advertising. Council officer time is also allocated to support the Arts and Culture Committee's work.

7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Arts and Culture Committee will provide advice to Council in relation to the broad social implications associated with the development of art, cultural and heritage policies and strategic plans.

8. RELEVANCE TO KNOX COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025

Connection, Resilience & Wellbeing

Strategy 4.1 - Support our community to improve their physical, mental and social health and wellbeing.

Strategy 4.2 - Foster inclusivity, equality, belonging and safety within the community.

Strategy 4.4 - Support the community to identify and lead community strengthening initiatives.

Civic Engagement & Integrity

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

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

Confidential Attachment 2 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 personal information, being the names and details of prospective committee members, which would be unreasonable to disclose publicly, or to disclosure before they are appointed.

Report Prepared By: Coordinator Arts and Cultural Services, Elissa Bates
Report Authorised By: Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley

Attachments

1. Attachment 1 - Terms of Reference - Knox Arts and Culture Committee V 4 - 2023 [5.2.1 - 6 pages]



Knox Arts & Culture Committee

Directorate:	Connected Communities		
Approval by:	Council	Responsible Officer:	Coordinator Arts & Cultural Services
Approval Date:	10 May 2021	Version Number:	4
Review Date:	14 August 2025		

1. Purpose

The function of the Knox Arts and Culture Committee is to facilitate stakeholder engagement which supports quality decision making and in turn, the achievements of Council's goals and strategies under the Community and Council Plan.

The Knox Arts and Culture Committee (the Committee) provides Council with strategic advice on issues relating to the advancement of arts and culture in Knox. It assists in promoting greater awareness and understanding of arts and cultural services in Knox, and the value of arts and culture in supporting community health and wellbeing. The Committee also provides Council with direct insight into the local needs, interests and trends in arts, culture and creative industry development in Knox.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the Committee are to:

- Provide advice and recommendations to Council on arts and cultural issues.
- Promote access to a diverse range of arts and cultural activities within the Knox.
- Assist Council in the development of arts and cultural policy, procedure and planning
- Contribute ideas and recommendations on the key service portfolios of the Arts and Cultural services Unit, including but not limited to Festivals and Events, Community and Public Arts, and Cultural Venues;
- Advocate and promote arts and cultural development in Knox; and
- Actively network and build connections and opportunities for increased collaboration between the Knox Community and Council through arts and cultural initiatives.

The Committee supports the delivery of the following Knox Community & Council Plan goals:

Goal 1. We value our natural and built environment.

Goal 7. We are inclusive, feel a sense of belonging and value our identity.

The Arts and Culture Committee is aligned to the 'Inclusive, Active and Creative Communities' Group. Whilst the individual committees will meet at the designated times within its Terms of Reference each 'group' will meet once annually, this will generally be between October to December each year. A designated Directorate will be responsible for coordinating group meetings.

The purpose of these meetings will be to:

- Provide feedback to group on priorities for individual committees;
- Update group of progress of key issues; and



- Identify synergies between groups and links to progressing the Community and Council Plan.

In addition to group meetings, all committees will be provided with an opportunity to meet together annually. The 'annual advisory committee' sessions will generally be held between April or May each year and will be coordinated by the Governance team. The purpose of these meetings will be to:

- Report on progress by Council against Community and Council Plan;
- Provide overview of industry trends and Council priorities for the upcoming year;
- Consider synergies and opportunities for sharing information and collaboration; and
- Deliver training to support to committees.

3. Membership, Period of Membership and Method of Appointment

The Arts & Culture Committee shall comprise the following:

- A maximum of 12 community members
- A maximum of 4 industry members (including any relevant government agency representatives)
- 3 Councillors

3.1 Selection and Recruitment of Community and Industry Representative Members

The process to appoint community members will be advertised on Council's website, digital platforms, publications and through local networks. Applicants must make an application via an online expression of interest process.

Submissions for community and industry membership will be assessed alongside the following selection criteria:

- Live, work or study in Knox, or regularly participate in Knox Arts and Cultural activities;
- Demonstrate an interest and knowledge of Arts and Cultural activities within Knox, including services, events, venues, programs, projects and initiatives offered through Council, Community and local Businesses;
- Contribute specialist skills and experience in one of more areas of Arts and Culture, including but not limited to Cultural Development, Arts Management, Public Art, Arts Facilities, Programming, Arts Education, Event Management, Placemaking, Cultural Tourism, Arts Marketing, Community Engagement, Creative Industry Development, Arts Funding, Performance or Creative Arts Practice; and
- Offer insight into the social, cultural, environmental and economic factors impacting the wider Knox community and how these may influence local arts and cultural service delivery.

The approach and method for appointing representatives will include the following:

- Community and industry members will be selected by a panel comprising a Councillor and 2 Council Officers from the relevant service unit;
- The method of appointment will be via an online expression of interest process;
- Members will be appointed for a two year term;
- All members will be eligible to re-apply for appointment, however continuous membership for longer than four years will not be considered, unless otherwise recommended by the Committee Chair and endorsed by Council on a case by case basis;
- Council will be responsible for appointing all Councillor, community and industry representative members; and



- Casual vacancies which occur due to community or industry members being unable to complete the full term of their appointments, may be filled by co-opting suitable candidates from a previous selection process for the remainder of the previous incumbents' terms, or where the previous applications are unsuitable, new members may be recommended and must apply as per Item 3.1. The selection panel will make a recommendation to the CEO, who will have the authority to appoint the recommended candidate/s to the committee for the remainder of the previous incumbent's term.
- Community and Industry representatives unable to attend a committee meeting are able to nominate a proxy or alternate member from the organisation they represent. Any proxy attendance should be notified to Council's nominated officer at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. It is expected the Committee member will provide an appropriate briefing of the committee purpose and objectives and relevant meeting notes to enable active participation and contribution of the proxy representation within the meeting.
- The committee Chair may invite observers to meetings from time to time. This is at the discretion of the committee.
- The committee Chair may invite guests to attend and participate at meetings, this would generally be for a specific purpose and/or specified period of time. This is at the discretion of the committee.

3.2 Councillors

Council will appoint Councillor representation annually.

Unless otherwise appointed to the committee by Council, the Mayor is, by virtue of the Office, an ex officio member of the committee. It is important that whilst the Mayor may not chair these meetings, appropriate recognition should be given to the presence of the Mayor if in attendance.

The role of Councillors is to participate in the meetings, review Agendas and Minutes, listen to community and stakeholder views and keep the Council informed, through reports on committees by Councillors at Council meetings, on issues of community and Council interest being considered at meetings.

3.3 Council Officers

Council officers will be nominated to support the committee by the CEO as required to provide advice and administrative support to the committee.

3.4 Arts Assessment Panel Membership

The Art Assessment Panel (AAP) is a working group that assesses and makes recommendations for the acquisition and deaccession of public art and civic art collection items, as per the [Knox Public Art Policy \(2022 – 2026\)](#). Community and Councillor representation on the AAP is derived from the Knox Arts and Culture Committee, joining key internal officers.

At the commencement of the two year term for Knox Arts and Culture Committee members, between two and four community/industry members will be nominated to be members of the AAP for their Committee term, with a preference for nominated members to demonstrate experience in visual arts management. At least one Councillor will be also nominated from the Committee, who will take on the role of AAP Chair. Where multiple Arts and Culture Committee Councillors wish to take part in the AAP, the role of Chair will be given to the Mayor or Deputy Mayor, or negotiated where this does not apply. Other Councillors may also take part in the AAP, by negotiation with the AAP Chair.

Meetings of the AAP are ad-hoc as required (approximately 4 per year), and some decisions may be made via email. The AAP members will regularly report back to the Knox Arts and Culture Committee on outcomes.



4. Delegated Authority and Decision Making

The committee acts in an advisory capacity only and has no delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of Council.

5. Meeting Procedures

The committee will meet approximately every three months with a minimum of four meetings per year, and an annual schedule of meetings will be agreed upon at the first meeting of the committee in each year. The committee will also be invited to participate in the 6 monthly Group Meetings and the annual advisory committee Forum.

The committee is not required to give public notice of its meetings and its meetings are not open to the public.

At the commencement of each financial year the committee will develop a work plan for the upcoming year. This will generally be aligned with the Community and Council Plan. The committee may also highlight any emerging issues which will also be documented. For efficiency purposes the business of the committee throughout the ensuing year should align with the work plan and list of emerging issues.

Meetings will follow standard meeting procedure protocols, which are in summary:

- Commence on time and conclude by the stated completion time;
- Be scheduled and confirmed in advance with all relevant papers distributed (as appropriate) to each member;
- Encourage fair and reasonable discussion, participation and respect for each other's views;
- Focus on the relevant issues at hand; and
- Provide advice to Council as far as possible on a consensus basis.

6. Chair

The position of Chairperson shall be held by a Councillor and shall be reviewed annually immediately following Councillor appointments to committees. The position of Chairperson is to be agreed upon between Councillors. When this cannot be achieved, the Mayor of the day shall determine the Chair.

If the Chairperson is not present at a meeting, any other Councillor who has been appointed to the committee shall be appointed Chairperson. In the absence of any other Councillor representative/s, a staff member appointed by the relevant Director may Chair the meeting.

7. Agendas and Meeting Notes

Agendas and meeting notes must be prepared for each meeting.

The Agenda must be provided to members of the committee not less than 4 days before the time fixed for the holding of the meeting.

The Chairperson must arrange for meeting notes of each meeting of the committee to be kept.

The meeting notes of a Council Committee must:

- (a) contain details of the proceedings and recommendations made;
- (b) be clearly expressed;
- (c) be self-explanatory; and



(d) incorporate relevant reports or a summary of the relevant reports considered by the committee.

Draft meeting notes must be:

- (a) submitted to the Committee Chairperson for confirmation within 7 days of the meeting;
- (b) distributed to all Committee Members following confirmation from the Chairperson and within 14 days of the meeting; and
- (c) submitted to the next meeting of the Committee for information.

In compliance with section 58 of the 2020 Act and the requirements of the Council's Public Transparency Policy the agenda and minutes of this group will be made available on Council's website unless:

- the information contained in the agenda and/or minutes is confidential by virtue of the 2020 Act or any other Act; or
- the public availability of the information has been deemed by the Chief Executive Officer or nominee to be contrary to the public interest.

8. Voting

As this is an advisory committee, voting on issues is not required. Any recommendations will generally be developed through consensus. Where a matter cannot be agreed the differing opinions should be clearly expressed in the notes of the meeting.

9. Conflict and Interest Provisions

In performing the role of Advisory Committee member, a person must:

- Act with integrity;
- Impartially exercise his or her responsibilities in the interests of the local community;
- Not improperly seek to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person;
- Treat all persons with respect and have due regard to the opinions, beliefs, rights and responsibilities of other persons;
- Commit to regular attendance at meetings; and
- Not make improper use of information acquired because of their position or release information that the member knows, or should reasonably know, is confidential information.

Meetings of the Panel will typically constitute a Meeting Conducted under the Auspices of Council pursuant to Council's Governance Rules and Councillors are consequently required to comply with the conflict of interest provisions as set down in section 131 of the 2020 Act and Chapter 5 of the Council's Governance Rules.

Councillors must:

- disclose that conflict of interest by explaining the nature of the conflict of interest to those present immediately before the matter is considered;
- absent themselves from any discussion of the matter; and
- as soon as practicable, provide the CEO with a written notice recording the nature of the conflict.

Where a member of staff or a community member has a conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest in relation to a matter before the Group, they must disclose the matter to the group before the matter is



considered or discussed. Disclosure must include the nature of the interest and be recorded in the meeting notes. It will be at the discretion of the Chairperson if the staff and/or community member remains or leaves the room whilst the matter is discussed, and this must also be recorded in the notes of the meeting.

All members of the Advisory Committee shall participate in training on the Conduct and Interest provisions which will be run a minimum of annually by the Governance team.

10. Reporting

The committee will prepare a formal report on an annual basis in line with their stated objectives. The report must be adopted by the committee and should directly reflect the objectives and the performance measures of the committee as set out in the Terms of Reference. Once adopted by the committee the report will be presented to Council.

11. Administration Support

Administration support will be provided by the Connected Communities Directorate.

12. Contact with the Media

Contact with the Media by Advisory Committee members will be conducted in accordance with the Councillor and Staff Media Policies. Community members should defer any media enquiries to the Chairperson in the first instance and should take care not to respond as a representative of the committee.

13. Review Date

The committee will sunset after 4 years. If the committee continues to have a relevant function, a report must be presented to Council prior to this date that includes a review of the committee's Terms of Reference and seeking endorsement from Council to continue act in an advisory capacity.

14. Meals

The provision of refreshments during the course of a committee meeting will be provided in accordance with the Meals and Beverages for Council Committees Policy.

15. Administration Updates

From time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this Terms of Reference, such a change may be made administratively. Examples of minor administrative changes include change to names of Council departments or positions, change to names of Federal or State Government departments or a minor amendment to legislation that does not have material impact. Where any change or update may materially change the intent of this Terms of Reference, it must be considered by Council at a Council or delegated Committee meeting.

5.3 Early Years Advisory Committee - Appointment of New Members

SUMMARY: Strategic Projects Officer, Suzy Bennett

The role of the Early Years Advisory Committee is to provide advice to Council on early years issues and to promote greater awareness and understanding in the local community of early years services and the life of children and families in the Knox community through the lens of Council’s Child, Youth and Seniors Plan 2021-2025.

The membership term for two members of the Early Years Advisory Committee concluded at the end of June 2023. An expression of interest process was conducted in accordance with the Knox City Council Committee Policy. This report seeks approval to appoint the recommended Committee Members as outlined in Confidential Attachment 1.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

- 1. Thank outgoing Committee Members for their contribution over the last four years.
- 2. Appoint the recommended Committee Members to the Early Years Advisory Committee for the period July 2023 to June 2025 as presented in Confidential Attachment 1.

Name:	Category:
1.	Professional Representative
2.	Professional Representative

1. INTRODUCTION

The Early Years Advisory Committee (EYAC) was formally established in April 2010. The role of the EYAC is to provide advice to Council on emerging early years matters and to promote greater awareness and understanding in the local community of early years services and the life of children and families in the Knox community.

The Child, Youth and Seniors Plan 2021-2025 identifies the differing needs and interests of each group according to their life stages and identifies where tailored approaches are required to support the health and wellbeing of these groups. This Plan builds on Council’s commitment to an integrated and inter-generational planning process. The Plan promotes inter-generational interactions while acknowledging the strengths and capacities of residents across the life course and providing opportunities to strengthen community connectedness.

The EYAC Terms of Reference require that members be renewed through a selection process, inviting community and professional representatives to submit expressions of interest. There were two professional vacancies in this round of recruitment undertaken throughout May to June 2023.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Role of the Committee

The current objectives of the EYAC are to:

- 1. Provide advice and recommendations to Council on the implementation of the Child, Youth and Seniors Plan 2021-2025 with an early years focus. This Plan captures key priorities and actions to be delivered over four years which are linked to the five key directions of the Knox Community Plan 2021-2031 and the Knox Council Plan 2021-2025.
- 2. The advice and recommendations in relation to this Plan will include:

- (a) Agreed priorities.
 - (b) The ongoing outcomes and achievements of the Child, Youth and Seniors Plan 2021-2025.
 - (c) Effective communication and consultation strategies to facilitate engagement with the community and other key stakeholders on the development and implementation of the Child, Youth and Seniors Plan 2021-2025.
3. Provide advice to the Council on matters impacting families and children and the related services within the Knox community.
 4. Identify emerging key research, policy and legislative issues that might impact on the implementation of the Child, Youth and Seniors Plan 2021-2025.
 5. Consider advice and information made available through other Council advisory and community consultation processes related to families and children and/or local early years services.

An Annual Report on the key discussion topics and achievements of the EYAC is presented to Council for noting.

2.2 EYAC Membership

Membership of EYAC consists of a maximum of six community members and four professional members comprising a total of ten members and two Councillors. Further details are outlined in Confidential Attachment 1.

2.3 Recruitment Process

It is a requirement that the appointment to a Council Advisory Committee be in accordance with Knox City Council Committee's Policy. This Policy requires that every effort be made to ensure a representative cross-section of people from the municipality is selected to the Committee as appropriate.

Recruitment for the two EYAC professional positions was promoted through the following:

- Knox City Council Website.
- An advertisement in Seek Volunteer.
- An advertisement in Volunteer social platform.
- Advertisement sent to all Early Years External Professional Partners.
- Better Impact Public Volunteer page.
- Advertisement in various Early Years Network Bulletins.

Four expressions of interest applications for new members were received (please refer to Confidential Attachment 1). The expression of interest period for the community and professional member positions were open from 23 May 2023 until 27 June 2023.

A Selection Panel comprising Mayor Marcia Timmers-Leitch as Chair and two Council officers was conducted using the following criteria when interviewing applicants:

- Reside/work in Knox.
- Personal experience and knowledge of early years issues.
- Effective communication and consultation within the community and with other stakeholders.
- Ability to identify issues and solutions and provide advice to Council.

- Ability to work collaboratively.

Four professional representatives provided expressions of interest, of these two were ineligible due to not meeting the required criteria as per the Committee Terms of Reference.

The remaining two applications, comprising of two professional representatives were interviewed between 23 June and 26 June 2023. As a result, both these applicants were recommended by the interview selection panel for a two-year appointment to EYAC (Confidential Attachment).

Should the Council approve the nomination of two Professional members, it is anticipated that an induction process for the new members will take place in September 2023.

3. CONSULTATION

Information about EYAC and the recruitment process was promoted on Council's website, through Council community email networks, social media and the Better Impact Volunteer Management Portal.

4. CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS

Implementation of the recommendation is considered to have no direct implications or has no direct impacts upon Council's Net Zero 2030 target, the Community Net Zero 2040, exposure to climate risks or climate change adaptation.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL/AMENITY CONSIDERATIONS

The EYAC continues to play a key role considering early years matters and advising Council in terms of child friendly spaces, which promotes the health and wellbeing of Knox children and families into the future.

6. FINANCIAL & ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

The Family and Children's Services Department supports the administration of Council's EYAC. Officer time of approximately ten hours each month is absorbed within the Department budget in addition to an annual catering and supplies allowance of \$2,500.

7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

In 2023, Knox has 11,797 children (within the age range of 0-6 years) provided from the 2021 Census data. This age group known as the early years has been identified as the most vulnerable and dependent group in the Child Youth and Seniors' Plan (2021-2025). Actions outlined in this plan describe the need for partnerships to assist young children to thrive and initiatives which aim to create more opportunities for positive long-term impacts on the health, well-being, education and future employment outcomes for this group of young children.

Recent research by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY, 2022) identified that to thrive, children and young people also need to be valued, they need their basic material needs met, they need to be healthy, learning, participating in family, community and decision making, and have a positive sense of their identity and culture.

There are many factors that threaten young children's capacity to thrive due to their dependence upon the health and well-being of their families, carers and communities around them. The establishment and continuation of the Early Years Advisory Committee (EYAC) is a positive

example of connection with the local community that builds a supportive network to provide civic involvement in helping young children living in Knox to thrive.

8. RELEVANCE TO KNOX COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025

Connection, Resilience & Wellbeing

Strategy 4.2 - Foster inclusivity, equality, belonging and safety within the community.

Strategy 4.4 - Support the community to identify and lead community strengthening initiatives.

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

Confidential Attachment 1 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 personal information (being the names and details of prospective Committee members which would be unreasonable to disclose publicly, or to disclosure before they are appointed).

Report Prepared By: Strategic Project Officer, Suzy Bennett
Report Authorised By: Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley

Attachments

Nil

5.4 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.

This report represents the second-to-last report for ICT Capital Works Program based on the 2017 ICT Strategy, before the implementation of the new Customer and Performance governance framework that reflects the new capital budget project commitments for FY 23/24.

A briefing to the Council is scheduled for the 21st of August to discuss the new Customer and Performance (C&P) Governance Framework, including enhanced reporting, which is scheduled to commence from September 2023.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the monthly ICT Capital Works Report.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report summarises the Council's monthly ICT Capital Works Program. The aim of this report is to provide a regular and succinct status summary of each project. The ICT Capital Works Report is included as an attachment. The project status of each project is incorporated within the ICT Capital Works Report, which has been included as an attachment.

Key achievements for this reporting period:

- **Asset Management Information System:** Contractor Portal is now available and live with Parks and Works contractors. This feature allows contractors to work directly with our asset management system, receiving requests and providing updates in real-time.
- **Corporate Reporting:** Risk Items for the previous Audit & Risk Committee were produced out of the new system. The key benefits include automated report generation to reduce effort and streamlined business updates. The Key Performance Indicator module also went live, which will simplify KPI reporting across the organisation.

Overview of ICT projects progress and “get-to-green” actions:

RAG Status	Project Name	Schedule %	“Get-to-Green” action
Amber	Early Years Platform	97%	New project manager needed to be assigned, decommissioning of old system now scheduled (August)
Red	Asset Management Information System (AMIS)	46%	Contract extension sign-off and data migration proof of concept (September)
Amber	Corporate Reporting Solutions	87%	People data updated to ensure the Delegations module works with the "assign to position" functionality (September)
Amber	Intranet Replacement	69%	Mitigation actions with vendor being tracked and monitored (September)
Amber	Enterprise Integration Platform (EIP)	68%	Vendor performance issues and resolution underway (September)

Key Issues and Risks:

Issues	
Description	Resolution
<p>The current Project Management Tool has limited features and functionality to support required and enhanced reporting.</p> <p>Enhancements include - resource management, forecasting and tracking of risks/issues, which is currently being done inefficiently.</p>	<p>An enhancement to the existing Project Management tool or a new tool under investigation with a longer-term view to automate integration into the finance system, and to also potentially cater for all projects across the organisation (outside of Customer and Performance).</p>
Risks	
Description	Mitigation
<p>Internal people data – multiple dependencies exist and need improved people data processes. Projects such as Intranet, Corporate Reporting, and the Enterprise Integration Platform.</p>	<p>Multiple data management initiatives are currently resourced and underway to improve accessibility and availability of internal people data.</p>
<p>Resourcing - labour market conditions and rates continue to be a challenge for retaining key project personnel.</p>	<p>Multiple recruitment options are being used to source talent. Focus on employee engagement is a priority to ensure key personnel are retained.</p>
<p>Vendors / Supply Chain – cost increases and performance challenges are being observed across multiple vendors, potentially impacting future project delivery.</p>	<p>Regular and on-going vendor meetings as part of project governance.</p>

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 August [5.4.1 - 6 pages]

Project Name & Status	RAG Status
In progress - On track	
<p>Asset Management Information System</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. The 'Confirm' solution is market leading, innovative, and flexible in managing the broad range of Council asset classes and provision of services in the most effective and efficient manner. In order to deliver incremental value to the Council, the project has been separated into two distinct phases, with each phase consisting of several workstreams. The first phase was completed in December 22, with the implementation of the Parks and Works Departments onto Confirm and discontinuation of their usage of Lifecycle. The second phase will cover the implementation of the remaining Infrastructure departments, these being Facilities, Plant and Fleet. Included in the second phase will also be the implementation of Asset Renewals, Strategic Asset Management and the decommissioning of Lifecycle.</p> <p>The current focus is on resolving the issues on the data migration and signing-off the contract extension with the vendor. A decision on the approach to the data migration will be made in late August after the Proof of Concept is delivered. The sign-off of the data migration specifications is on track for 4 August, and work has continued on the end-user change management, covering Confirm Familiarisation and Training. The specification for the integration into the finance system will be complete by 31 July. The RAG status will be changed when consolidation of all the project schedules is completed and and baselined, inclusive of all the Change Requests.</p>	Red
<p>Corporate Reporting Solutions</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 apply to staff. Pulse will be rolled out in 2023 in the following phases; Audit - February, Corporate Reporting - April, Risk - July, Corporate Indicators - July and Polices & Delegations - September.</p> <p>The Corporate Reporting Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) module, and the Risk Module both went live at the end of June. Training for business users on the KPI module and Risk module has been completed and updates are being made in the Pulse system for reporting. Interplan, the old system, has been retired. Design for the Delegations module will commence in mid-August. The project is amber but expect to go green around mid-September when the dependency on the People and Data project completes the planned people data variation work to ensure our HR data is continuously accurate and up to date which is critical for the implementation of the Delegations module and the "assign to position" functionality.</p>	Amber

Project Name & Status	RAG Status
<p>DCCT Program - Ph-2 Intranet Redevelopment</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 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 includes improvements to complex forms and movement of information from obsolete functionality. Stage 3 includes staff collaboration functionality.</p> <p>The build phase with the vendor, WebVine commenced in June, however this has been progressing slower than expected. Discussions with the vendor are in progress to address this. A second content writer commenced in early July which will progress the content stream of work. The project schedule has been reforecasted to capture the delays and has brought forward some Phase 2 tasks to work in parallel with Phase 1. The photo initiative has been very successful with 580+ staff participating. Having photos on our Intranet and other MS applications will help staff get to know each other and promote staff connection. The project is amber due to uncertainty with revised milestone dates until the open issues are resolved. Project Manager is working through issues and no additional support is required at this stage.</p>	Amber
<p>Early Years Platform</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>The project has been put on hold and marked as amber due to the resignation of the Project Manager. A new Project Manager was allocated to the project in mid-July. Decommissioning activities that are yet to be completed are expected to finish by mid-August 2023.</p>	Amber
<p>Enterprise Integration Platform</p> <p>The Enterprise Integration Platform 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>Preparation and vendor onboarding tasks have completed. Development is currently in progress for the people data integration required for the intranet project. The project is amber due to system testing preparation delays because of vendor performance issues. A meeting was held with the vendor on 2nd Aug. Another review meeting is scheduled for the end of August to discuss the project issues that were raised. No support is needed currently.</p>	Amber

Project Name & Status	RAG Status
<p>Project Management Office 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>Project Management Office - ICT Governance 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
On hold	
<p>Cloud Migration The objective of this project is to conduct high-level cloud suitability assessment for all applications hosted on-prem. Our goal is to build migration plan and build migration landing zone in Azure, and conduct migration of workloads to Azure.</p> <p>This project has been put on hold and is planned for execution in FY23. However, the prioritisation process remains active and ongoing.</p>	Grey
<p>Master Data Management 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>The MDM project is currently on-hold due departure of the project manager. Project scope and timings will be reviewed in relation to other Customer & Performance Portfolio Roadmap priorities. Recommendations to be provided August/September.</p>	Grey
<p>Spatial Capability 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 across council. Existing GIS systems were successfully upgraded in June 20, with the business users now taking advantage of improved functionality for Intramaps and QGIS.</p> <p>The project is currently on hold. It will be closed, and a new project will be created to deal with the out-of-support Intramaps. The new project will address the requirements for an upgrade or replacement.</p>	Grey
Not started	
<p>Customer Relationship Management 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 now due to commence in line with the completion of the Customer Strategy. Commencement of the CRM project will now be considered in the context of the Customer & Performance Portfolio Roadmap which is in development.</p>	Grey

Project Name & Status	RAG Status
<p>DCCT Program - Ph-3 Integration Phase 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>This project will needs to be scheduled in line with re-prioritisation model.</p>	Grey
<p>Facilities Booking Solution - Phase 2 Community Facilities Booking Solution 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 the booking solution to the community for facilities booking, including access to 300+ facilities such as halls, pavilions, ovals etc.</p> <p>This project has not started and will commence when resource capacity becomes available from the Asset Management Information System Project over the next 12 months.</p>	Grey
Completed	
<p>Business Intelligence 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>Community Engagement Platform 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

Project Name & Status	RAG Status
<p>DCCT Program - Ph-1 Website Redevelopment 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
<p>Facilities Booking Solution - Phase 1 Staff Room Bookings 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>HR Systems 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 & 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 & Culture.</p>	Green
<p>Pathway Program 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
Removed	

Project Name & Status	RAG Status
<p data-bbox="309 398 619 427">Active Aging System Platform</p> <p data-bbox="309 430 1265 517">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 data-bbox="309 551 1251 730">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 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.</p>	

5.5 Proposed Motions to the October 2023 MAV State Council

SUMMARY

This report seeks Council's formal endorsement of a motion for submission and consideration at the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) State Council Meeting in October 2023, in relation to library funding.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the following motion and supporting rationale (as set out in this report) for submission to the MAV State Council Meeting in October 2023:

- **That the MAV call on the Victorian Government to reverse its decision to freeze the level of grants for public libraries in 2023/24 and commit to restoring its funding contribution to 50% of the service cost.**

1. INTRODUCTION

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) State Council Meeting will be held on Friday 13 October 2023. Motions from member councils on issues of state-wide significance to local government are due by 14 August 2023.

Knox City Council is a member of the MAV and is represented by its delegate Cr Susan Laukens. The MAV is a membership association and the legislated peak body for local government in Victoria. Motions are being sought from member councils on issues of state-wide significance to local government. Motions must be submitted online and must have been the subject of a Council resolution. Councils may amend their submitted motions up until 30 August 2023.

Motions for the MAV State Council must be aligned to the MAV Strategy. The MAV Strategy 2021-25, adopted at the May 2021 State Council meeting identifies 6 MAV strategic outcomes:

1. Economically sound councils
2. Healthy, diverse and thriving communities
3. Well-planned, connected and resilient built environment
4. Changing climate and a circular economy
5. Sector capability and good governance
6. Effective and responsive MAV.

The Victorian Government's funding of public libraries is considered an appropriate motion to put forward that meet's the MAV requirements, particularly relating to the MAV strategic outcomes of economically sound councils, and healthy, diverse and thriving communities.

2. DISCUSSION

Funding of public libraries is an issue of state-wide significance for local government in Victoria that warrants further advocacy by the MAV. Knox City Council, along with Maroondah City Council and Yarra Ranges Shire Council, are members of Your Library Limited, with Eastern Regional Libraries having recently transitioned to Your Library Limited under a Beneficial Enterprise structure.

Your Library Limited has been advised that Victorian Government funding for library services in 2023/24 is being held at 2022/23 levels, with no indexation to reflect the increasing costs of service provision. This represents a further shifting of costs from the Victorian Government onto local government.

The following Motion has been prepared for Council's consideration.

Name of Motion: Victorian Government funding of public libraries

Motion: That the MAV call on the Victorian Government to reverse its decision to freeze the level of grants for public libraries in 2023/24 and commit to restoring its funding contribution to 50% of the service cost.

Rationale: The Victorian Government has advised that its funding for library services in 2023/24 will be held at 2022/23 levels, with no indexation to reflect the increasing costs of service provision. This follows an increase in funding of just 2% in the 2022/23 year. Across these two years, the Victorian Government's funding increase of 2% compares with an estimated increase in CPI of around 10%.

This reduction in the Victorian Government's share of library funding continues a downward trend that has existed over many years. Historically, the Victorian Government and local governments shared the cost of providing library services on a 50/50 basis. Cost shifting over time has now resulted in the Victorian Government's share of funding reducing to around 20%, and local government's share increasing to around 80%. With local governments increasingly subject to constrained finances in a rate-capped environment, it will simply not be possible to maintain service levels in this critical community service.

This Motion calls on the Victorian Government to reverse its decision for 2023/24, and to commit to restoring its funding contribution to 50% of the service cost, in line with the historical levels.

3. CONSULTATION

Endorsing and submitting a motion to the MAV State Council Meeting enables the canvassing of the issue with all other local governments across Victoria, to gain their support for the motion.

Maroondah City Council, also a member of Your Library Limited, has also submitted an MAV Motion calling on the Victorian Government to increase its share of library funding. Knox City Council's Motion complements that submitted by Maroondah and adds weight to the issue for MAV State Council consideration.

4. CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS

Implementation of the recommendation is considered to have no direct implications or has no direct impacts upon Council's Net Zero 2030 target, the Community Net Zero 2040, exposure to climate risks or climate change adaptation.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL/AMENITY CONSIDERATIONS

There are no direct environmental or amenity implications for this report.

6. FINANCIAL & ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

As noted above, the Victorian Government's share funding of library services continues to decline, with the decision to hold funding in 2023/24 at 2022/23 levels putting significant pressure on the delivery of library services.

7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Libraries are critical places of learning and connection for our communities. Should the share of Victorian Government funding continue to decline, it will simply not be possible for libraries to offer the same level of services as are currently provided.

8. RELEVANCE TO KNOX COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025

Neighbourhoods, Housing & Infrastructure

Strategy 2.2 - Create, enhance and maintain places and spaces for people to live, work, play and connect.

Connection, Resilience & Wellbeing

Strategy 4.1 - Support our community to improve their physical, mental and social health and wellbeing.

Strategy 4.2 - Foster inclusivity, equality, belonging and safety within the community.

Civic Engagement & Integrity

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

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

There is no content in this report that meets the definition of confidential information from the Local Government Act 2020.

Report Prepared By: Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley
Report Authorised By: Chief Executive Officer, Bruce Dobson

Attachments

Nil

6 Supplementary Items

7 Notices of Motion

8 Urgent Business

9 Confidential Items