

MINUTES

Meeting of Council

Held at the
Civic Centre
511 Burwood Highway
Wantirna South
On
Monday 24 March 2025



The Agenda for the Meeting of Council, Monday 24 March 2025, forms part of these Minutes and is attached in full at the end of the Minutes.

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

The meeting commenced at 7.16 p.m.

PRESENT:

<i>Cr L Cooper (Mayor)</i>	<i>Scott Ward</i>
<i>Cr P Lockwood</i>	<i>Baird Ward</i>
<i>Cr P Kennett</i>	<i>Chandler Ward</i>
<i>Cr C Duncan</i>	<i>Collier Ward</i>
<i>Cr R Williams</i>	<i>Dinsdale Ward</i>
<i>Cr M Baker</i>	<i>Dobson Ward</i>
<i>Cr P Considine</i>	<i>Friberg Ward</i>
<i>Cr S Pearce</i>	<i>Taylor Ward</i>
<i>Cr G Atwell (Deputy Mayor)</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>Ms N Lorkin</i>	<i>Chief Financial Officer</i>
<i>Mr A Dowling</i>	<i>Manager, Governance and Risk</i>

THE MEETING OPENED WITH A STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND A STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation as Traditional Custodians of the land, and meets on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. We pay our respects to elders both past and present.

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1 Apologies and Requests for Leaves Of Absence

Nil.

2 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

Nil.

3 Confirmation of Minutes

The Chairperson, Councillor Lisa Cooper invited Councillors to raise any opposition to the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on Monday 24 February 2025. There being none, the Chairperson declared the Minutes be confirmed.

4 Presentations, Petitions and Memorials

Nil.

The Mayor, Councillor Cooper, sought and obtained leave of Council to change the order of business and bring forward consideration of Item 8.1, Biannual Report and Annual Assessment of the Audit & Risk Committee.

8.1 Biannual Report and Annual Assessment of the Audit & Risk Committee

SUMMARY

This report presents to Council, the Audit and Risk Committee Biannual Report – March 2025. The report includes outcomes of the Audit and Risk Committee's annual self-assessment, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020, and the Audit and Risk Committee Charter.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to:

1. Receive and note the Audit and Risk Committee Biannual Report - March 2025, as set out in Attachment 1 to the report.
2. Receive and note the findings of the Audit and Risk Committee Self-Assessment Report, as set out in Attachment 2 to the report.

The Mayor, Councillor Cooper, welcomed the independent Chairperson of the Knox City Council Audit and Risk Committee, Mr Geoff Harry, to the meeting (via Zoom) and invited him to speak to the report.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Pearce

SECONDED: Councillor Cooper

That Council resolve to:

1. Receive and note the Audit and Risk Committee Biannual Report - March 2025, as set out in Attachment 1 to the report.
2. Receive and note the findings of the Audit and Risk Committee Self-Assessment Report, as set out in Attachment 2 to the report.

CARRIED

5 Reports By Councillors

5.1.1 Councillor Pearce

Councillor Pearce reported attending the following meetings:

- Knox Festival – noting it was great to see everyone enjoying themselves.
- International Women’s Day event with Councillor Lockwood – noting the speakers were inspiring.
- Audit and Risk Committee Meeting - expressed appreciation for the Committee member’s professional knowledge and advice.
- A meeting with the Outer East Foodshare at Templer Reserve with Deputy Mayor Atwell and Councillor Considine - noted they provide food to 37 different organisations across and outside Knox.
- Attended the Rowville Men’s Shed with Councillor Kennett and Deputy Mayor Atwell.

Councillor Pearce also:

- Encouraged the community to contact the Rowville Men’s Shed if they have a community project that needs support.

5.1.2 Councillor Lockwood

Councillor Lockwood reported attending the following meetings:

- MAV Congress of Councillors weekend – noted Graeme Emerson and David Wolfe spoke on leadership standards in public life.
- Visited the Knox Police Station with Councillor Kennett and Councillor Baker and discussed local issues.
- Seniors Forum – noted that Mary Doyle MP, Member for Aston, and Kate Thwaites MP, Assistant Minister for Ageing, were in attendance.
- Event with The Hon. Penny Wong, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Mary Doyle MP, Member for Aston with the Chinese community.
- Eastern Transport Coalition Meeting
- KnoxFest – noted it was a fabulous event and the prosperity toss was a highlight
- Knox Multicultural Affairs Committee (KMAC) interviews
- International Women’s Day event at Council
- Environment Advisory Committee with Councillor Kennett
- Victorian Local Government Grants Commission – noted the Commission explained their grants methodology
- Eastern Affordable Housing Association Meeting
- The Basin Music Festival – noted the event is a great support for local businesses
- Council’s budget workshop
- Visit with Knox Police where Cr Kennett, Cr Baker and I were brought up to speed on local crime issues: Youth, Family Violence and theft
- Your Library Planning Day – for the future of Your Library

Councillor Lockwood also:

- Shared some personal reflections on the role of councillors and his views that a councillor's role is to question, demand, challenge, learn, and offer insights rather than passively accept information; that councillors should apply themselves fully to their term; and that a diverse councillor group brings different perspectives and aspirations, which strengthens ideas.

5.1.3 Councillor Williams

Councillor Williams reported attending the following meetings:

- Outer East Foodshare Distribution Centre
- Knox Athletics Track Opening
- Wantirna Lions Club with Councillor Duncan – noted they came up with some fantastic ideas on how they can work with Council in supporting our local community
- Knox City Cricket Club presentation at Lewis Park - to meet the ladies' cup-winning team, who received a Council Minor Grant, and present awards to senior club members.
- Clean up Australia Day, run by the First Friends of Dandenong Creek
- Guy Turner reserve - where facility and maintenance issues were discussed
- KnoxFest
- The Basin Music Festival

Councillor Williams also:

- Acknowledged he unfortunately missed an event at the Shree Swaminarayan temple due to the fires in Montrose. He will go there to visit them soon.
- Acknowledged the Knox CFA brigades for their work in fighting the Montrose fires.
- Acknowledged John Franklin from the Scouts and welcomed him to the chamber.

5.1.4 Councillor Duncan

Councillor Duncan reported attending the following meetings:

- Youth Advisory Committee bus tour
- Recreation and Leisure Advisory Committee induction
- CEO Performance Committee
- International Women's Day event
- Wantirna Junior Football Club – noted it's one of the largest clubs in Knox.
- Knox Athletics redevelopment

Councillor Duncan also:

- Lions Club of Wantirna – noted the work they do with the Men's Shed including a partnership with the Red Nose Foundation to support families of stillborn babies.
- Noted he attempted to attend the Basin Music Festival, however, could not find parking.
- Met with residents about derelict properties and planning matters that are coming up to Council.

5.1.5 Councillor Considine

Councillor Considine reported attending the following meetings:

- KnoxFest – noted the fun and engaging atmosphere

- RAFT Anglican Church with Deputy Mayor Atwell for World Day of Prayer
- Holi Festival in Boronia
- Knox Park Athletics Center redevelopment
- Outer East Foodshare – noted it was inspiring to see the dedication of the volunteers
- Knox Churches Soccer Club
- Rowville Men's Shed

Councillor Considine also:

- Expressed deep gratitude for the support her and her daughters have received during this difficult time.

5.1.6 Councillor Atwell

Councillor Atwell reported attending the following meetings:

- Rowville Men's shed
- Eastern Region Group of Council – noted there are five Councils that participate in the ERG, representing 15% of the greater Melbourne population.
- Outer East Foodshare
- Knox Community Safety Committee – noted they discussed the latest crime statistics with Victoria Police and Council officers and that the Committee is looking at local government policy
- Knox Park Athletics Center redevelopment
- RAFT Anglican Church with Councillor Considine for World Day of Prayer
- Swinburne University Seniors Forum with Councillor Lockwood

Councillor Atwell also:

- Highlighted that there have been at least two serious collisions this year, and many near misses, relating to the Avalon Road and Turramurra Drive intersection. Councillor Atwell liaised with the Director Infrastructure to review the intersection and provide feedback to VicRoads/ Department of Transport and Planning
- Spoke to representatives of the Knox Repair Café while at the Open day for the Rowville Men's shed who have diverted over 900kg away from landfill
- Tomorrow is Coffee with a Cop is at Stud Park at 10am tomorrow.
- Announced that there was an election commitment made by candidate for Aston, Manny Cicchiello, towards the cost of facilities upgrade at the Knox Historical Society.

5.1.7 Councillor Kennett

Councillor Kennett reported attending the following meetings:

- Four Committee meetings and the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action – noted it is a collaboration of Councils in Melbourne's east targeting net zero
- Boronia Police – note they discussed local crime issues and collaboration opportunities
- Outer East Foodshare
- The Basin Music Festival – and acknowledged Council's provision of 3 phase power to pavilion allowing event to run without a generator for the first time.
- Rowville Men's Shed

Councillor Kennett also:

- Acknowledged the work of Maureen, the Manager of the Basin Community House, and wished her all the best for the future.
- Highlighted the closure of Ben's Place and advised that if support is needed, to contact Council.
- Highlighted residents' concerns about traffic in Forest Road and thanked Council staff and the Department of Transport and Planning for their work on a solution.
- Delivered a Local Government session at the Basin Primary School.

5.1.8 Councillor Baker

Councillor Baker reported attending the following meetings:

- Ferntree Gully Cricket Club – note they met regarding asbestos closures
- Your Library Board Planning Day
- The Knox Festival 2025
- A briefing about Shared Path Bridge near Wally Tew Reserve
- Budget workshop
- Boronia Police – note they discussed local crime issues and collaboration opportunities
- The Basin Music Festival

5.1.9 Councillor Cooper

Councillor Cooper reported attending the following meetings:

- Knox Fest
- Radio Eastern FM – talked about Koolunga Tree removal plan, bin lid changes as part of State Government standardised waste education and transition and the Domestic Animal Management Plan.
- International Women's Day event
- Audit and Risk Committee
- Knox Park Athletics Center upgrade – noted that it was delivered in partnership with the State Government

Councillor Cooper also:

- Acknowledged the closure of the expressions of interest for the panel focused on the management of local assets.
- Encouraged the community to provide their feedback on the Domestic Animal Management Plan. Council is seeking feedback from pet owners and the broader community until 13 April 2025.
- Highlighted Council has updated a list of food providers on the website.

6 Planning Matters

6.1 Report of Planning Applications Decided Under Delegation 1 February 2025 to 28 February 2025

SUMMARY

Details of planning applications considered under delegation are referred for information. It is recommended that the items be noted.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the planning applications decided under delegation from 1 February 2025 to 28 February 2025 as set out in the officers' report.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Baker
SECONDED: Councillor Williams

That Council note the planning applications decided under delegation from 1 February 2025 to 28 February 2025 as set out in the officers' report.

CARRIED

6.2 18 Carnarvon Avenue, The Basin

SUMMARY

This report considers Planning Application P/2025/6062 for the removal of one (1) *Corymbia citriodora* (Lemon Scented Gum) at 18 Carnarvon Avenue, The Basin

RECOMMENDATION

That Council issue a Notice of Refusal for the removal of one (1) *Corymbia citriodora* at 18 Carnarvon Avenue, The Basin on the following grounds:

1. The removal of the *Corymbia citriodora* (Lemon Scented Gum) is not consistent with the objectives of Schedule 2 of the Significant Landscape Overlay in relation to the removal of vegetation.
2. The removal of the *Corymbia citriodora* (Lemon Scented Gum) fails to satisfy the relevant Municipal Planning Strategies, particularly Clause 02.03-2 (Environmental and Landscape Values) and Clause 02.03-4 (Built Environment and Heritage) of the Knox Planning Scheme.
3. The removal of the *Corymbia citriodora* (Lemon Scented Gum) fails to satisfy the relevant Planning Policy Framework strategies and objectives, particularly Clause 12 (Environmental and Landscape Values) of the Knox Planning Scheme.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Kennett

SECONDED: Councillor Atwell

That Council issue a Planning Permit for application P/2025/6062 for the removal of one (1) *Corymbia citriodora* (Lemon Scented Gum) at 18 Carnarvon Avenue, The Basin, subject to the following conditions:

1. Within 28 days of removing the one (1) *Corymbia citriodora* (Lemon-Scented Gum), the removed tree must be replaced with at least one (1) medium native canopy tree chosen from Plant List 2 of Council's '*Landscape Plan Guidelines*' to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority. The planting must be maintained or replaced as necessary to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority. The planting must not be topped or lopped in accordance with *Australian Standard AS-4373-2007 Pruning of Amenity Trees*.
2. Notification of the completed replacement planting(s) must be made to Council's Arborist with evidential images identifying each replacement planting(s) inclusive of Genus, species & location within seven (7) days of planting completion.
3. Once the removal of the one (1) *Corymbia citriodora* (Lemon-Scented Gum) has started it must be continued and completed to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.
4. Any vegetation removal must be in accordance with the endorsed plans.
5. Within five (5) days of removing the one (1) *Corymbia citriodora* (Lemon-Scented Gum), the applicant/property owner shall contact the Responsible Authority Landscape Inspection Officer on 9298 8125 to advise of the completed removal of the tree.

6. A copy of this permit and the endorsed plan must be kept on-site by the owner of the land, the occupier of the land or any person involved with removing the one (1) *Corymbia citriodora* (Lemon-Scented Gum) during the tree removal works. These documents must be able to be produced immediately when requested by an Authorised Officer inspecting the site as a representative of Knox City Council.
7. This permit will expire if the permitted removal of the one (1) *Corymbia citriodora* (Lemon-Scented Gum) is not commenced and completed within one (1) year from the date of this permit.

Pursuant to Section 69 of the *Planning & Environment Act 1987*, the Responsible Authority may extend:

- The commencement date referred to if a request is made in writing before the permit expires or within six (6) months afterwards.
- The completion date referred to if a request is made in writing within 12 months after the permit expires and the development started lawfully before the permit expired.

Note:

Unless otherwise permitted by the Knox Planning Scheme, no vegetation, other than that shown on the endorsed plan shall be removed/pruned without the permission of the Responsible Authority.

CARRIED

A division was called by Councillor Atwell

For the motion: Councillor Kennett, Councillor Atwell, Councillor Considine, Councillor Duncan, Councillor Lockwood, Councillor Pearce

Against the motion: Councillor Baker, Councillor Cooper, Councillor Williams

Abstention: Nil

CARRIED 6:3

PROCEDURAL MOTION

ADJOURNMENT

MOVER: **Councillor Atwell**

SECONDER: **Councillor Duncan**

That Council adjourn the meeting for 10 minutes.

CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 8.30pm and resumed at 8.40pm with all Councillors present.

7 Public Question Time

Question Time commenced at 8.43 p.m.

The following questions were raised with Council:

7.1.1 Question One - Darren Wallace

Is Council concerned about the presence of trees along Mountain Hwy, which have had significant root disturbance from construction activities associated with State Government's Albert Ave /Colchester Rd roadworks in Boronia, and if so, what actions will Council take to minimise risk to road users, from foreseeable tree collapse?

The Director Infrastructure, Grant Thorne responded:

- Prior to the commencement of these works, Council collaborated extensively with the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) to assess which trees were viable for retention as part of the project. As part of this process, hydro excavation works were conducted to identify structural tree roots within the work zone, ensuring that potential impacts on tree health were carefully evaluated. This assessment considered both roots within the excavation area and those located at greater depths.
- Where necessary, Tree Protection Zones (TPZs) have been established to safeguard retained trees and mitigate any risk posed by construction activities. To date, there has been no recorded damage to structural tree roots as a result of these works (including the trees identified). Council remains committed to ensuring that tree health is preserved and continues to work closely with DTP to monitor ongoing construction and assess any potential risks to trees.

7.1.2 Question Two - Darren Wallace

Could Council please make contact with the Boronia K -12 school, and offer support and guidance to control local laws listed environmental weeds with in the schools identified Site of Biological Significance?

The Director Infrastructure, Grant Thorne responded:

- Council has previously worked with the Boronia K-12 school regarding environmental weed management at this site. Previously, Dr. Graeme Lorimer (author of the Councils sites of biological significance documentation) has provided valuable insights through education sessions with students and teachers, highlighting the importance of this site and managing weeds within it.
- In his forthcoming update to the Sites of Biological Significance, Dr Lorimer has identified the top five environmental weed species to be targeted for management within this site. Council will provide a copy of this document to the school upon its finalisation in the next fortnight to support informed weed control efforts. Additionally, Dr. Lorimer has generously offered to provide pro bono sessions on site management for interested teachers and students. Council encourages the school to engage with Dr. Lorimer to benefit from his expertise and is available to offer further support and guidance where needed.

7.1.3 Question Three - Robert Mason

Can Council provide and report to the public of the annual financial results for the past four years for each of its Childcare Service Centre's (Long Day Care) to confirm that it is delivering services in a competitively neutral manner, and that rating revenue is not used to subsidise the delivery of Childcare services that are primarily delivered by private enterprise.

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- Under the Victorian Competitive Neutrality Policy, councils should uphold competitive neutrality when providing services that compete with private enterprises. This ensures that Council's pricing and financial practices do not unfairly disadvantage private providers.
- We review the status of our Childcare Service Centres, our two Long Day Care centres, each year and we confirm Council remains compliant with the Victorian Competitive Neutrality Policy. Council report on its Early Years services within its budget and annual report each year and we would be happy to meet with you to understand in more detail the information you are seeking.

7.1.4 Question Four - Robert Mason

In accordance with Council's Public Transparency Policy, how much does council receive from open space contributions as a result of town planning permit applications, as a total each year per ward?

The Director City Liveability, Matt Kelleher responded:

- For the most recent 2023/24 financial year, Council received \$5,916,388 in Open Space Contributions. This amount is publicly available and shown in Council's Annual Report as a transfer into the Open Space Reserve.
- I note the question refers to previous precedence rulings regarding obligations Council has to maintain records of how Open Space funds are utilised and expended in each Ward or Suburb. Having worked in Local Government for over 20 years, I am not aware of the specific precedents or rulings being referred to in the question. In particular, I am unaware of any precedents or rulings about reporting funds spent on open space by Ward.
- The Subdivision Act 1988 specifies what Open Space Contributions can be used for which is to acquire land for additional open space or to improve open space. There is no specific nexus specified for how funds are spent across the municipality, and will generally be in response to open space gaps, needs or development pressures. Ward boundaries rarely have any relevance to such matters.
- The collection of open space contributions by Ward has no current purpose to Council and therefore the information is not collected in that manner. On that basis, we are unable to provide the data in the manner requested as it is not coded by Ward as it is not relevant to Council's business processes and it would be administratively onerous to do so.
- Please refer to Council's previous Annual Reports publicly accessible and available on its website regarding previous financial year contribution amounts you may have an interest in.

7.1.5 Question Five - Jon Franklin

Can the council consider a report comparing facilities funding, per organisation, of youth based activities including sporting and non-sporting youth development groups to assist with a more equitable funding model for the next budget?

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- Council recognises the importance of fair and equitable funding for both sporting and non-sporting groups. We provide funding for Knox Youth Services and programs, while also supporting various groups, that assist young people through our grant programs.
- Officers also work with external stakeholders supporting there provision of services to young people. Councillors are provided information on the provision of services and facilities which helps inform their decision making.

Question Time Concluded at 9.01 p.m.

8 Officer Reports

8.2 Response to Notice of Motion No.155 - Stamford Park Masterplan

SUMMARY

At its Ordinary Meeting of Council on 26 August 2024, Council endorsed Notice of Motion No. 155 – Stamford Park Masterplan. The Notice of Motion requested a report be presented in relation to the implementation of the Stamford Park Masterplan by the March 2025 Council meeting. This report responds to that Notice of Motion.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Receives and notes this report in response to the 26 August 2024 Council Meeting Notice of Motion No. 155 relating to the Stamford Park Masterplan.
2. Write to Dr Nerina Di Lorenzo, Managing Director of Melbourne Water, seeking an update on their investigations and what actions are being taken to address flooding issues within the Corhanwarrabul floodplain.
3. Seek clarification from Melbourne Water on the magnitude of the storm events which occurred in January and July 2024 in the vicinity of the Waterlea and Bankside estates, specifically the equivalent AEP event.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Atwell

SECONDED: Councillor Baker

That Council:

1. Receives and notes this report in response to the 26 August 2024 Council Meeting Notice of Motion No. 155 relating to the Stamford Park Masterplan;
2. Write to Dr Nerina Di Lorenzo, Managing Director of Melbourne Water, seeking an update on their investigations and what actions are being taken to address flooding issues within the Corhanwarrabul floodplain;
3. Seek clarification from Melbourne Water on the magnitude of the storm events which occurred in January and July 2024 in the vicinity of the Waterlea and Bankside estates, specifically the equivalent AEP event; and
4. Receives a report at a future Council meeting detailing Melbourne Water's response to recommendations 2 and 3, including any findings from their investigations and proposed actions.

CARRIED

8.3 Response to Notice of Motion 163 – Eastern Regional Group and Greater South East Melbourne

SUMMARY

Knox Council is a member of a number of regional groupings that comprise multiple Councils coming together in a formal way to work together and advocate for particular outcomes. These groupings include the Eastern Region Group of Councils (ERG) and Greater South East Melbourne (GSEM).

This report provides a summary of achievements of the ERG and GSEM and the cost of membership of both organisations, as requested by Council in Notice of Motion 163 considered at the 28 January 2025 Council meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to receive and note this report on the comparative achievements of the Eastern Region Group and Greater South East Melbourne and the cost of membership of both organisations.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Lockwood

SECONDED: Councillor Pearce

That Council resolve:

- **To receive and note this report on the comparative achievements of the Eastern Region Group and Greater South East Melbourne and the cost of membership of both organisations.**
- **To receive a report to the Council meeting in July 2025 (unless deferred to a later date in consultation with the Mayor) enabling Council to re-evaluate its membership of ERG.**

CARRIED

8.4 Response to Notice of Motion 164 - Eastern Transport Coalition

SUMMARY

Knox Council is a member of a number of regional groupings that comprise multiple Councils coming together in a formal way to advocate for particular outcomes. These groupings include the Eastern Transport Coalition (ETC), which currently comprises seven Councils – Greater Dandenong, Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges.

The ETC advocates for accessible, integrated and environmentally sustainable transport in the eastern region of Melbourne to improve liveability and reduce car dependence and vehicle emissions.

This report provides a summary of the achievements of the ETC over the last 3-5 years, as requested by Council in Notice of Motion 164 considered at the 28 January 2025 Council meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to receive and note this report.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Lockwood

SECONDED: Councillor Pearce

That Council resolve to receive and note this report.

CARRIED

8.5 Response to Notice of Motion 165 - Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance Achievements

SUMMARY

Knox City Council has a long history of research, advocacy, and strategic development in relation to social and affordable housing. It is a founding member of the Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA) which currently comprises six Councils in the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR) of Melbourne: Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Whitehorse, and Yarra Ranges.

The formal Alliance was established in 2009 in response to the growing need for more social and affordable housing in the region and the lack of action by State and Federal Governments.

EAHA's framework consists of an Executive Committee that features a Councillor and a Manager from each Council, alongside a Steering Committee comprising of Managers and specialist Officers from each Council. Specific projects may require the formation of working groups.

In response to Notice of Motion 165 at the Meeting of Council held on 28 January 2025, this report provides a summary of highlights and achievements from EAHA over the past 3-5 years.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to receive and note this report.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Lockwood

SECONDED: Councillor Pearce

That Council resolve to receive and note this report.

CARRIED

8.6 Response to Notice of Motion 169 - Council Support for the Knox Business Awards Run by the Rotary Club of Rowville and Lysterfield

SUMMARY

This report has been prepared in response to Notice of Motion 169 adopted by Council at its meeting of 24 February 2025 (Attachment 1) which requested:

1. That a high level report be presented to Council at the March 2025 Meeting of Council outlining:
2. What Council is doing to assist with the Knox Business Awards being organised by the Rotary Club of Rowville and Lysterfield; and
3. The potential opportunities for how these awards can be widened to the whole of Knox and include all kinds of businesses.

The Knox Business Awards were re-established in 2024 by the Rotary Club of Rowville – Lysterfield and Knox Business Network to celebrate the achievement and strengths of the local business community. The Knox Business Network is a newly formed network of local businesses wishing to connect and network.

Given existing resources and priorities of Council's Economic Development team, officers recommend support be provided to the Knox Business Awards through ongoing promotional support of the Awards through the Economic Development service's existing digital communications channels as outlined in Attachment 2.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Endorses the Knox Business Awards for the 2025 program being delivered by the Rowville – Lysterfield Rotary Club and Knox Business Network as a form of Council's support of the Awards.
2. Continues to support the Knox Business Awards through its Economic Development service and communication channels as outlined in Attachment 2.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Pearce

SECONDED: Councillor Atwell

That Council:

1. **Endorses the Knox Business Awards for the 2025 program being delivered by the Rowville – Lysterfield Rotary Club and Knox Business Network as a form of Council's support of the Awards.**
2. **Continues to support the Knox Business Awards through its Economic Development service and communication channels as outlined in Attachment 2.**

CARRIED

9 Supplementary Items

Nil.

10 Notices Of Motion

10.1 Notice of Motion No. 172 - Connecting Council with the Knox Community (Reports by Councillors)

The following notice of motion was lodged by Councillor Atwell in accordance with Council's Governance Rules:

I hereby give notice that it is my intention to move the following motion at the Council Meeting on 24 March 2025:

That Council resolve:

1. To note that the order of business for monthly Council Meetings makes provision for *Reports by Councillors*, which ordinarily include a summary of attended events and engagements, community meetings, committee meetings, and the particulars of Ward-specific and Council-wide issues of note.
2. To note that *Reports by Councillors* form part of Council meetings (including livestreaming and recordings) and are summarised in the Minutes of Council Meetings published on the Agendas and Minutes page of Council's website.
3. To receive a report to a Council meeting no later than May 2025 (unless deferred to a later date in consultation with the Mayor) including:
 - a) Amendments or alternatives to current arrangements for "Reports by Councillors" to make the information provided in these reports more dynamic and accessible to the Knox community
 - b) An assessment of how these amendments or alternatives could enhance transparency and improve access to information about the activities, engagements and issues of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors
 - c) An assessment of privacy and safety considerations arising from those options and how they might be addressed

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Atwell

SECONDED: Councillor Kennett

That Council resolve:

1. To note that the order of business for monthly Council Meetings makes provision for *Reports by Councillors*, which ordinarily include a summary of attended events and engagements, community meetings, committee meetings, and the particulars of Ward-specific and Council-wide issues of note.
2. To note that *Reports by Councillors* form part of Council meetings (including livestreaming and recordings) and are summarised in the Minutes of Council Meetings published on the Agendas and Minutes page of Council's website.

- 3. To receive a report to a Council meeting no later than May 2025 (unless deferred to a later date in consultation with the Mayor) including:**
- a) Amendments or alternatives to current arrangements for “Reports by Councillors” to make the information provided in these reports more dynamic and accessible to the Knox community**
 - b) An assessment of how these amendments or alternatives could enhance transparency and improve access to information about the activities, engagements and issues of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors**
 - c) An assessment of privacy and safety considerations arising from those options and how they might be addressed**

CARRIED

PROCEDURAL MOTION

ADJOURNMENT

MOVER: Councillor Cooper
SECONDER: Councillor Baker

That Council adjourn the meeting for 5 minutes.

CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 9.44 pm and resumed at 9.50 pm with all Councillors present except Councillor Lockwood.

10.2 Notice of Motion No. 173 - Connecting Council with the Knox Community (Ward Meetings)

The following notice of motion was lodged by Councillor Atwell in accordance with Council's Governance Rules:

I hereby give notice that it is my intention to move the following motion at the Council Meeting on 24 March 2025:

That Council resolve:

1. To recognise the importance of convening 'meet your councillor' style Ward Meetings as collaborative round-table discussions where attendees can raise issues and initiatives that are important to them and directly with local Councillors and senior Council staff; and
2. To include in the imminent review of the Councillor Expenses and Support Policy:
 - a) Consideration of the existing provisions regarding Ward Meetings and whether they remain fit for purpose and align with expectations regarding engagement and representation with the Knox community;
 - b) Options to refresh and renew the format and frequency of Ward Meetings and any relevant cost considerations; and
 - c) A year-by-year breakdown of Ward Meetings held between 2016 and 2024

Councillor Lockwood returned to the meeting at 9.54pm before the vote on item 10.2

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Atwell
SECONDED: Councillor Williams

That Council resolve:

1. To recognise the importance of convening 'meet your councillor' style Ward Meetings as collaborative round-table discussions where attendees can raise issues and initiatives that are important to them and talk directly with local Councillors and senior Council staff; and
2. To include in the imminent review of the Councillor Expenses and Support Policy:
 - a) Consideration of the existing provisions regarding Ward Meetings and whether they remain fit for purpose and align with expectations regarding engagement and representation with the Knox community;
 - b) Options to refresh and renew the format and frequency of Ward Meetings and any relevant cost considerations; and
 - c) A year-by-year breakdown of Ward Meetings held between 2016 and 2024

CARRIED

10.3 Notice of Motion No. 174 - Budget Parameters

The following notice of motion was lodged by Lockwood in accordance with Council's Governance Rules:

I hereby give notice that it is my intention to move the following motion at the Council Meeting on 24 March 2025:

That Council resolve:

1. To note the importance of sound financial practice and being both effective and efficient in undertaking its role;
2. To recognise the need to identify opportunities within the current and future budget processes to lower costs and /or increase non-rate revenue;
3. To investigate ways in which further non-rate income could be introduced to Council's budget as part of the 2026/27 Budget process; and
4. That the requirement to reduce costs by \$576,000 in the 2026-27 year in the draft budget currently in development be replaced with a budget parameter that expenditure for 2026-27, be reduced in real terms by 1.2%, excluding infrastructure expenditure, waste charge-related costs, and staff costs covered by the Knox Enterprise Agreement, resulting in an ongoing reduction target of approximately \$793,000.

MOTION

MOVED: Councillor Lockwood

SECONDED: Councillor Pearce

That Council resolve:

1. To note the importance of sound financial practice and being both effective and efficient in undertaking its role;
2. To recognise the need to identify opportunities within the current and future budget processes to lower costs and /or increase non-rate revenue;
3. To investigate ways in which further non-rate income could be introduced to Council's budget as part of the 2026/27 Budget process; and
4. That the requirement to reduce costs by \$576,000 in the 2026-27 year in the draft budget currently in development be replaced with a budget parameter that expenditure for 2026-27, be reduced in real terms by 1.2%, excluding infrastructure expenditure, waste charge-related costs, and staff costs covered by the Knox Enterprise Agreement, resulting in an ongoing reduction target of approximately \$793,000.

LOST

A division was called by Councillor Lockwood

For the motion: Councillor Lockwood, Councillor Pearce, Councillor Williams, Councillor Kennett

Against the motion: Councillor Baker, Councillor Atwell, Councillor Considine, Councillor Cooper, Councillor Duncan

Abstention: Nil

LOST 4:5

10.4 Notice of Motion 176 - Service Planning Information

The following notice of motion was lodged by Councillor Lockwood in accordance with Council's Governance Rules:

I hereby give notice that it is my intention to move the following motion at the Council Meeting on 24 March 2025:

That Council resolve to receive a report to a Council meeting no later than June 2025 (unless deferred to a later date in consultation with the Mayor) including:

- a. Details of actions taken or not taken in all Service Reviews produced over the past 3 years; and
- b. For any Service Reviews not acted upon that an explanation be provided along with a schedule for implementation.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Lockwood

SECONDED: Councillor Pearce

That Council resolve to receive a report to a Council meeting no later than June 2025 (unless deferred to a later date in consultation with the Mayor) including:

- a. Details of actions taken or not taken in all Service Reviews produced over the past 3 years; and**
- b. For any Service Reviews not acted upon that an explanation be provided along with a schedule for implementation.**

CARRIED

10.5 Notice of Motion No. 177 - Christmas Decorations

The following notice of motion was lodged by Councillor Williams in accordance with Council's Governance Rules:

I hereby give notice that it is my intention to move the following motion at the Council Meeting on 24 March 2025:

That Council, as part of recognising the importance of enhancing civic pride and the role our local retail traders play in Knox, resolve to receive a report by July 2025 (or a later date in consultation with the Mayor if further time is required) that provides options for how Christmas could be celebrated within our local retail activity centres, with the following parameters:

- Options are to be accommodated within a maximum potential annual budget of \$50,000 and could include opportunities for a window display program to engage with our local retail traders that leverages the Experience Knox platform and simple decorations such as bin wraps that provide for visual impact at a reasonable cost; and
- Options are to recognise available resource capacity and seek to achieve value for money.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Williams

SECONDED: Councillor Pearce

That Council, as part of recognising the importance of enhancing civic pride and the role our local retail traders play in Knox, resolve to receive a report by July 2025 (or a later date in consultation with the Mayor if further time is required) that provides options for how Christmas could be celebrated within our local retail activity centres, with the following parameters:

- Options are to be accommodated within a maximum potential annual budget of \$50,000 and could include opportunities for a window display program to engage with our local retail traders that leverages the Experience Knox platform and simple decorations such as bin wraps that provide for visual impact at a reasonable cost; and
- Options are to recognise available resource capacity and seek to achieve value for money.

CARRIED

PROCEDURAL MOTION

EXTEND THE MEETING

MOVED: Councillor Atwell

SECONDED: Councillor Pearce

That Council resolve to extend the Council meeting to 11 p.m.

CARRIED

10.6 Notice of Motion No. 178 - Wellington Road Traffic Measures

The following notice of motion was lodged by Councillor Pearce in accordance with Council's Governance Rules:

I hereby give notice that it is my intention to move the following motion at the Council Meeting on 24 March 2025:

That Council resolve to write to the Department of Transport and Planning and VicRoads requesting:

- 1) A speed limit reduction to 60km/h for heavy vehicles on Wellington Road between Napoleon and Stud Roads, Rowville (noting this will require a speed limit reduction for all vehicles); and
- 2) Installation of warning lights on Wellington Road Rowville to signal to west -bound vehicles they need to prepare to stop at the traffic lights at the intersection of Wellington Road and Braeburn Pde.

MOTION

MOVED: Councillor Pearce

SECONDED: Councillor Williams

That Council resolve to write to the Department of Transport and Planning and VicRoads requesting:

- 1) A speed limit reduction to 60km/h for heavy vehicles on Wellington Road between Napoleon and Stud Roads, Rowville (noting this will require a speed limit reduction for all vehicles); and any combination of the following:
- 2) Installation of warning lights on Wellington Road Rowville to signal to west -bound vehicles they need to prepare to stop at the traffic lights at the intersection of Wellington Road and Braeburn Pde.
- 3) Installation of a speed and redlight camera at the intersection of Wellington Road and Braeburn Pde.

Councillor Considine retired from the meeting at 10.59 pm, during the discussion and before the vote on Notice of Motion No. 178 - Wellington Road Traffic Measures.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

EXTEND THE MEETING

MOVED: Councillor Atwell

SECONDED: Councillor Pearce

That Council resolve to extend the Council meeting to 11.30p.m.

CARRIED

CARRIED

10.7 Notice of Motion No 179 - Street Trees in Bristol Place

The following notice of motion was lodged by Councillor Pearce in accordance with Council's Governance Rules:

I hereby give notice that it is my intention to move the following motion at the Council Meeting on 24 March 2025:

That Council resolve to receive a report to a Council meeting no later than May 2025 (unless deferred to a later date in consultation with the Mayor) regarding street trees in Bristol Place Rowville, including:

1. An outline of how Council assesses street trees for potential removal;
2. An outline of reasons why any street trees in Bristol Place have been removed over the past 15 years;
3. Details of the last inspection date for each of the remaining trees in Bristol Place and an indication of whether there are any current plans for further street tree removals in the near future; and
4. An outline of specific tree complaints received from residents concerning street trees in Bristol Place over the past 10 years.

MOTION

MOVED: Councillor Pearce

SECONDED: Councillor Lockwood

That Council resolve to receive a report to a Council meeting no later than May 2025 (unless deferred to a later date in consultation with the Mayor) regarding street trees in Bristol Place Rowville, including:

- 1. An outline of how Council assesses street trees for potential removal;**
- 2. An outline of reasons why any street trees in Bristol Place have been removed over the past 15 years;**
- 3. Details of the last inspection date for each of the remaining trees in Bristol Place and an indication of whether there are any current plans for further street tree removals in the near future; and**
- 4. An outline of specific tree complaints received from residents concerning street trees in Bristol Place over the past 10 years.**

CARRIED

11 Urgent Business

Nil.

12 Questions Through the Chair

Councillor Pearce asked the following question through the Chair:

Have the funds used to pay the Council's share of fencing costs been expended and if so, what is the process in which residents can receive payment for fencing costs? Is there a limit on material costs for a fence which Council will only pay up to?

The Director Infrastructure, Grant Thorne responded:

- There are three situations regarding fences of which do and don't involve Council.
 1. Where Council does not contribute to the costs of the fence. This applies to your front fence or where you might have a boundary to a private property, your neighbour. Council is not contributing to the cost of any of those fences.
 2. Where your neighbour is Council, but that land is not a public park or a public reserve. It might be that you're next to a maternal and child health center or the library or a facility like that which is not a public reserve. Council pays, in accordance with the Fences Act, half the cost of a standard fence. Council does have a budget for those types of fences, but we continue to pay them when we reach the budget, because we are required to pay the shared cost of the fence under legislation.
 3. Where Council is the neighbour and that Council land is a public park or public reserve. Under the Fences Act 1968, and the Fences Amended Act 2014, owners of the adjoining land are required to contribute equal portions of fencing for a standard fence. However, it's important to note that an owner, within the Act, does not include a municipal council where that land is a public park or a public reserve.
- The legislation does not require Council to contribute to the shared cost of a fence where that private property abuts a public park or public reserve. However, Council does currently contribute to those fences, and we contribute up to 50% of the cost at a maximum rate of \$110 per meter for the fence, for a standard 1.6 meter high paling fence. We do not contribute to additional features such as higher fences, gates, trellises. They must be paid for by the owner. Funding for this category of fencing is limited within the budget to \$51,600. When that money is exhausted, we stop contributing to those fences as the legislation doesn't require Council to contribute. That is the limit set by Council. Once we have reached that limit, we advise applicants they can either continue on and pay 100% of the cost of the fence themselves or they can reapply the following financial year. The process for application for these types of fences requires the property owner to submit one quote from a registered provider, and once it is approved and the fence is built and inspected, Council will reimburse the cost upon receiving proof that the amount has been paid. People can submit their requests online or by post. All the details are available on Council's website.

13 Confidential Items

Nil.

MEETING CLOSED AT 11:10pm

Minutes of Meeting confirmed at the
Meeting of Council
held on Monday, 28 April 2025

.....
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 24 March 2025 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 Leaves Of Absence

2 Declarations Of Conflict Of Interest

3 Confirmation Of Minutes

Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting of Council held on Monday 24 February 2025.

4 Presentations, Petitions And Memorials

5 Reports By Councillors

6 Planning Matters

6.1 Report of Planning Applications Decided Under Delegation 1 February 2025 to 28 February 2025

Final Report Destination: Council
Paper Type: For Noting
Author: Manager City Planning & Building, Paul Dickie
Manager: Manager City Planning & Building, Paul Dickie
Executive: Director City Liveability, Matt Kelleher

SUMMARY

Details of planning applications considered under delegation are referred for information. It is recommended that the items be noted.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the planning applications decided under delegation from 1 February 2025 to 28 February 2025 as set out in the officers' report.

1. REPORT

Details of planning applications decided under delegation from 1 February 2025 to 28 February 2025 are attached. The applications are summarised as follows:

Application Type	No.
Building & Works: Residential	4
Other	4
Subdivision	6
Units	5
Tree Removal / Pruning	6
Single Dwelling	5
Variation of the Restrictive Covenant	1
TOTAL	31

2. CONFIDENTIALITY

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

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

Knox City Council

Report of Planning Applications Decided Under Delegation

1 February 2025 and 28 February 2025

Ward	No/ Type	Address	Description	Decision
Baird	2025/9010	1/27 Springfield Road BORONIA VIC 3155	Buildings and works (construction of a single storey dwelling)	26/02/2025 Approved
Baird	2025/9011	2/27 Springfield Road, BORONIA VIC 3155	Buildings and Works (construction of a single storey dwelling)	26/02/2025 Approved
Baird	2024/6408	46 Loretto Avenue FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	The construction of two (2) double storey dwellings on the land	26/02/2025 Approved
Baird	2024/6361	8 Grevillea Avenue BORONIA VIC 3155	The construction of two (2) double storey dwellings and one (1) single storey dwelling	7/02/2025 Approved
Chandler	2025/9007	1 Gwyn Crescent BORONIA VIC 3155	Removal of one (1) Liquidambar styraciflua (Sweetgum)	24/02/2025 Approved
Chandler	2024/6534	27 Underwood Road BORONIA VIC 3155	Buildings and Works (construction of a single storey dwelling)	25/02/2025 Approved
Chandler	2025/9000	38 Southey Road BORONIA VIC 3155	Buildings and works (Replacement of existing decking and pool)	13/02/2025 Approved
Chandler	2025/6010	4 Hayles Street BORONIA VIC 3155	Removal of one Quercus robur (English Oak) and one Liquidambar styraciflua (Sweetgum)	26/02/2025 Approved
Chandler	2024/6551	3 Basin Court THE BASIN VIC 3154	Removal of vegetation	5/02/2025 Approved
Chandler	2025/6005	3 Beech Court BORONIA VIC 3155	Removal of one (1) Pittosporum eugenoides 'Variegatum' (Variegated Pittosporum)	21/02/2025 Approved
Chandler	2024/6553	59B Underwood Road BORONIA VIC 3155	Removal of one (1) Cedrus deodara (Himalayan Cedar)	17/02/2025 Refused
Collier	2025/9006	11 Linsley Way WANTIRNA VIC 3152	Two lot subdivision (approved development site)	17/02/2025 Approved
Dinsdale	2025/6051	609 Burwood Highway KNOXFIELD VIC 3180	Buildings and works to install two portable buildings on the land	18/02/2025 Approved
Dinsdale	2024/6219	25 Allanfield Crescent WANTIRNA SOUTH VIC 3152	Construction of a double storey dwelling to the rear of existing dwelling	7/02/2025 Approved

Ward	No/ Type	Address	Description	Decision
Dinsdale	2024/9008	7 Wallace Avenue, BAYSWATER VIC 3153	Two lot subdivision (approved development site)	27/02/2025 Approved
Dinsdale	2024/6475	2 Wendy Court BAYSWATER VIC 3153	Construction of a double storey dwelling to the rear of an existing dwelling	14/02/2025 Notice of Decision
Dobson	2025/6016	20 Rollings Road UPPER FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	Removal of two (2) Eucalyptus cypellocarpa (Mountain Grey Gum)	25/02/2025 Approved
Dobson	2024/6391	28 Hunter Street FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	The construction of a shed, front fence and tree removal	13/02/2025 Approved
Dobson	2024/6411	29 Grandview Crescent UPPER FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	Buildings and works (extension to existing dwelling) and removal of vegetation	28/02/2025 Approved
Dobson	2024/6522	28 Dorothy Grove FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	Construction of a dwelling and vegetation removal	7/02/2025 Approved
Dobson	2024/6473	74 Taldra Drive FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	Variation of the Restrictive Covenant T334616W	7/02/2025 Approved
Dobson	2024/6437	28 Sherwood Way, LYSTERFIELD VIC 3156	Construction of one (1) dwelling on the land, including construction outside of the building envelope	28/02/2025 Approved
Friberg	2024/6026	175 Windermere Drive FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	Construction of two double storey dwellings on a lot	14/02/2025 Notice of Decision
Friberg	2023/6208	32 Hayward Road FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	Use and development of the land for Industry (contractors depot and associated vehicle storage) and shipping container storage	11/02/2025 Approved
Friberg	2025/9012	132 Anne Road, KNOXFIELD VIC 3180	Two lot subdivision (approved development site)	28/02/2025 Approved
Scott	2025/9017	4 Philip Road, KNOXFIELD VIC 3180	Two lot subdivision (approved development site)	28/02/2025 Approved
Scott	2025/9005	15 St Bernards Court WANTIRNA SOUTH VIC 3152	Two lot subdivision (approved development site)	13/02/2025 Approved

Ward	No/ Type	Address	Description	Decision
Scott	2024/6360	1166 High Street Road WANTIRNA SOUTH VIC 3152	Use and development of the land as an indoor recreation facility (badminton) in a Farming Zone with associated bicycle parking reduction, non-illuminated advertising signage and removal of access to a road in a Transport Zone	14/02/2025 Refused
Tirhatuan	2025/9013	804 Stud Road SCORESBY VIC 3179	Internal mezzanine and associated reduction to the requirement for car parking	28/02/2025 Approved
Tirhatuan	2024/6470	17 Yvette Drive ROWVILLE VIC 3178	Three Lot Staged subdivision	6/02/2025 Approved
Tirhatuan	2025/6035	PEPPERTREE HILL 112/15 Fulham Road ROWVILLE VIC 3178	Buildings and Works (Construction of a verandah)	27/02/2025 Approved

6.2 18 Carnarvon Avenue, The Basin

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Decision
Author:	Planning Coordinator, Peter Steele
Manager:	Manager City Planning & Building, Paul Dickie
Executive:	Director, City Liveability, Matt Kelleher

SUMMARY

This report considers Planning Application P/2025/6062 for the removal of one (1) *Corymbia citriodora* (Lemon Scented Gum) at 18 Carnarvon Avenue, The Basin

RECOMMENDATION (SUMMARY)

That Council issue a Notice of Refusal for the removal of one (1) *Corymbia citriodora* at 18 Carnarvon Avenue, The Basin subject to the grounds of refusal detailed in the full recommendation in section 10 below.

1. DISCUSSION

Application P/2025/6062 has been lodged with Council for the removal of one (1) *Corymbia citriodora* at 18 Carnarvon Avenue, The Basin.

This application is being reported to Council as it has been called up by Cr Kennett.

The removal of a *Corymbia citriodora* is not consistent with the Significant Landscape Overlay – Schedule 2 (SLO2).

It is considered that the proposal does not respond appropriately to the Municipal Planning Strategy or the Planning Policy Framework and that the removal of the *Corymbia citriodora* will not provide an appropriate balance between the need to protect the landscape character and habitat values of The Dandenong Foothills whilst managing the safety concerns associated with vegetation litter.

It is recommended that a Notice of Refusal be issued.

The detailed Officer's Report is provided with Attachment 1, along with relevant plans and documents at Attachment 2.

2. ENGAGEMENT

The application was not required to be advertised.

The application was referred internally to Council's Arborist who objected to the removal of the *Corymbia citriodora*.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are social implications associated with the proposed tree removal, with the need to balance the environmental benefits and significance of the tree with the maintenance required to manage litter from the tree. A thorough assessment of the application against all relevant considerations of the Knox Planning Scheme can be found at Section 5 of the Officer's Report at Attachment 1.

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.

In response to the Community Net Zero 2040 target and exposure to climate risks or climate change adaptation, the Knox Planning Scheme does not currently require planning applications to achieve net zero emissions, nor has this proposal been required to achieve this.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are negative environmental impacts and amenity issues associated with the proposal. A thorough assessment of the application against environmental and amenity considerations can be found at Section 5 of the Officer's Report at Attachment 1.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial or economic implications associated with the proposal for Council.

7. RISKS

There are no major risks for Council associated with the proposal.

8. KNOX COMMUNITY AND 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.

Natural Environment & Sustainability

Strategy 3.1 - Preserve our biodiversity and waterways, and enhance our urban landscape.

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. RECOMMENDATION

That Council issue a Notice of Refusal for the removal of one (1) *Corymbia citriodora* at 18 Carnarvon Avenue, The Basin on the following grounds:

1. The removal of the *Corymbia citriodora* (Lemon Scented Gum) is not consistent with the objectives of Schedule 2 of the Significant Landscape Overlay in relation to the removal of vegetation.
2. The removal of the *Corymbia citriodora* (Lemon Scented Gum) fails to satisfy the relevant Municipal Planning Strategies, particularly Clause 02.03-2 (Environmental and Landscape Values) and Clause 02.03-4 (Built Environment and Heritage) of the Knox Planning Scheme.
3. The removal of the *Corymbia citriodora* (Lemon Scented Gum) fails to satisfy the relevant Planning Policy Framework strategies and objectives, particularly Clause 12 (Environmental and Landscape Values) of the Knox Planning Scheme.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

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

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment 1 - Officer Report - 18 Carnarvon Avenue, The Basin [**6.2.1** - 8 pages]
2. Attachment 2 - Council Attachments - 18 Carnarvon Avenue, The Basin [**6.2.2** - 3 pages]



Planning Application P/2025/6062 for the removal of one (1) *Corymbia citriodora* (Lemon Scented Gum) at 18 Carnarvon Avenue, The Basin.

1. Summary:

Subject Site:	18 Carnarvon Avenue, THE BASIN VIC 3154
Proposed Development:	Removal of one (1) <i>Corymbia citriodora</i> (Lemon Scented Gum)
Existing Land Use:	Residential
Site Area:	1,014m ²
Planning Scheme Controls:	Neighbourhood Residential Zone – Schedule 1 (NRZ1) Environmental Significance Overlay – Schedule 3 (ESO3) Significant Landscape Overlay – Schedule 2 (SLO2) Design and Development Overlay – Schedule 1 (DDO1)
Application Received:	13 February 2025
Number of Objections:	Application not advertised
PCC Meeting:	Not Applicable
Ward:	Chandler

2. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Councillors with the Council Planning Officer's assessment of Planning Permit Application P/2025/6062 to assist in making a decision on the application. It should be read in conjunction with the other attachments.

3. Background

3.1 Subject Site and Surrounds

The location of the subject site and surrounds is shown in Attachment 2.

- The subject site is a large single allotment located on the northern side of Carnarvon Avenue, approximately 65 metres from the intersection with Waratah Avenue, The Basin. The subject site is rectangular in shape and has an approximate slope of 3.5m from the south (front) to north (rear).
- The subject site and surrounds are within an established residential area, predominately single dwellings within a landscaped setting.
- The site area is 1,014m². The site has vehicular access via a single width crossover to Carnarvon Avenue.
- A 3.1-metre wide Drainage Easement is located along the northern (rear) boundary of the site.
- The subject site contains a single dwelling and significant vegetation, including the tree requested to be removed.
- No covenants are registered on the copy of title.



Attachment 1

3.2 Previous Planning Application at 18 Carnarvon Avenue, The Basin

- Application P/2024/6233 was lodged with Council on 21 May 2024 and proposed the removal/lopping of two trees, one (1) *Eucalyptus bicostata* (Victorian Blue Gum) and one (1) *Corymbia citriodora* (Lemon Scented Gum). Justification for the removal of the two trees was that they posed a danger from limbs dropping and safety threat due to leaf, bark and seed litter.
- Planning Permit P/2024/6233 was issued under delegation by Council Officers on 19 July 2024 and permitted the removal of one (1) *Eucalyptus bicostata* (Victorian Blue Gum). The *Corymbia citriodora* (Lemon Scented Gum) was required to be retained.
- The planning permit required the submission of amended plans to show the retention of the *Corymbia citriodora*. At the time of the preparation of this report, no amended plans have been submitted and the *Eucalyptus bicostata* has not been removed.
- The applicant did not appeal any conditions of Planning Permit P/2024/6233 to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

3.3 The Proposal

The proposal seeks permission for the removal of one (1) *Corymbia citriodora* (Lemon Scented Gum). Refer to attached plans at Attachment 2. Details of the proposal are as follows:

- The subject tree is located within the front setback area of the site, approximately 2 metres from the front boundary and 8.5 metres from the dwelling;
- The tree is approximately 15 metres tall and has a canopy spread of 12 metres;
- The tree's DBH (trunk diameter at breast height) is 64cm, giving it a trunk circumference of 201cm.

Justification provided for the removal of the *Corymbia citriodora* is that the tree overhangs power/NBN lines and that it drops bark, leaves, sap, branches, and seeds within the site and on the public footpath, which are unsafe and require a high level of maintenance.

4. Consultation

4.1 Advertising

The application was not advertised.

4.2 Referrals

The application was referred to Council's Arborist for advice. The following is a summary of relevant advice:

Arborist: Objects to the removal of the *Corymbia citriodora* (Lemon Scented Gum).

The tree is a significant example, visually prominent within the street and is healthy, of good form being influenced by responsible pruning throughout the tree's development and of sound structure with all critical unions and parent branch attachment being of desired shape, formation and free of defects or faults. Canopy spread is relatively compact relative to the height of the tree and has been well confined with no overhang to the dwelling, an acceptable spread with no over-extension across the street and property frontage. At the time of inspection there were no practical works identified that need to be undertaken to either mitigate risk or maintain the tree

5. Discussion

This section considers the proposed development in light of the provisions of the Knox Planning Scheme including the Municipal Planning Strategy, Planning Policy Framework, any other relevant policies and objectives.



Attachment 1

5.1 Zoning and Overlays

5.1.1 Zone

The site is located within the Neighbourhood Residential Zone – Schedule 1 (NRZ1). A planning permit is not required for the removal of vegetation under the NRZ1.

5.1.2 Overlays

Significant Landscape Overlay – Schedule 2 (SLO2)

The subject site is located with the Significant Landscape Overlay – Schedule 2 (SLO2) relating to the Dandenong Foothills: Backdrop and Ridgeline area.

The purpose of the Significant Landscape Overlay is:

- To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.
- To identify significant landscapes.
- To conserve and enhance the character of significant landscapes.

Landscape character objectives to be achieved

- To protect and enhance the visual, natural and cultural heritage values of the foothills landscape.
- To protect landscapes from visual intrusion due to the inappropriate siting, design or materials of buildings and works.
- To encourage siting, design and landscaping of buildings and works that responds to the landscape significance and character of the area and responds to bushfire risk.
- To protect the appearance of the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges, particularly when viewed from the west, as treed slopes rising above the suburbs.
- To maintain vegetation as a key element of the foothills landscape and encourage retention and regeneration of native vegetation to protect wildlife habitats.

Permit requirement

A planning permit is required to:

- Construct a building or construct or carry out works.
- Remove, destroy or lop a tree if the circumference of the trunk is more than 0.5 metres or the tree is 5 metres or more; and
- Construct a front fence, unless the fence is 1.2 metres in height or less and is more than 50 percent transparent; or a side fence between a building and the street, unless the fence is 1.2 metres in height or less.

Due to the size of the tree, a planning permit is triggered under the SLO2 for the removal of a *Corymbia citriodora* (Lemon Scented Gum).

Decision Guidelines (as applicable)

Landscape Character

- The statement of the nature and key elements of the landscape and the landscape character objective contained in a schedule to this overlay, specifically:



Attachment 1

- The visual dominance of vegetation including large native trees and understorey plants and the often continuous flow of vegetation across residential blocks and roadways.
- The way in which the majority of development blends in with the vegetation and the hillsides appear to be tree covered even when developed with houses.
- Houses tucked into the hilly landscape with colours that blend with the landscape.
- The gently sloping and hilly terrain.
- Visual intrusion on views of the Dandenongs and their foothills from inappropriate development.
- The conservation and enhancement of the landscape values of the area.

Landscaping

- Whether sufficient provision has been made for the planting of canopy trees and other vegetation to meet the landscape character objectives.

Vegetation

- Whether vegetation will be retained and planting used to screen buildings.
- Whether fragmentation of the tree canopy will be minimised.
- Whether habitats for native fauna, including wildlife corridors, will be identified and protected, and strengthened or created.
- Whether noxious and environmental weeds will be removed.
- Whether the planting of noxious and environmental weeds will be avoided.
- Whether adequate tree protection areas have been provided to protect retained vegetation from buildings or works (including paving), services and other infrastructure, unless demonstrated that there is no adverse effect to the tree's health to ensure its continuing contribution to landscape character.
- Whether any vegetation to be retained, removed, destroyed or lopped addresses the risk of bushfire to life and property.
- Where an area is subject to high bushfire risk, whether the vegetation outcome does not increase bushfire risk and considers ongoing bushfire protection measures.

Response: As noted above in Section 4.2, Council's Arborist has assessed the subject tree and noted that it is a significant example, visually prominent within the street and is in good health.

*The subject tree is significant within the local landscape, and the removal of it will further fragment tree canopy. The proposal to remove the *Corymbia citriodora* is inconsistent with the objectives and decision guidelines of the Significant Landscape Overlay – Schedule 2.*

Design and Development Overlay – Schedule 1 (DDO1)

The subject site is located within the Design and Development Overlay – Schedule 1 (DDO1) relating to the Dandenong Foothills: Foothills Backdrop and Ridgeline area.

The purpose of the Design and Development Overlay is:

- To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.
- To identify areas which are affected by specific requirements relating to the design and built form of new development



Attachment 1

Permit requirement

A planning permit is not required under the Design and Development Overlay if the following requirements are met:

- The site area covered by buildings must not exceed 40 per cent.
- The site area covered by buildings and impervious surfaces must not exceed 60 per cent.

A permit cannot be granted to construct a building or construct or carry out works which are not in accordance with these requirements

A planning permit is not triggered under the DDO1 for the removal of a *Corymbia citriodora* (Lemon Scented Gum) and the proposal will not alter the existing site or impervious site coverage.

Environmental Significance Overlay – Schedule 3 (ESO3)

The subject site is located within the Environmental Significance Overlay – Schedule 3 (ESO3) relating to the Dandenong Ranges Buffer area.

The purpose of the Environmental Significance Overlay is:

- To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.
- To identify areas where the development of land may be affected by environmental constraints.
- To ensure that development is compatible with identified environmental values.

Permit requirement

With regards to the removal of vegetation, a permit is required to remove, destroy or lop any vegetation, including dead vegetation, with a number of exceptions.

A planning permit is not triggered under the ESO3 as the *Corymbia citriodora* is not indigenous within Knox.

5.2 Municipal Planning Strategy

Council's Municipal Planning Strategy identifies Knox's location between the Dandenong Creek Valley, Lysterfield Hills and the Dandenong Foothills. These regionally significant environmental and landscape features define the character and image of Knox and provide recreational and open space benefits. It aims to protect and enhance Knox's natural environment to ensure sustainability for future generations and identifies the strategic direction to achieve this.

Clause 02.03-2 Environmental and Landscape Values: The most significant landscape characteristic of Knox is its suburban area set in a larger natural and rural landscape. Canopy trees, including trees in suburban backyards, are an integral component in Knox's natural environment and maintaining its green skyline and leafy green landscape character. The Dandenong Foothills provide a scenic backdrop to views from the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. They are a major defining element of Knox's character and identity. The Dandenong Foothills have high environmental and social values of metropolitan significance. Residential development and urban consolidation objectives must not outweigh the environmental and landscape objectives for the Foothills.

Relevant strategic directions include:

- Retain canopy trees as the single most important factor in defining Knox's landscape character and its natural environment.
- Strengthen Knox's green and leafy streetscapes and its identifiable landscape character.



Attachment 1

- Maintain the unique landscape character, amenity and natural values of Knox's significant landscapes, including the Dandenong Foothills, Lysterfield Valley and the Dandenong Creek Valley.
- Protect the heavily treed canopy and unique character of the Dandenong Foothills as a landscape of metropolitan significance by avoiding additional residential development and urban consolidation.
- Maintain views of the Dandenong Foothills from within the municipality and around metropolitan Melbourne by:
 - Retaining canopy trees.
 - Designing and siting buildings and works to sit below the dominant tree canopy height.
- Create attractive road corridors that link the suburbs with the landscape of the Dandenong Foothills.
- Enhance landscape-dominant gateways that uniquely identify the City of Knox.
- Provide landscape character and a green skyline, particularly along ridgelines and creek valleys, within major views and vistas and as a backdrop to urban and rural areas.
- Avoid the fragmentation of land.

Clause 02.03-4 Built Environmental and Heritage: Knox takes a 'whole of city' approach to the creation of liveable and sustainable environments, with a focus on place-based planning with a strong green and leafy landscape being the unifying element of the neighbourhood character of Knox.

Development should be accessible, sustainable and adaptable to meet existing and future community needs and all people in Knox should feel and be safe.

Relevant strategic directions include:

- Ensure well designed development to create functional, architecturally attractive, sustainable and accessible places and buildings.
- Strengthen the unifying 'green and leafy' character of Knox across all residential areas.
- Protect environmentally sustainable landscapes and natural habitats.

*Response: The removal of the *Corymbia citriodora* is not consistent with the Municipal Planning Strategy when balancing the significance and health of the tree and the value that it adds to the broader landscape of the Dandenong Foothills with the safety concerns of the resident.*

5.3 Policy Consideration: State and Local Planning Policy Framework

Planning policy requires Council to integrate the range of policies relevant to the issues to be determined, and balance conflicting objectives in favour of net community benefit and sustainable development. The key themes for the assessment of the application include Environment and Landscape Values and Built Environment and Heritage.

5.3.1 Environmental and Landscape Values

Planning should help to protect the health of ecological systems and the biodiversity they support (including ecosystems, habitats, species and genetic diversity) and conserve areas with identified environmental and landscape values.

Clause 12.05 Significant Environments and Landscapes: Planning policy aims to protect and enhance significant landscapes and open spaces that contribute to character, identity and sustainable environments.



Attachment 1

Clause 12.05-2L Dandenong Foothills (Precinct 3 – Foothills Backdrop and Ridgeline Area): The Dandenong Foothills Policy aims to protect the aesthetic, environmental and metropolitan landscape of the Dandenong Foothills which is characterised by its existing low-density character and canopy tree coverage.

Relevant strategies include:

- Maintain the continuous closed tree canopy of the Foothills and encourage additional canopy tree planting.
- Provide a continuous vegetation canopy across residential lots and roads.
- Maintain the appearance of the area as an extension of the Dandenong Ranges National Park by blending development with vegetation on the hillsides.
- Retain existing vegetation and utilise indigenous canopy and understorey planting.

5.3.2 Built Environment and Heritage

Clause 15.01-1S Urban Design: Create urban environments that are safe, healthy, functional and enjoyable and that contribute to a sense of place and cultural identity.

Relevant strategies include:

- Ensure that the design and location of publicly accessible private spaces, including car parking areas, forecourts and walkways, is of a high standard, creates a safe environment for users and enables easy and efficient use.
- Ensure that development provides landscaping that supports the amenity, attractiveness and safety of the public realm.

Response: The Corymbia citriodora is a significant example, that is visually prominent within the street, is in good health and contributes to the broader landscape and habit values of the Dandenong Foothills.

It is acknowledged that Corymbia and Eucalypt trees do drop leaves, bark and seed pods, and may drop branches in some conditions. However the Corymbia citriodora is relatively clean and the tree's shape and extent of litter can be managed appropriately by pruning. As mentioned above in Section 4.2 of this report, this tree has a history of being well maintained and appropriately managed.

On balance it is considered that the Corymbia citriodora can be appropriately maintained to manage the litter it produces, and that the significance of the tree should be retained and the retention of the tree is supported by the Planning Policy Framework.

5.4 General Decision Guidelines

Clause 65 of the Knox Planning Scheme and Section 60 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 set out decision guidelines/matters which the responsible authority must consider when deciding any planning application.

- The decision guidelines of Clause 65 of the Knox Planning Scheme and Section 60 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* have been appropriately considered.

6. Conclusion

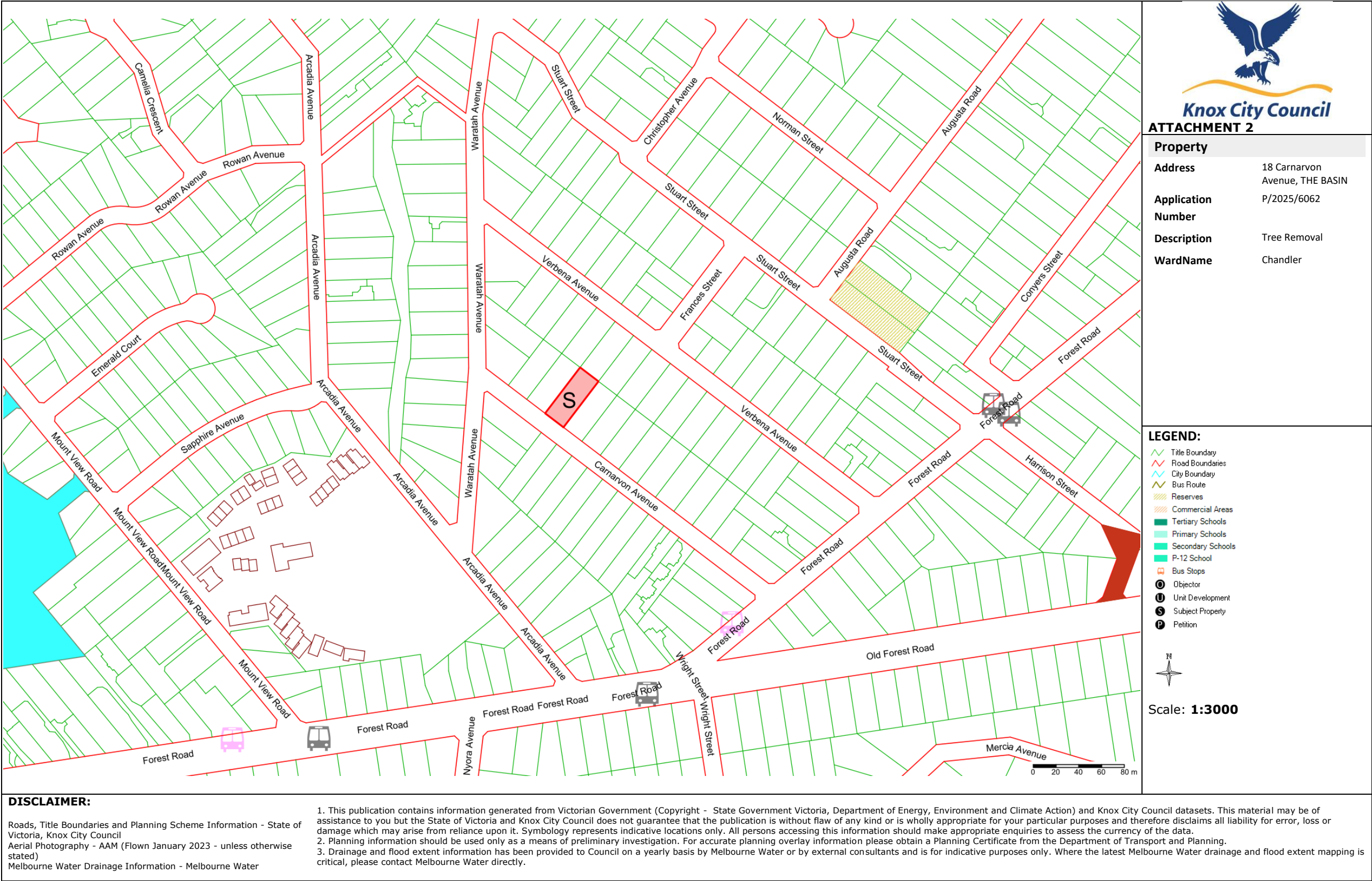
Clause 71.02-3 of the Knox Planning Scheme requires Council to balance relative policy objectives when making decisions to ensure resulting development is sustainable and achieves a net community gain. In this context, the proposal is considered that it is not appropriate given the following:

- The *Corymbia citriodora* is a significant tree that contributes to the green and leafy character of Knox;



Attachment 1

- The proposed removal of the *Corymbia citriodora* is not consistent with the Municipal Planning Strategy and Planning Policy Framework, specifically, Clause 02.03-2 (Environmental and Landscape Values), Clause 02.03-4 (Built Environmental and Heritage), Clause 12.05 (Significant Environments and Landscapes), Clause 12.05-2L (Dandenong Foothills) of the Knox Planning Scheme.
- The proposed removal of the *Corymbia citriodora* is not consistent with the Significant Landscape Overlay – Schedule 2.
- The amount of litter dropped and the risk that the *Corymbia citriodora* poses can be managed through appropriate maintenance, including pruning as required.







Knox City Council

ATTACHMENT 2

Property	
Address	18 Carnarvon Avenue, THE BASIN
Application Number	P/2025/6062
Description	Tree Removal
WardName	Chandler

LEGEND:

- Title Boundary
- Road Boundaries
- City Boundary
- Bus Route
- Reserves
- Commercial Areas
- Tertiary Schools
- Primary Schools
- Secondary Schools
- P-12 School
- Bus Stops
- Objector
- Unit Development
- Subject Property
- Petition

N

Scale: **1:3000**

DISCLAIMER:

Roads, Title Boundaries and Planning Scheme Information - State of Victoria, Knox City Council

Aerial Photography - AAM (Flown January 2023 - unless otherwise stated)

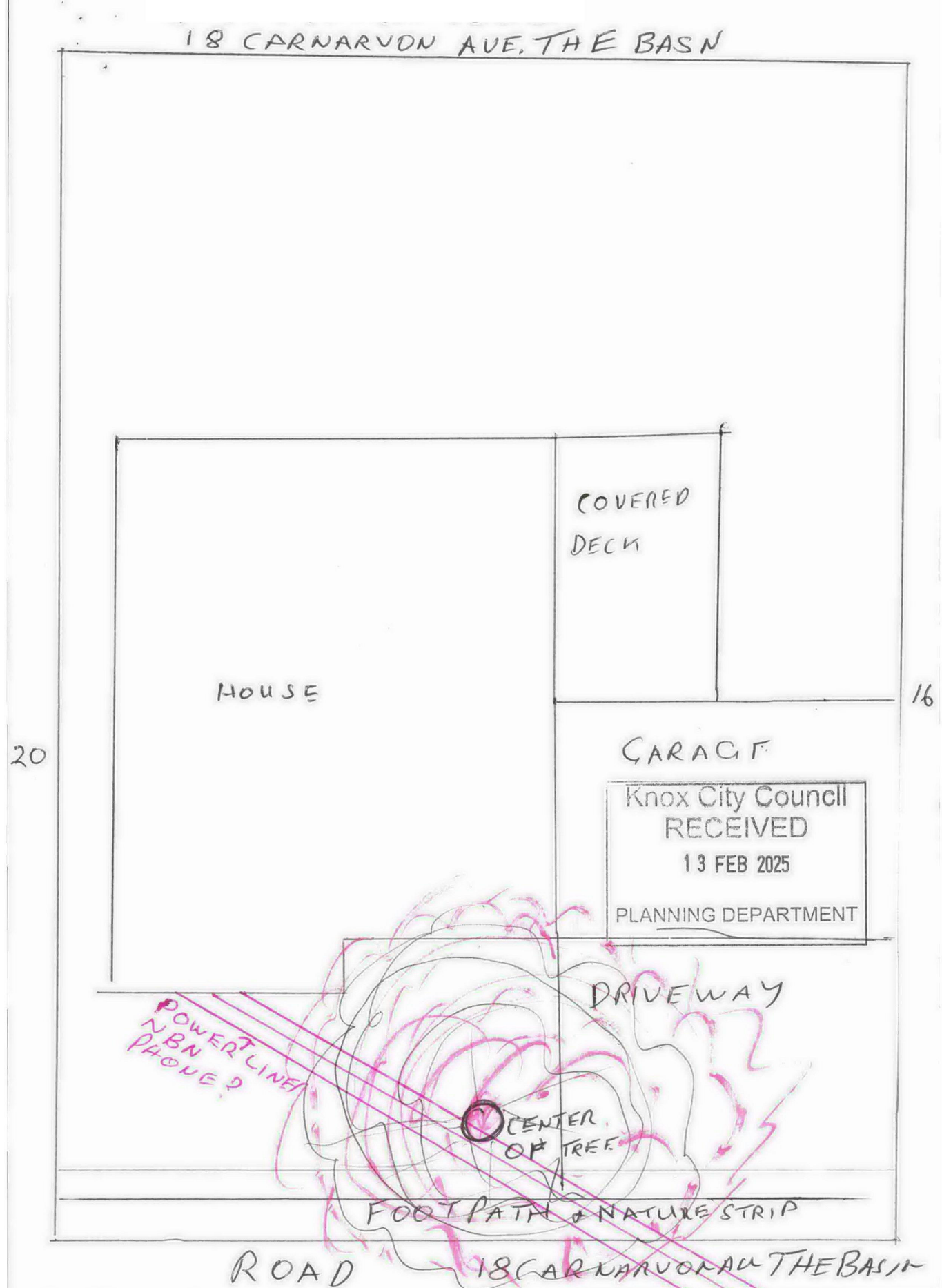
Melbourne Water Drainage Information - Melbourne Water

1. This publication contains information generated from Victorian Government (Copyright - State Government Victoria, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action) and Knox City Council datasets. This material may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and Knox City Council does not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for error, loss or damage which may arise from reliance upon it. Symbology represents indicative locations only. All persons accessing this information should make appropriate enquiries to assess the currency of the data.

2. Planning information should be used only as a means of preliminary investigation. For accurate planning overlay information please obtain a Planning Certificate from the Department of Transport and Planning.

3. Drainage and flood extent information has been provided to Council on a yearly basis by Melbourne Water or by external consultants and is for indicative purposes only. Where the latest Melbourne Water drainage and flood extent mapping is critical, please contact Melbourne Water directly.

D25-41688



7 Public Question Time

8 Officer Reports

8.1 Biannual Report and Annual Assessment of the Audit & Risk Committee

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Noting
Author:	Governance Officer, Damian Watson
Manager:	Manager Governance & Risk, Andrew Dowling
Executive:	Director, Customer & Performance, Greg Curcio

SUMMARY

This report presents to Council, the Audit and Risk Committee Biannual Report – March 2025. The report includes outcomes of the Audit and Risk Committee’s annual self-assessment, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020, and the Audit and Risk Committee Charter.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to:

1. Receive and note the Audit and Risk Committee Biannual Report - March 2025, as set out in Attachment 1 to the report.
2. Receive and note the findings of the Audit and Risk Committee Self-Assessment Report, as set out in Attachment 2 to the report.

1. DISCUSSION

The Audit and Risk Committee (the Committee) is a Committee established in accordance with section 53 of the Local Government Act 2020 (LGA 2020).

Under the LGA 2020 and the Audit and Risk Committee Charter (the Charter), the Committee is required to formally report on its activities twice annually to Council. The Committee’s Biannual Report to March 2025 is set out in Attachment 1 and provides Council with a summary of the matters the Committee has addressed in discharging its responsibilities under its Charter.

Under the LGA 2020, the Audit and Risk Committee must also undertake an annual assessment of its performance against the Audit and Risk Committee Charter with the assessment subsequently tabled to Council.

A copy of the self-assessment report as presented and noted by the Audit and Risk Committee at its December 2024 meeting is included at Attachment 2.

2. ENGAGEMENT

The Audit and Risk Committee annual assessment and Biannual Reports are prepared in consultation with the Audit and Risk Committee. The Biannual Report was presented to the Committee at its March 2025 meeting and the annual assessment conducted in the lead up to the December 2024 Committee meeting at which the outcomes were presented.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

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 IMPLICATIONS

Identify relevant guidelines or legislation and summarise the environmental benefits or impacts.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

7. RISKS

The Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) is established to strengthen Council's governance, risk management, financial management; and to drive continuous improvement. Presentation of the ARC's biannual report provides assurance to Council that the Committee is effectively overseeing these areas and ensuring that robust controls and risk management practices are in place.

8. KNOX COMMUNITY AND COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025

Civic Engagement & Integrity

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. STATEMENT OF COMPATIBILITY

There are no legislative obligations under the Human Rights Charter, Child Safe Standards or the Gender Equity Act that are incompatible with the recommendation in this report.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

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

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment 1 - Biannual ARC Report - March 2025 [8.1.1 - 9 pages]
2. Attachment 2 - Extract - Audit and Risk Committee Agenda - 12-12-2024 [8.1.2 - 4 pages]



Knox City Council

Audit and Risk Committee

Biannual Report
March 2025



1. Background and Purpose of this Report

The Audit and Risk Committee (the Committee) is a committee established in accordance with section 53 and 54 of the Local Government Act 2020 (LGA). Under the Charter, the Committee is to formally report on its operations to the Council twice annually.

This report meets the reporting requirements to Council as mandated by section 54(5) OF the Local Government Act 2020 and importantly provides Council with a summary of the matters that the Committee has addressed in the reporting period in discharging its responsibilities under its Charter.

The Committee's Charter is set by the Council and a review of the Charter is currently underway in line with the Committee's Annual Work Plan. Once finalised a revised Charter will be endorsed by the Committee for consideration by Council.

2. Period of Reporting

This report covers the Audit and Risk Committee Meetings on 12 December 2024 and 6 March 2025.

3. Committee Membership and Meetings

The composition of the Committee in accordance with its Charter is three independent members and two Council representatives. Councillor members are appointed by Council annually, for a 12-month term, which may be renewed subject to Council resolution. Independent members are appointed by Council for a three-year term following an external selection process.

The Chief Executive Officer and Senior Management representatives attended meetings of the Committee, by invitation, to assist in meeting discussions and procedures. Representatives from the internal and external auditors also attend to present on matters related to internal and external audit activities.

The Mayor, Councillor Lisa Cooper, and Councillor Susan Pearce were appointed to the Audit and Risk Committee at the Council Meeting on 21 November 2024.

The Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee, Geoff Harry, was re-elected as Chair for 2025 at the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting held on 12 December 2024.

The following table provides details of the Committee members and meeting attendance during the reporting period.

Attendee	Role	12/12/2024 Meeting	06/03/2025 Meeting
Mr. Geoff Harry	Independent Chair (March 2023-Present)	Yes	Yes
Mr. Homi Burjorjee	Independent Member	Yes	Yes
Mr. Mick Jaensch	Independent Member	Yes	Yes
Cr Lisa Cooper (Mayor)	Councillor Member	Yes	Yes
Cr Susan Pearce	Councillor Member	Yes	Yes



4. Committee Responsibilities

The Committee's Charter is used to develop an Annual Work Plan which guides the agenda and activities at each meeting during the year and on Behalf of the Committee.

Relevant obligations under the Charter were addressed during the reporting period.

4.1 Chief Executive Officer Report

The Committee received quarterly updates from the Chief Executive Officer Bruce Dobson on matters including:

- Code of Conduct matters
- Election outcomes & Induction
- Election Integrity – Baird Ward
- Election Appeal – Dobson Ward
- Kindergarten Status
- Plan for Victoria and Draft Housing Capacity Targets
- State Government Planning and Housing Reform Announcements
- Local Government Act Reform
- IBAC Corruption and Misconduct Allegations Dashboard
- Request for Information from the National Redress Scheme
- Council Plan and Budget Development
- Inquiry into fraud and corruption control in local government

4.2 Internal Audit

The Interim Strategic Internal Audit Plan (SIAP) was reviewed and endorsed at the 6 March 2025 Committee meeting. Progress against the adopted SIAP is monitored at each meeting. Council's internal audit service provider (HLB) continued the practice of preparing and completing internal audit reports which provides recommended actions for the organisation.



The following Internal Audit reports have been presented to the Committee:

December 2024	March 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract Management • Immunisation Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Controls (Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable) including Data Analytics

Recommendations contained within all reports were accepted by Management for implementation.

Actions from Completed Internal Audits

Addressing outstanding Internal Audit Actions from previous Internal Audit Reviews remains a prime focus of the Committee, with a revised reporting format providing the Committee with greater oversight on the progress of these actions.

The summary below reflects the half year to the March 2025 Audit and Risk Committee Meetings. Following the August 2024 meeting, there were 62 open Internal Audit actions with 2 of those actions classified as overdue. As at the March 2025 meeting, there are 56 open Internal Audit actions with 6 of those actions classified as overdue.

Table One: Summary of Movements Since August 2024

	Priority			
	High	Medium	Low	Total
Open Actions at 15 August 2024	2	38	22	62
Add New Agreed Actions Reported in the Period	0	22	4	26
Sub Total	2	60	26	88
Less Actions Closed in the Period	1	21	10	32
Less Rejected Actions	0	0	0	0
Open Actions at 27 February 2025	1	39	16	56

4.3 External Audit

An External Audit Strategy for the upcoming 2024-2025 external audit was presented to the March 2025 Audit and Risk Committee Meeting.

4.4 Risk Management

The Committee received Quarterly Risk Management updates, inclusive of a report summarising significant operational risks (residual rating of high or above), and the Strategic and Operational Risk profile. The committee also received detailed reports into selected Strategic Risks. Updates were also provided in relation to management of Council's insurance portfolio and claims management.

4.5 Governance and Compliance Reports

Informing areas of focus by the Committee were various reports including:

- Quarterly Compliance Report detailing management of council's register of delegations and ongoing compliance with relevant legislation detailing any compliance breaches and engagement with various oversight bodies including the Office of the Victorian Information Commissions, Ombudsman, Local Government Inspectorate and IBAC
- Councillor Expenses Reports as required by the Local Government Act 2020
- Audit and Risk Committee Self-Assessment Report
- Review of Audit and Risk Committee Charter

The Committee also received reporting which monitors reports released by State based integrity agencies (VAGO, IBAC, Ombudsman Victoria) that may be relevant to Council via HLB's Recent Reports and Publications circular .

4.6 Financial and ICT Reporting

During the period, the Committee received and considered:

- Quarterly Financial Report Statements
- Transformation Governance Committee Updates.
- Cyber Security Updates

4.7 Fraud Prevention systems and controls

There were no material matters of fraud and corruption reported to the Committee during the reporting period.

4.8 Reporting to Council

Minutes of Committee meetings are provided to all Councillors as soon as practical after each meeting via Council's online portal and via email.

The Committee reports formally to the Council at least twice per annum. The Committee Chairperson is invited to present to the Council annually.



The Committee's August 2024 Report was presented to the Council Meeting held on 16 September 2024 and this report is scheduled to be presented to the 24 March 2025 Council Meeting.

4.9 Summary of Reports Presented

Date	Report Title & Description	Outcome
December Meeting		
12/12/2024	Actions from Previous Audit and Risk Committee Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides comments against the status of all actions arising from previous meeting 	Noted
12/12/2024	Annual Work Plan 2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tracks delivery of the Committee's Annual Work Plan 	Noted
12/12/2024	Chief Executive Officer Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A quarterly presentation of issues of note 	Noted
12/12/2024	Strategic Risk Review – Deep Dive Report IT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular “deep dives” provide an opportunity for in-depth analysis of Council's key strategic risks 	Noted
12/12/2024	Cyber Security Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on the Customer and Performance portfolio's capital and operational projects currently being delivered, and an overview of cyber security issues 	Noted
12/12/2024	Quarterly Risk Management Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An overview of Council's risk registers and summary of key risk management activities 	Noted
12/12/2024	Transformation Governance Committee Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an update to the Audit and Risk Committee on the formation, scope and activities of Council's Transformation Governance Committee – in preparation for the first committee meeting with new Councillors. 	Noted
12/12/2024	Internal Audit Status Report	Noted
12/12/2024	Actions from Internal Audits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A progress report on outstanding actions from Internal Audits previously presented to the Committee. 	Noted
12/12/2024	Contract Management Internal Audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of the Internal Audit report 	Noted
12/12/2024	Immunisation Services Internal Audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of the Internal Audit report 	Noted





Date	Report Title & Description	Outcome
12/12/2024	Local Government – Recent Reports and Publications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A summary of recent reports and publications regarding audits throughout the Local Government sector 	Noted
12/12/2024	Councillor Expenses – Q1 2024/25 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A quarterly report in line with the Councillor Expenses and Support Policy & Procedure 	Noted
12/12/2024	Quarterly Compliance Report- December 2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A report summarising activities in key compliance area including areas such as privacy and human rights, Freedom of Information, and Ombudsman enquiries 	Noted
12/12/2024	Audit and Risk Committee Self-Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents the outcomes of the Audit and Risk Committee 2024 annual self-assessment review completed independently by the Committees Independent Members, Councillors, and relevant staff. 	Noted
12/12/2024	Audit and Risk Committee Charter Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an opportunity for the Audit and Risk Committee to provide feedback on the review of the Audit and Risk Committee Charter prior to presentation to Council as provided for within the Charter. 	Noted
12/12/2024	Quarterly Performance Report- December 2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of the most recent Quarterly Performance Report as presented to Council 	Noted
March Meeting		
6/3/2025	Actions from Previous Audit and Risk Committee Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides comments against the status of all actions arising from previous meetings 	Noted
6/3/2025	Annual Work Plan Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tracks delivery of the Committee's Annual Work Plan 	Noted
6/3/2025	Chief Executive Officer Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A quarterly presentation of issues of note 	Noted
6/3/2025	Strategic Risk Review – Deep Dive Report - Municipal Facilities Become Unfit for Purpose This report provides a deep dive into a strategic risk – <i>Municipal facilities throughout the Knox municipality that have become unfit for purpose and subsequently present risks to the organisation.</i>	Noted



Date	Report Title & Description	Outcome
6/3/2025	Risk Management Update – March 2025 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An overview of Council’s risk registers and summary of key risk management activities, including an update on Council’s insurance renewal and claims experience over the previous year 	Noted
6/3/2025	Internal Audit Status Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An update from Council’s contracted internal auditor on the status of internal audits. 	Noted
6/3/2025	Strategic Internal Audit Program Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of revisions to the draft Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2024-2027 for approval by the Committee. 	Endorsed for Council consideration
6/3/2025	Actions from Internal Audits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A progress report on outstanding actions from Internal Audits previously presented to the Committee. 	Noted
6/3/2025	Local Government – Recent Reports and Publications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A summary of recent reports and publications regarding audits throughout the Local Government sector 	Noted
6/3/2025	Financial Controls (Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable) including Data Analytics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of the Internal Audit report 	Noted
6/3/2025	External Audit Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RSM Australia has provided an Audit Strategy Memorandum for the financial year ending 30 June 2025 outlining the plan for conducting the audit of the Knox City Council financial report and performance statement, and acquittals for the Roads to Recovery Program and Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program. 	Noted
6/3/2025	Councillor Expenses – Q2 2024/25 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A quarterly report in line with the Councillor Expenses and Support Policy & Procedure 	Noted
6/3/2025	Quarterly Compliance Report – August 2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A report summarising activities in key compliance area including areas such as privacy and human rights, Freedom of Information, and Ombudsman enquiries 	Noted

Date	Report Title & Description	Outcome
6/3/2025	Biannual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee – March 2025 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To consider and endorse the Committee's biannual audit and risk report in line with its Charter and the Local Government Act 2020 	Endorsed
6/3/2025	Fraud and Corruption Control Framework Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This report is to present the proposed changes to the Fraud and Corruption Control Framework to the Audit and Risk Committee for review and to endorse a revised Framework to Council for adoption. The revised Fraud and Corruption Control Framework 2025 incorporates enhancements aimed at strengthening Council's fraud prevention and response measures. 	Endorsed
6/3/2025	Annual Financial Report and Performance Statement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2023-24 Statements are presented to the Audit and Risk Committee for consideration and, subject to that review, to recommend them to Council for in-principle adoption. Includes the Governance and Management checklist, Management Representation Letter, and VAGO's Closing Report and Final Management Letter 	Noted



5. Conclusion

The Committee benefits from the combined knowledge of Councillor and independent members during meetings. The Committee acknowledges the contribution of all members who perform their responsibilities with diligence and professionalism. The Committee also acknowledges the contribution of audit representatives from Council's internal and external auditors, and Council staff supporting the Committee.

10.3. Audit and Risk Committee Self-Assessment 2024

SUMMARY

This report presents the outcomes of the Audit and Risk Committee 2024 annual self-assessment review completed independently by the Committees Independent Members, Councillors, and relevant staff.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee note the Committees Self-Assessment Report, December 2024.

DISCUSSION

Under the Local Government Act 2020, the Audit and Risk Committee is required to undertake an annual performance evaluation self-assessment.

The results of the self-assessment assist the Audit and Risk Committee in reviewing its own performance and relates to administrative support, effectiveness, skills, audit process and meeting conduct.

This year the participants of the survey included the Committees Independent Members, Councillors, Executive Leadership (ELT) and a few relevant staff.

The survey was sent to thirteen people with results received from eleven people. Five being Committee members and six being staff members.

Survey Results (Average)

The Audit and Risk Committee and relevant staff have responded to the questions below. The rating scale of each question was from 1 to 6. Less than adequate, adequate & more than adequate.

Less than adequate		Adequate		More than adequate	
1	2	3	4	5	6

Overall, the survey results are extremely positive, with all responses rated adequate to more than adequate (4 to 6).

- Dark green shading highlights “more than adequate” responses
- Light green shading highlights “adequate” responses

2024-12-12 - Audit and Risk Committee

Question		2024 Result	2023 Result
Q1	Are you a Committee Member		
1	Yes	5	5
2	No	6	6
Q2	The Audit and Risk Committee has monitored and reported on the systems and activities of Council ensuring:		
1	Reliable financial reporting and management information	5.1	5.4
2	High standards of corporate governance	5.0	5.1
3	Appropriate application of accounting policies	4.9	5.3
4	Compliance with applicable laws and regulations	4.8	5.1
5	Effective and efficient internal audit functions	4.7	4.8
6	Measure to provide early warning of any issues affecting the organisation's financial wellbeing	4.7	4.8
7	Maintenance and fostering an ethical environment	5.1	5.1
Q3	The Audit and Risk Committee has:		
8	Received information, presentations, or explanations it considers necessary to fulfil its responsibilities	5.1	5.0
9	Worked with Management to develop a framework for monitoring the various elements of corporate governance	4.7	4.6
10	Gained a level of assurance that systems are in place within Council to identify and manage high risks	4.8	4.7
11	Complied with the adopted ARC Charter adopted February 2023	5.1	5.1
12	Considered relevant topical issues arising during the review period	5.1	5.0
13	Reviewed the effectiveness of internal control systems in place	4.7	4.7
14	Considered recommendations to address control deficiencies	5.1	5.0
15	Reviewed the effectiveness of management information including financial controls and reporting	4.9	4.7
Q4	The Audit & Risk Committee considers:		
16	Developments and changes in the various rules, regulations and laws which relate generally to Council's business operations	4.5	4.8
17	Council's compliance response to changing legislation	4.5	4.9
18	The Committee effectively considers and oversees processes for the management of Council's Risks	4.8	4.7
Q5	The Audit & Risk Committee:		
19	Considered the effectiveness of the internal audits	5.0	4.9
20	Considered the internal audit actions progressed and closed	5.0	5.1
21	Considered the effectiveness of the external audit strategy	5.0	4.8
22	Reviewed and approved the annual Internal Audit Program and rolling three-year plan	5.0	5.3
23	Reviewed and approved the Audit and Risk Committee Annual Plan	5.1	5.1
Q6	The Audit & Risk Committee:		
24	Considered the effectiveness of the CEO Report	5.3	4.7
25	Considered the effectiveness of the Curious Eyes Report	4.1	4.3
26	Considered the effectiveness of the Monitoring Governance Report	4.9	4.7
27	Has been able to request and receive additional reports from Management	5.1	5.3

2024-12-12 - Audit and Risk Committee

Question		2024 Result	2023 Result
28	Demonstrates its understanding of the expectations and requirements to the ARC?	5.1	5.3
Q7	Audit & Risk Committee Meetings have:		
29	Been well attended by Committee members	5.6	5.4
30	Been conducted in accordance with the agenda issued	5.4	5.3
31	Been supported by well-structured and informative agendas and supporting papers	5.4	5.3
32	Been conducted to allow for full participation by all members	5.3	5.3
33	Allowed Committee members to raise any issue they believe relevant	5.3	5.5
34	Been conducted to allow for open, frank, and robust discussion of all matters raised	5.2	5.5
Q8	Practicalities of the Committee & Committee Meetings:		
35	The quality of reports and information presented to the ARC is sufficient for members and the Committee to discharge their responsibilities	4.9	5.1
36	The distribution arrangements for meeting papers allows adequate time for members to prepare for meetings	4.5	5.2
37	The Annual Meeting Cycle is adequate to cover all matters the Committee should consider	4.8	5.0
38	There is adequate meeting time allocated for the Committee throughout the year	5	5.1
39	ARC members have adequate time to devote to their ARC responsibilities and are not considered to be "overloaded"	4.7	4.9
40	ARC members are well prepared for meetings	4.9	5.1
41	The Chair allocates reasonable time to agenda items with time prioritized to discuss important issues	5.2	5.3

It is noted that there is a slight reduction in performance for some questions , however it is noteworthy that:

- For the 20 questions where a reduction is observed, the magnitude is not significant;
- Of those 20 questions, 8 still achieved a score of "more than adequate"; and
- Of the remaining 12 questions, the scores were strongly "adequate", with only one question (#25) achieving a score below 4.5.

The survey provided an opportunity to raise additional matters as part of the performance assessment of the ARC for the 2023/24 financial year, and matters raised were:

1. More of a comment for future, that all Councillors received an initial induction to ARC to better understand its role in the work of Council and additional induction for members
2. Control effectiveness (design and the operations of them)
3. ARC draft minutes could be provided more quickly
4. Independent Members did not have an opportunity to be involved in the process for awarding of the new IA contract
5. I would recommend a good quality induction program for new members to understand role and expectations

In relation to Items 1 and 5 above:

2024-12-12 - Audit and Risk Committee

- The Risk & Assurance Team are currently working on an Introduction to Risk Management module to be delivered as part of the post-election Councillor Induction Program, which will meet the requirements of the Mandatory Training outlined in the recently amended Local Government (Governance & Integrity) Regulations 2020. A refresher will then be provided annually following the appointment of Committee members.
- For 2024, considering the limited time available between appointment of Councillor members (on 21 November 2024) and the December Audit and Risk Committee meeting, a pre-briefing meeting has been offered to the Councillor members of the Committee ahead of the meeting.
- The induction program will also be suitably adapted for new external members.

In relation to Item 2 above, a thorough review of all Risks held in the PULSE system has just been completed. During the review, all Controls and Tasks were reviewed to confirm they are still relevant and fit for purpose. (Refer to the Risk Management Update report for a full list of current Risks and Controls.)

In relation to Item 3, delays in the distribution of the draft Audit and Risk Committee minutes are acknowledged. The Governance Team has re-committed to a desired standard for distribution of minutes which is “within one- week of the meeting date” for all meeting types.

In relation to Item 4, the process for tendering for Internal Auditors and contract renewals will be reviewed and consideration given to the involvement of the Committee, ahead of the next process.

Debbie Pulham
Head of Risk & Assurance

Attachments

Nil

8.2 Response to Notice of Motion No.155 - Stamford Park Masterplan

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Decision
Author:	Coordinator Infrastructure and Major Projects, Melissa Sparrow
Manager:	Manager Major Projects & Facilities, Monica Micheli
Executive:	Director, Infrastructure, Grant Thorne

SUMMARY

At its Ordinary Meeting of Council on 26 August 2024, Council endorsed Notice of Motion No. 155 – Stamford Park Masterplan. The Notice of Motion requested a report be presented in relation to the implementation of the Stamford Park Masterplan by the March 2025 Council meeting. This report responds to that Notice of Motion.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Receives and notes this report in response to the 26 August 2024 Council Meeting Notice of Motion No. 155 relating to the Stamford Park Masterplan.
2. Write to Dr Nerina Di Lorenzo, Managing Director of Melbourne Water, seeking an update on their investigations and what actions are being taken to address flooding issues within the Corhanwarrabul floodplain.
3. Seek clarification from Melbourne Water on the magnitude of the storm events which occurred in January and July 2024 in the vicinity of the Waterlea and Bankside estates, specifically the equivalent AEP event.

1. DISCUSSION

At its meeting on 26 August 2024, Council endorsed Notice of Motion No. 155 – Stamford Park Masterplan. The Motion endorsed:

That in relation to the 2014 adopted Stamford Park Masterplan (the Masterplan), Council:

1. Requests that a report on the implementation status of the Masterplan be presented at a Council meeting no later than March 2025 (unless deferred to a later date in consultation with the Mayor) to provide Council and the community with a comprehensive update on this major initiative.
2. Request the report referred to in Resolution 1 above include, but not necessarily be limited to:
 - a. A brief history of the project, including key milestones, decision points and announcements since the Masterplan was adopted;
 - b. A financial synopsis detailing:
 - i. The initial projected costs and funding sources for each Masterplan stage
 - ii. The actual total expenditure on the project for each Masterplan stage
 - iii. The revenue received from land sales;
 - c. An overview of variations (whether delivered or proposed) for each Masterplan stage compared to the adopted original Masterplan;

- d. The current and projected ongoing maintenance costs associated with Stamford Park and relevant funding sources; and
- e. A summary of Council's agreement with Melbourne Water for ongoing management and maintenance of the wetlands/Corhanwarrabul Creek floodplain.

History of the Stamford Park Project

The overall Stamford Park Development Plan was endorsed by Council in October 2008, with a proposed redevelopment of the property to create three key precincts including 40 hectares of parkland, a historic precinct incorporating the 1880's Stamford Park Homestead and gardens, and a 7.2ha residential estate.

The principle for the Stamford Park development was that the delivery of the objectives for Stamford Park would be self-funded through the sale of the land for the residential parcel.

The Stamford Park Masterplan (Attachment 1) was approved in July 2014, representing the second stage of detailed physical planning for the Stamford Park site. The original Masterplan was prepared with input and support from the Stamford Park Project Steering Committee and the Stamford Park Community Reference Group. The adoption of the Masterplan provided the basis for the rezoning and sale of the residential pad and design principles for the historical and parkland/recreation precincts.

The residential pad was put to the market as a part of a comprehensive EOI Tender Process – which was subsequently awarded to Stockland in March 2016. Council received a total of \$17.0M for the development pad, in conjunction with a range of asset outcomes.

Concept plans for the redevelopment of the Homestead, Gardens and Parklands were presented to and approved by Council at its July 2017 meeting. Funding of \$13m was also endorsed to be allocated to the works from the Stamford Park Reserve.

Initial works on the Homestead commenced in 2016/17 with underpinning and stabilization of the foundations, repair of the stormwater drainage and restoration of the verandah and verandah deck. Further work undertaken and completed by 2019 then included:

- Internal and external repair works to all buildings.
- Restoration of the fireplaces.
- Replacement of the timber flooring in the homestead.
- New front steps, repair of rear steps and new rear verandah.
- Upgrade of fire services, sewer, electrical services, boiler unit and hydronic heating.
- New accessible toilet and ramps.
- Kitchen extension.

During 2018/19, the Homestead gardens were enhanced for use by the community and restaurant including open lawn spaces, replanting, ha-ha wall to parklands, and kitchen garden. The Homestead was subsequently leased and opened as a restaurant in 2019.

Council supported exploring opportunities to integrate the proposed recreation lake with the Melbourne Water wetland at its 9 April 2018 Strategic Planning Committee meeting and endorsed

an alteration to the 2014 Masterplan to “incorporate an integrated Melbourne Water wetland with the Stamford Park recreation lake”.

A revised concept plan (Attachment 2) was prepared in 2019 with the 40ha parklands broken into several packages for delivery:

1. Swale and permaculture garden.
2. Adventure Play precinct.
3. Lake/Ephemeral precincts (incorporating the Melbourne Water wetlands).

These works were completed between 2019 and 2024.

The Stamford Park Men’s Shed, which operated from part of the Homestead, was relocated in March 2018 to Aimee Seebeck Hall, Rowville and ultimately into a new purpose built facility at Rowville Recreation Reserve in October 2020.

Key dates:

22 July 2014	Original Masterplan endorsed by Council
18 March 2016	Sale of land to Stockland Holdings
10 July 2017	Stamford Park concept design and cost estimate endorsed by Council
23 Nov 2017	Stamford Park Steering Committee discontinued
March 2018	Stamford Park Men’s Shed relocated temporarily to Aimee Seebeck Hall, Rowville
9 April 2018	Masterplan/Concept design changes endorsed by Council
Jan 2019	Homestead restoration works completed
20 Feb 2019	Homestead Gardens completed
May 2019	Stamford Park Homestead restaurant opened
30 June 2019	Permaculture Garden and swale completed
October 2020	Rowville Men’s Shed (formally Stamford Park Men’s Shed) new facility completed
23 Dec 2020	Adventure Play precinct completed
Nov 2021	Grant application successful through Melbourne Water’s Liveable Communities Liveable Waterways Program for \$600,000 (ex GST)
18 Feb 2022	Works Offer received from Melbourne Water for Lake/Ephemeral works
5 June 2024	Remaining Parklands completed

It is also noted that between March 2020 and October 2022 there were COVID restrictions/lockdowns and significant impacts on construction material costs and labour, as well as delivery timeframes.

Financial Synopsis

A cost estimate was presented to Council at its 10 July 2017 Strategic Planning Meeting. Council approved the allocation of \$13m from the Stamford Park Reserve to the Capital Works Program for delivery. Table 1 provides an overview of each Masterplan Stage presented at that meeting, the year(s) delivery occurred and the actual expenditure. It should be noted that these costings were completed prior to the revised concept plan being completed with the approved changes.

Stage	Year(s) delivered	Concept plan estimate (July 2017)	Actual expenditure (June 2024)
Parklands			
1. Permaculture garden & swale	2018-2020	\$149,070	\$837,146 ¹
2. Adventure Play	2020	\$1,747,071	\$2,072,933
3. Lake & Ephemeral	2022-2024	\$8,590,324	\$10,542,417 ²
Homestead restoration	2017-2019	\$1,488,340	\$1,559,222
Homestead Gardens	2018-2020	\$696,000	\$1,953,302 ³
Public Art	2023-24	\$328,000	\$340,969
TOTAL		\$12,998,805	\$17,305,989

Table 1 – Stamford Park Financial estimates

¹ The original concept design for the permaculture garden and swale was very basic. This was expanded during the design process to add extensive planting through the swale to assist with water management and achieve a better outcome.

² Due to cost escalations resulting from delays in receiving Melbourne Water approvals and the impact of COVID, this final stage of works needed to be value managed with the tenderers resulting in a large portion of the ephemeral precinct being removed.

³ The Homestead Gardens tender submissions were over the original estimates due in part to the main carpark on Emmeline Row (delivered as part of this stage of works) being changed to asphalt rather than gravel. This change was considered beneficial in reducing ongoing maintenance costs.

Regarding funding Council received towards the project, there were two main sources:

1. Council received \$17m from Stockland in March 2016 for the residential development pad sale. In addition to this, Stockland contributed funding totalling \$434,005.84 towards various components of the parkland delivery as well as the use of an existing Council stockpile for fill.
2. A grant for \$600,000 (ex GST) was also received from Melbourne Water in 2022 as part of their Liveable Communities Liveable Waterways Program towards the Lake and Ephemeral package of works.

Masterplan Variations

A number of changes occurred from the original Masterplan as the design was developed. Each, outlined below, were either endorsed by Council, agreed through the Stamford Park Steering Committee or completed as part of value management exercise to stay within budget.

Masterplan Stage	Change
Homestead and Gardens	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Overflow parking within gardens removed.2. Gravel carpark changed to asphalt.
Permaculture Garden and Swale	Nil
Adventure Play Precinct	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Dog off lead park removed.2. Shelters and BBQ facilities removed.3. Mountain bike activities removed.
Lake and Ephemeral Precinct	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Kiosk considered as a future option.2. Recreational lake replaced with expanded Melbourne Water wetlands.3. Shelters and BBQ facilities deleted.4. Aquifer Storage and Retrieval (ASR) deleted.5. Bridge/link over Corhanwarrabul Creek to Caribbean Park removed.6. Yarning circle added.7. Paths, boardwalks, bird hides and planting removed from the ephemeral precinct.

Stamford Park Maintenance

Over the last four (4) years, prior to the parklands being completed, the cost of maintaining the overall Stamford Park vegetation including garden bed maintenance, mowing and brush cutting as well as bushland management was approximately \$15,000 per year. It is now estimated that ongoing management of the parklands will be \$120,000 per year. This is being funded through the relevant Green Spaces and Environment teams Operating budgets.

Floodplain Management

The region to the north of Waterlea and Bankside Estates as well as the Stamford Park precinct itself form part of the greater Corhanwarrabul floodplain (Figure 1). During storms it is an intended and natural behaviour for the water level within Corhanwarrabul creek to rise and spill out into the surrounding parkland, and in doing so, slowing the flow of stormwater and storing it to prevent erosion and flooding downstream. The volume of water an area can store during a storm event is referred to as “flood storage”.

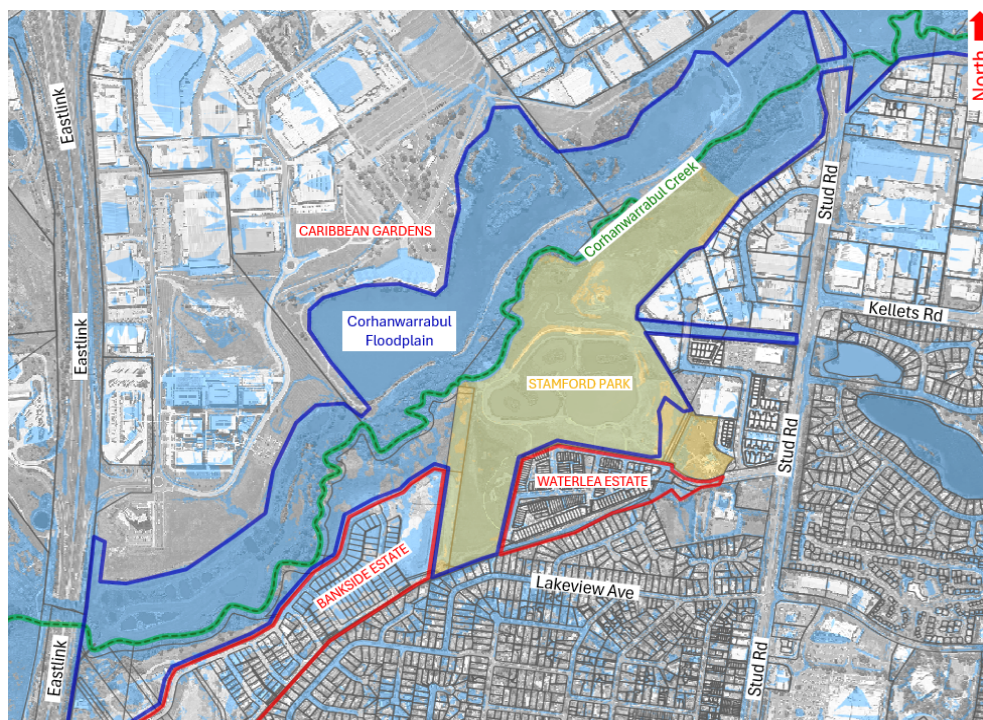


Figure 1 – Corhanwarrabul Floodplain

There are several stormwater assets within Stamford Park (Figure 2) with maintenance responsibility shared between Melbourne Water and Council. A maintenance agreement with Melbourne Water is currently in development following completion of the parkland works which will formalize arrangements.

A description of each of the stormwater assets is attached in Attachment 3.

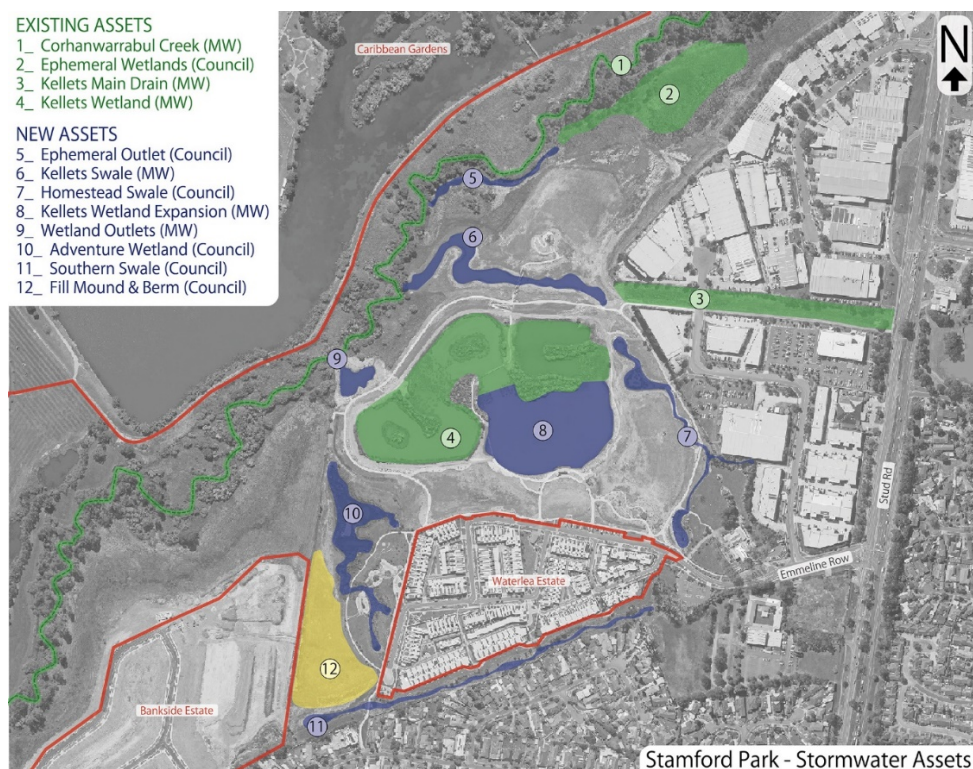


Figure 2 – Stamford Park Stormwater Assets

Melbourne Water assets have predominantly been left with minimal maintenance over the years which could be a contributing factor in flooding events which have been experienced.

All new developments are designed to cater for and take flooding into consideration. The design standard is for all homes to be constructed above the 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) event flood level - a significant rainfall event which has a 1% chance in occurring each year, commonly referred to as the “100 year storm”. Melbourne Water are the authority responsible for the management of Corhanwarrabul Creek and the surrounding floodplain, as such they nominate the level at which developments and homes must be constructed to based on detailed flood modelling.

Water within the Corhanwarrabul floodplain has reached or at times exceeded the predicted peak flood level for the 1% AEP storm during storms which are less significant in magnitude than that of the 1% AEP. Figures 3 and 4 are from a storm event in January 2024 which depicts a flood level above that predicted for the 1% AEP event.



Figure 3 – Flood event January 2024



Figure 4 – Flood event January 2024

This indicates one or all the following are true:

- a. The capacity of Corhanwarrabul Creek is significantly lower than what is typical of an urban waterway of a similar size due to instream obstructions caused by excessive vegetation cover, silt or litter build-up,
- b. The flood storage available within the floodplain and creek differ from those calculated based on survey and terrain modelling, and/or
- c. Ground levels have been altered somewhere within the floodplain outside of the Stamford Park precinct.

Based on detailed before-and-after scenario flood modelling, the development of the parklands and wetlands by Council increased the available flood storage within the region, in doing so lowering flood levels in the vicinity during the 1% AEP event. The additional flood storage is evident in the amount of excavation undertaken in the area to accommodate the wetland expansion and new waterway, creating more room for water to be stored during flood events.

Council officers also have certainty that the changes made within the Stamford Park precinct are not the cause of the elevated flood levels as the issue predates any works associated with the Stamford Park precinct being undertaken.

Council officers have contacted Melbourne Water on multiple occasions from November 2020 to present day requesting information t into why flood waters are exceeding the predicted 1% AEP flood level during less severe storms. However, Council is yet to receive a response beyond Melbourne Water stating that they are investigating the issue. As the risk of another flood event similar to the one in January 2024 is possible, Council should continue to advocate to Melbourne Water to prioritise action to protect properties adjacent to the Corhanwarrabul floodplain.

2. ENGAGEMENT

Extensive community consultation occurred in the development of the Stamford Park Masterplan. Stamford Park Steering Committee and Council officer consultation comments were incorporated into the concept design.

Melbourne Water have been a key stakeholder throughout the project given Stamford Park's location being in a flood plain and works to several of their key assets.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The development of Stamford Park addresses a significant need in Rowville and the surrounding community to provide public open space and recreation opportunities. Prior to Council's works at Stamford Park, the area surrounding the Melbourne Water wetlands was unused and overgrown. Stamford Park now provides the community a much valued opportunity to socialise and enjoy nature.

4. CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS

Implementation of the recommendation of this report are 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 IMPLICATIONS

Stamford Park is largely situated within the Corhanwarrabul floodplain. The design and construction works significantly centre on integrated water management and hydraulic functionality.

Works undertaken as part of the Stamford Park project have provided multiple environmental benefits both in terms of enhancing flood capacity and water quality, as well as improved biodiversity outcomes.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The Stamford Park project was predominantly funded through the sale of a residential development pad for \$17 million.

The ongoing maintenance responsibilities at Stamford Park are currently being formalised with Melbourne Water. Discussions have been occurring with relevant Council teams over the life of the project to ensure appropriate resources have been allocated to meet Council's ongoing maintenance responsibilities.

7. RISKS

There are environmental and financial risks associated with flood management in Corhanwarrabul Creek floodplain including possible damage to both Council and community assets as well as private dwellings. A flood event greater than 1% AEP has a likelihood of being 'possible', with the consequence potentially being 'critical' should properties be damaged by floodwaters.

8. KNOX COMMUNITY AND 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.

Natural Environment & Sustainability

Strategy 3.1 - Preserve our biodiversity and waterways, and enhance our urban landscape.

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. STATEMENT OF COMPATIBILITY

There are no legislative obligations under the Human Rights Charter, Child Safe Standards or the Gender Equity Act that are incompatible with the recommendation in this report.

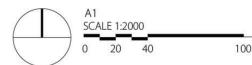
11. CONFIDENTIALITY

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

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment 1 - Stamford Park Masterplan - 2014 [8.2.1 - 1 page]
2. Attachment 2 - Stamford Park concept plan 2019 [8.2.2 - 1 page]
3. Attachment 3 - Stamford Park Stormwater Assets [8.2.3 - 5 pages]





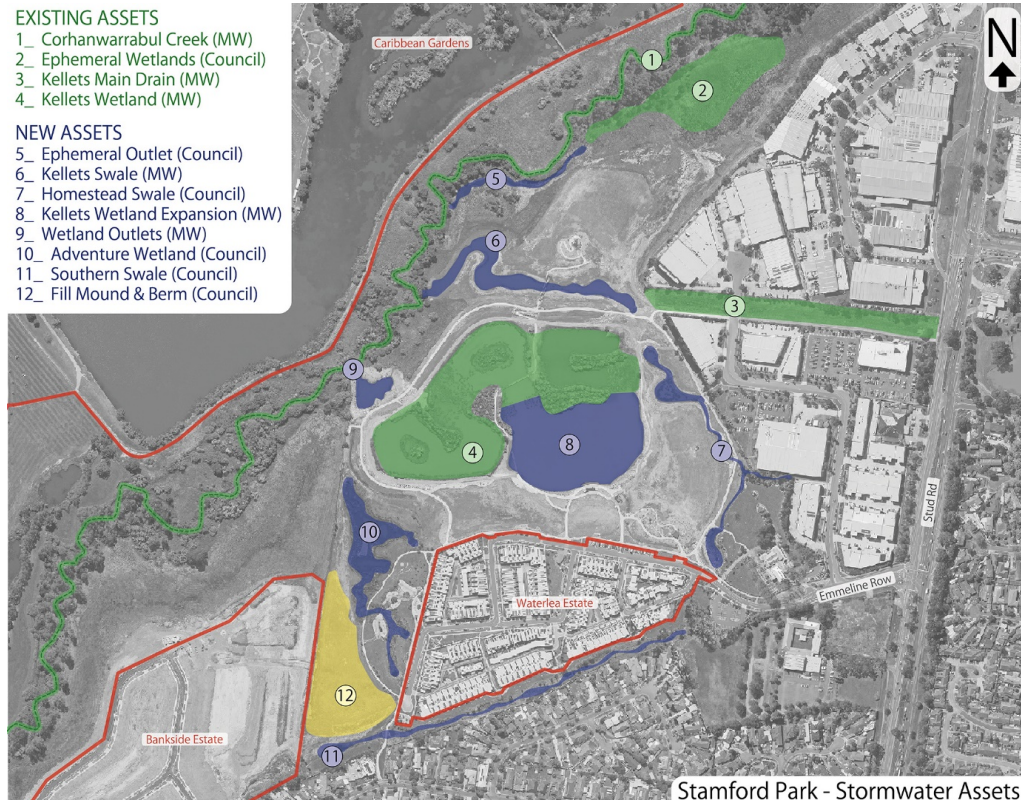
LANDSCAPE CONCEPT MASTERPLAN (REVISED)

Stamford Park Parklands

PROJ/DRG NO 316884-00 D003 REV 02 DRAWN HJM CHKD KA APPROV KA DATE 16.08.2019

Tract

Stamford Park - Stormwater Assets



1. Corhanwarrabul Creek (Melbourne Water)

The creek is typical of most urban waterways with the following characteristics:

- Narrow and relatively shallow with very limited longitudinal grade (slope) to the waterway bed.
- Deep and often incised (eroded) banks
- Mounds of accumulated sediment and gravels in areas of low velocity
- Dense (impenetrable) vegetation spanning over the waterway from bank-to-bank
- Infested with weeds (willow, honeysuckle & large swaths of blackberry brambles)
- Islands of floating litter caught in low lying vegetation
- Very limited direct access to sunlight
- Subject to damaging “pulse” flows due to the urbanization of the upstream catchment

A summary of an assessment by Melbourne Water of the waterway’s condition in 2018 is depicted below where the stormwater condition and water quality of the waterway were deemed as very low.



2. Ephemeral Wetlands (Council)

A low-lying region within the greater floodplain adjacent to a section of Corhanwarrabul Creek where the waterway is shallower and wider, which promotes stormwater to spill out and into the ephemeral wetland. Being frequently subject to inundation from the adjacent creek allows the region to support several state and regionally endangered wetland vegetation species.

3. Kelletts Main Drain (Melbourne Water)

A Melbourne Water asset consisting of a traditional trapezoidal channel above and a large diameter pipe below ground used to efficiently transfer stormwater from the upstream catchment.

Regular day-to-day stormwater flows are transferred via the underground pipe with the above ground channel only engaging during larger storms. The channel is heavily vegetated with a combination of native wetland plants and weeds, mounds of silt and gravels are present throughout the channel. It is likely the channel not functioning as originally intended and is in need of maintenance by Melbourne Water.

4. Kelletts Wetland (Melbourne Water)

Constructed by Melbourne Water circa 2010 as a dual-purpose asset through:

- Providing additional flood protection to the region, in doing so allow for development of the adjacent industrial/commercial precinct to the east.
- Treating stormwater from the urbanised catchment upstream prior to discharging into Corhanwarrabul Creek.

The wetland has been largely left to its own devices since 2010 with several state and regionally endangered wetland vegetation species colonising the wetland. Being well established, the wetland is of high value with respect to Biodiversity and forms a critical part of a corridor for nomadic and migratory movements of birds, insects and fish.

However, being downstream of an urbanised catchment the wetland is frequently subject to an influx of floating litter. As part of the development of the Stamford Park precinct Council requested Melbourne Water install a gross pollutant trap upstream of the wetland to better manage litter, however this was not actioned by Melbourne Water.

5. Ephemeral Outlet (Council)

As part of the precinct's development a more formalised outlet servicing the ephemeral wetland was designed. The outlet consists of a vegetated swale of varying width and depth which meanders its way from the ephemeral wetland to Corhanwarrabul Creek.

A link between ephemeral wetland and the creek was created to not only improve the health/function of the wetland but to provide a consistent path for stormwater to travel from the wetland whilst avoiding the neighbouring industrial/commercial properties.

6. Kelletts Swale (Melbourne Water)

Kelletts Swale was once the continuation of the existing Melbourne Water owned Kelletts Main Drain (3) to the east. As part of the Stamford Park project, the old underground main drain and trapezoidal channel were removed and replaced with a "naturalised" swale.

The swale has been planted with indigenous grasses on its banks and aquatics below the surface of the water and is directly linked to Corhanwarrabul Creek, effectively making the swale another arm of the natural waterway. This improves the connectivity of both assets not only from a biodiversity or habitat perspective but also from a flood management perspective. As storms cause the water level within Corhanwarrabul Creek to rise the water level within the swale can rise with it, providing critical flood storage.

7. Homestead Swale (Council)

The homestead swale acts as a conduit for stormwater between the historic Stamford Park Homestead, the adjacent industrial/commercial precinct and Kelletts swale. The swale is heavily vegetated with indigenous plants and is peppered with several billabongs along its length. The billabongs help slow the movement of stormwater down, reduce erosion and provide habitat for local flora & fauna.

8. Kelletts Wetland Expansion (Melbourne Water)

The existing Melbourne Water owned Kelletts wetland was expanded as part of the Stamford Park development. The expansion consists of three deep ponds connected via a larger, shallower basin resulting in an expanse of open water. The open water is a point of interest for the visiting public resulting in an uplift in amenity whilst providing a more diverse habitat for plants and animals.

9. Wetland Outlets (Melbourne Water)

The area linking the existing Kelletts wetland and the creek was redesigned to reduce likelihood of blockage whilst being expanded to accommodate the adventure wetland outlet. The area was previously prone to sediment build up on which plants would establish which would create a dam between the wetland and the creek. This would artificially raise the water level within Kelletts wetland, drowning out vegetation and reducing the amount of flood storage available.

10. Adventure Wetland (Council)

Referred to as the “adventure wetland” due to the wetland being nestled within a adventure/nature play focused playground, it is responsible for treating stormwater derived from Waterlea Estate before it’s discharged into Corhanwarrabul Creek. Upstream of the wetland (within Waterlea Estate) is a Council owned gross pollutant trap which removes most of the floating litter, gravels and coarse sediment from the stormwater before it’s received by the wetland.

The wetland consists of a meandering waterway linking numerous billabongs of varying size and depth all of which are planted with indigenous wetland species including dense grasses along the banks and submerged aquatics below the water’s surface. Much like its larger cousin (the Melbourne Water owned Kelletts Wetland), Council’s adventure wetland is now considered of high value with respect to Biodiversity and forms a critical part of a corridor for nomadic and migratory movements of birds, insects and fish.

11. Southern Swale (Council)

The southern swale was constructed to convey stormwater derived from existing residential precinct to the south of Waterlea Estate during larger storm events. The southern swale is connected to a large diameter stormwater pipe which runs under the southern boundary of Bankside Estate prior to discharging into Melbourne Water’s Rowville Main Drain.

Whilst its primary function is conveying stormwater during large storms the swale is heavily vegetated with indigenous wetland plants and as such acts as an ephemeral waterway and habitat corridor.

12. Fill Mound & Berm (Council)

The fill mound and berm were constructed to:

- c. Reduce Stamford Park project costs by reusing soil excavated from the Kelletts Swale area (rather than paying to dispose of it elsewhere).
- d. Provide a base on which a future road link between Waterlea & Bankside Estates can be located.
- e. Create a physical barrier to mitigate flood water originating from Corhanwarrabul Creek making its way into the “southern swale”.

The image below was taken shortly after a storm in July 2024 and is a great example of how the fill mound and berm separates the “southern swale” from flood waters originating from Corhanwarrabul Creek. Without the fill mound and berm acting as a barrier to flood waters there is a risk of flood damage to the existing residential precinct to the south.



8.3 Response to Notice of Motion 163 – Eastern Regional Group and Greater South East Melbourne

Final Report Destination: Council
Paper Type: For Noting
Author: Chief Executive Officer, Bruce Dobson
Executive: Chief Executive Officer, Bruce Dobson

SUMMARY

Knox Council is a member of a number of regional groupings that comprise multiple Councils coming together in a formal way to work together and advocate for particular outcomes. These groupings include the Eastern Region Group of Councils (ERG) and Greater South East Melbourne (GSEM).

This report provides a summary of achievements of the ERG and GSEM and the cost of membership of both organisations, as requested by Council in Notice of Motion 163 considered at the 28 January 2025 Council meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to receive and note this report on the comparative achievements of the Eastern Region Group and Greater South East Melbourne and the cost of membership of both organisations.

1. DISCUSSION

Knox Council is a member of a number of regional groupings that comprise multiple Councils coming together in a formal way to work together and advocate for particular outcomes. These groupings include the Eastern Region Group of Councils (ERG) and Greater South East Melbourne (GSEM).

Regional groupings allow for collaboration and pooling of effort to focus on outcomes that will benefit the region as a whole, and also use their collective voice to highlight and amplify the needs and advocacy efforts of individual Councils.

A summary of ERG and GSEM and their recent achievements is included below.

Eastern Region Group

The ERG currently comprises five Councils – Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges. ERG meetings held every two months are attended by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor or other appointed Councillor, Chief Executive Officers of each of the five Councils, and the ERG Executive Officer. The CEO's also meet with the Executive Officer in between the wider ERG meetings to work on ERG initiatives, monitor progress and plan future agendas and activities.

ERG's activities are guided by its Strategic Plan, most recently set for 2021-2025. The next Strategic Plan is currently being developed. ERG's goal is to be a catalyst for collaborative action and a trusted voice on regionally significant matters, with a mission to work together to make lives

better, create better places and deliver better performance across all Councils. ERG's vision for the Eastern Region is to be a connected, healthy, sustainable and prosperous region.

ERG has four strategic pillars in its Strategic Plan:

- **Communities** – more resilient and cohesive communities who enjoy an improving quality of life, with better health and wellbeing and great access to services
- **Environment** – a region known for its environmental stewardship and regional responses to sustainability (water, waste, energy and emissions), with spaces for people and nature, and where healthy ecosystems support healthy people and growing economies
- **Economy** – diverse local employment opportunities support an adaptable workforce, ready for the jobs of the future who enjoy a connected, competitive, diverse and prosperous future
- **Infrastructure and buildings** – that promote social cohesion, support equality of opportunity, resource efficiency and health in a region that's easy to get around and where active or public transport is preferred for short distances

A copy of the ERG Strategic Plan 2021-2025 is included in **Attachment 1**.

A focus of ERG's work in 2024/25 has been the development of an ERG advocacy platform for the 2025 Federal election. This has been included for information in **Attachment 2**. Other key work in 2024/25 has included the development of Plan East, a proposition for sustainable growth in the region, and a submission to the State Government's Plan for Victoria consultation process.

Further detail on this work and links to the documents prepared are included here - [Plan East and A Plan for Victoria - Eastern Region Group of Councils](#).

The following list of achievements over the last three financial years has been drawn from the ERG Annual Reports for those years.

2023/24

Eighteen actions formed the basis of ERG's workplan involving integrated planning, shared services, joint procurement and advocacy. Implementation highlights include:

- **Advocacy** was predominantly to the State Government and related to the Housing Statement, amendments to the Victoria Planning Provisions and Planning Schemes, and seeking a more cooperative approach to better support regional priorities and community needs. Other advocacy focussed on the financial sustainability of councils and governance, including library funding, Waste Management Guidelines and the unintended consequences of applying Windfall Gains Tax to council land.
- ERG completed the grant funded **Health Innovation and Care Economy** project in conjunction with the Eastern Metropolitan Partnership. This project recommended opportunities to strengthen the health, innovation and care sectors in the east, developed with comprehensive research and stakeholder input.
- The **Joint Fair Access Policy** was developed involving seven councils. It aims to improve gender equitable access and use of publicly owned community sports infrastructure and support the Melbourne East Regional Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2032 implementation.
- ERG continues to support the Eastern Region Procurement Network (ERPN) to **accelerate joint procurement**. This has seen an increase in collaboration for the joint tendering of shared

services and exploration of opportunities for shared procurement, training/capability building and reporting.

- Regular support to several council officer groups, including in the areas of **reconciliation and gender equality**, to assist and progress opportunities regionally.
- Working with the Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (**EAHA**) and the Charter Group of Councils to understand and address the minimum social housing supply needs for the region through submissions, information sharing and projects.
- Liaison with and support to the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (**EAGA**) to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Foster productive relationships with key stakeholders through our website, social media (LinkedIn page) and e-newsletter and meet regularly with council Communications teams.

2022/23

Implementation highlights in the second year of the Strategic Plan included:

- **Advocacy** priorities were targeted towards the need for better collaboration between all levels of government to achieve better outcomes for communities in the east. Meetings were held with the Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Melissa Horne MP as well as local state and federal Members of Parliament to discuss local challenges and opportunities to work together and contribute to decision making on shared regional priorities.
- Completion of the **Regional Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2032**.
- Commencement and completion of Stage 1 of the **Health Innovation and Care Economy** project in conjunction with the Eastern Metropolitan Partnership, following a grant from the State Government's Metropolitan Partnerships Development Fund. The project explores opportunities to strengthen this sector in the east and involves comprehensive research and stakeholder engagement.
- Working with the Eastern Region Procurement Network to accelerate **joint procurement** and create a Memorandum of Understanding to underpin regional collaboration. With the support of Procurement Australia and SimPLY, this work has included the analysis of historical procurement data to identify opportunities for collaboration. Regular meetings of Procurement Managers were also supported by the ERG throughout the year.
- Regular support to several council officer groups, including the areas of **reconciliation and gender equality**, to assist and progress opportunities regionally.
- Working with EAHA and the Charter Group of Councils to understand and address the minimum **social housing supply needs** for the region, as calculated by Knox City Council for all ERG and Charter Councils.
- Continued to support to **EAGA** to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Regular communication to members and to foster productive relationships with key stakeholders through our website, social media (LinkedIn page) and quarterly e-newsletter.

2021/22

First year of the Strategic Plan implementation achievements include:

- Delivered the **Regional Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2032**.
- Advocacy targeted to the May 2022 **Federal election**. The ERG identified a range of capital works and projects to support our regional communities, grow the regional economy, and sustain our built and natural environment. Media releases, social media and the ERG website were regularly updated with news and information. ERG councils pursued meetings with local

members, and the ERG, with the support of regional groups, met with several Federal Ministers and Shadow Ministers to raise the profile of the region and ensure they were aware of ERG priorities.

- Working on the 2022 **State election** advocacy, with a focus on economic development in the region.
- **Reconciliation Advisory Groups and Action Plans** - ERG meets regularly with council officers to provide assistance with progressing activities and opportunities regionally, including the potential to create an online indigenous cultural awareness training module tailored for the region.
- Promoting **trails for tourism, health and movement** in conjunction with the **ETC**, as well as regional road, rail and bus priorities.
- Support to **EAGA** to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions.

Greater South East Melbourne

GSEM currently comprises eight Councils – Cardinia, Casey, Greater Dandenong, Frankston, Kingston, Knox, Monash and Mornington Peninsula. Knox has been a member of GSEM since 2019. GSEM is governed by a Board comprising three independent directors and the Chief Executive Officers from the eight Councils. The Council Mayors attend a number of board meetings during the year and play a key role in advocacy initiatives, particularly in meeting with State and Federal elected representatives.

GSEM's independent directors are Simon McKeon – an Australian businessman, philanthropist and sportsman, and 2011 Australian of the Year, Margaret Fitzherbert – whose background includes serving as a State MP between 2014 and 2018, and James Merlino – who served as a State MP from 2002 to 2022, including as Deputy Premier. This mix of independent directors intentionally brings an experienced and bipartisan approach to advocating for better outcomes for south east Melbourne. GSEM is supported by The Agenda Group which provides secretariat and advocacy assistance. GSEM has had a key focus on working alongside community members in understanding needs and promoting regional outcomes. This has included stakeholder reference groups and stakeholder involvement in various working groups on particular issues.

GSEM advocates for jobs, infrastructure, liveability, sustainability and wellbeing for the south east and everyone who works and lives in the region. GSEM seeks to be recognised as a vital region for growth, innovation and net-zero transition, with well-established partnerships, clear advocacy, and a strong reputation for driving solutions in transport, jobs, manufacturing, and housing and liveability.

GSEM's priorities over time have been responsive to community needs, and most recently GSEM has focused on five key workstreams to improve regional outcomes:

Jobs and Skills – While the GSEM region has seen significant expansion in recent years, that growth has not created opportunities equally across the region. Many people are unable to access the training, education or jobs they need. GSEM has spent significant effort in preparing a Jobs and Skills Roadmap for the region, developed following an intensive Jobs and Skills Summit held in the GSEM region in May 2024. The Roadmap was launched at Parliament House, Canberra, on 26 June 2024 with a delegation of Mayors, business, community and other regional leaders in attendance, along with Federal MPs representing the region and senior members of the

government and opposition. A copy of the Roadmap is included for information in **Attachment 3**. An implementation plan for the Roadmap has since been developed. The Jobs and Skills work and Roadmap implementation is being led by a working group involving community, business, education, State and Federal department and Council representatives, and is chaired by Knox's Chief Executive Officer.

Net zero emissions – GSEM has created a guide roadmap to help local governments, businesses and households reach net-zero emissions while achieving substantial cost-savings. This has been prepared in conjunction with the South East Councils Climate Change Alliance (SECCCA). An implementation plan has been developed and the eight Councils in the region are working collaboratively toward emissions reduction both within their Council operations and within the broader community.

Transport – GSEM's work on transport is grounded in transport not being a means to an end, but rather an enabler of productivity, liveability, connection to precincts and activity centres, and jobs. Key projects within GSEM's transport focus include advocacy for early planning for a South East Melbourne Airport, the extension and upgrade of Thompsons Road, and the Caulfield-Rowville Trackless Rapid Transit (trackless tram) solution. GSEM has used its voice to advocate for important transport projects within Knox including the trackless tram, Dorset Road extension and improvements to Wellington and Napoleon Roads.

Housing and liveability – Given the significant amount of change underway being led by the State Government with regard to planning and housing, this work focuses on ensuring there is a GSEM voice across the numerous activities under way in representing regional needs and outcomes. A submission was made to the State Government's Plan for Victoria consultation process in August 2024.

Manufacturing – With manufacturing a significant feature of the south-east economy, this workstream focuses on building the profile of the manufacturing sector across the south east, attracting more manufacturers to the region, and securing infrastructure investment that will improve the environment for existing and new manufacturers.

A summary of recent GSEM activity and achievements is included below.

The launch of GSEM's Federal Election Platform in early December 2024 created media across radio and the Herald Sun. The platform launch involved community members who would benefit if the projects are funded. Since that time, the Platform has been distributed to the Cabinet, Shadow Cabinet and local MPs, resulting in meetings with a number of MPs. GSEM's Federal Election Platform is included in **Attachment 4**.

Letters to new Victorian Ministers following cabinet changes in late 2024 have resulted in meetings being scheduled with the Nick Staikos, Minister for Local Government, Colin Brooks MP, Minister for Industry and Advanced Manufacturing, and Harriet Shing MP, Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop, Minister for Housing and Building, Minister for Development Victoria and Precincts.

A December 2024 meeting with Julian Hill MP assisted the Jobs and Skills Working Group to present policy ideas to help migrant families and skilled job seekers better find employment locally and navigate a complex system.

GSEM has focused on improvements for the region and has sought to increase its profile through targeted advocacy across priority issues and series of events. Some of GSEM's more recent achievements include:

- The 2022 investment in the Dingley Recycled Water Scheme (\$72m) is a direct outcome of GSEM's advocacy.
- In 2024 the federal and state governments announced \$46.6 million for the Western Port Recycled Water Scheme.
- The participation of both state and federal government representatives on the Jobs and Skills working group.
- The Jobs and Skills Roadmap launched in Canberra in June 2024 by Minister Brendan O'Connor. The GSEM event at Parliament House was attended by most regional MPs and all Cabinet Ministers from Victoria, along with Coalition representatives.
- In 2024 the GSEM Jobs and Skills Summit attracted almost 200 stakeholders to the one-day event held in the City of Casey. Minister Hutchins, the Victorian Leader of the Opposition, Vice Chancellors and others all made a contribution to the GSEM Jobs and Skills Roadmap content as a result.
- GSEM has conducted research such as the Decentralisation study which found that if some public service jobs were relocated to the suburban National Employment and Innovation Centres or NEICs (which include Monash and Dandenong in the GSEM region) there would be a \$27 billion boost over 30 years.
- The launch of the GSEM Decentralisation Report in November 2023 saw extensive media coverage across multiple avenues. This elevated GSEM as an advocate for the 'city of cities' approach to urban planning across Melbourne. Further detail on this work and a copy of the report can be access here - <https://www.gsem.org.au/projects/decentralisation-and-the-neics>.
- Late in 2023 GSEM's advocacy ensured the Victorian government included the south east airport in its submission to the federal government's Aviation Green Paper. Following up in 2024, GSEM also advocated to have the south east airport retained in the new Plan for Victoria.
- A spin off from the GSEM-supported Net Zero Emissions Roadmap project is a bid for a Net A Zero Cities Cooperative Research Centre. The consortium is supported across NSW, Qld, the ACT and Victoria with Monash University and GSEM being the Victorian partners.
- The Jobs and Skills Working Group model is being used to establish and implement 2025 advocacy plans for transport, housing and liveability, net zero emissions, manufacturing and the continuation of jobs and skills.

2. ENGAGEMENT

There has been no external consultation undertaken in relation to this report.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Both ERG and GSEM contribute toward improved outcomes for communities within each region through the work they undertake.

4. CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS

Both ERG and GSEM undertake initiatives aimed at reducing emissions across the regions.

ERG has a number of objectives within its Environment strategic priority relevant to climate change, including reducing regional emissions, increasing active transport and accelerating roll-out of electric vehicles, and seeking funding for Councils to replace cost-shared street lights.

One of GSEM's priority projects has been the development and now implementation of a regional roadmap to net zero emissions. The roadmap, developed by GSEM and the South East Councils Climate Change Alliance (SECCA), identifies priority cost-effective opportunities to assist the Councils, businesses and households reduce emissions.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Both ERG and GSEM have initiatives focused on broader amenity and environmental improvements within the respective regions.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Council membership fees for ERG are currently \$35,000 per annum (excluding GST). This funding contributes toward ERG's payment of an Executive Officer and support staff, along with external project costs.

Membership of GSEM is currently \$50,000 per annum (excluding GST). This funding contributes to independent director fees, external project costs, and secretariat and advocacy work undertaken for GSEM by The Agenda Group.

7. RISKS

There are no specific risk implications to note in this report.

8. KNOX COMMUNITY AND COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025

The work undertaken by ERG and GSEM at a regional level supports many of the strategies included within the Knox Council Plan 2021-25, including:

Opportunity & Innovation

Strategy 1.1 - Maximise the local economy by supporting existing businesses and attracting new investment.

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

Neighbourhoods, Housing & Infrastructure

Strategy 2.1 - Plan for and support diverse housing to meet changing community needs.

Strategy 2.3 - Provide, maintain and advocate for accessible and sustainable ways to move around Knox.

Natural Environment & Sustainability

Strategy 3.1 - Preserve our biodiversity and waterways, and enhance our urban landscape.

Strategy 3.2 - Prepare for, mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

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. STATEMENT OF COMPATIBILITY

There are no legislative obligations under the Human Rights Charter, Child Safe Standards or the Gender Equity Act that are incompatible with the recommendation in this report.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

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

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment 1 - ERG Strategic Plan - 2021-2025 [**8.3.1** - 14 pages]
2. Attachment 2 - ERG Advocacy Platform - 2025 [**8.3.2** - 17 pages]
3. Attachment 3 - GSEM Jobs and Skills Roadmap Brochure [**8.3.3** - 16 pages]
4. Attachment 4 - GSEM Federal Election Platform [**8.3.4** - 4 pages]



Strategic Plan

2021 - 2025



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Indigenous acknowledgement

The ERG recognises the traditional custodians of the land we call the eastern region. We acknowledge their rich cultural heritage and spiritual connection to the land. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and value their ongoing contribution to the cultural heritage of the region.

Background & context

The Eastern Region Group

The Eastern Region Group of Councils (ERG) comprises six local government authorities of eastern Melbourne - Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges. ERG councils collaborate and partner on shared priorities through advocacy, integrated planning, shared services and joint procurement to benefit the communities of the region. Our vision for the ERG is to be a catalyst for collaborative action and a trusted voice on regionally significant matters. Our mission is to work together to make lives better, create better places and deliver better performance across all councils.

Our vision for the region is to be a connected, healthy, sustainable and prosperous region.

Our focus

We work towards our vision through a focus on four strategic pillars:

- **Our communities** - improved health, wellbeing and social connectedness
- **Our environment** - sustainable living and access to nature
- **Our economy** - a connected, competitive, diverse and prosperous region
- **Our infrastructure and buildings** - promote social cohesion, health and equality of opportunity

Our organising principles

To be successful we will:

- Undertake activities that benefit all councils
- Reduce duplication
- Avoid competing interests/tensions
- Only take on projects that are supported and achievable

to contribute towards:

- Better community outcomes
- Enhanced value through shared resources
- A strengthened voice through strong and clear messaging
- Economic benefits through scale, capital return, or increased external funding

These organising principles inform the criteria we use to identify our priorities and actions.

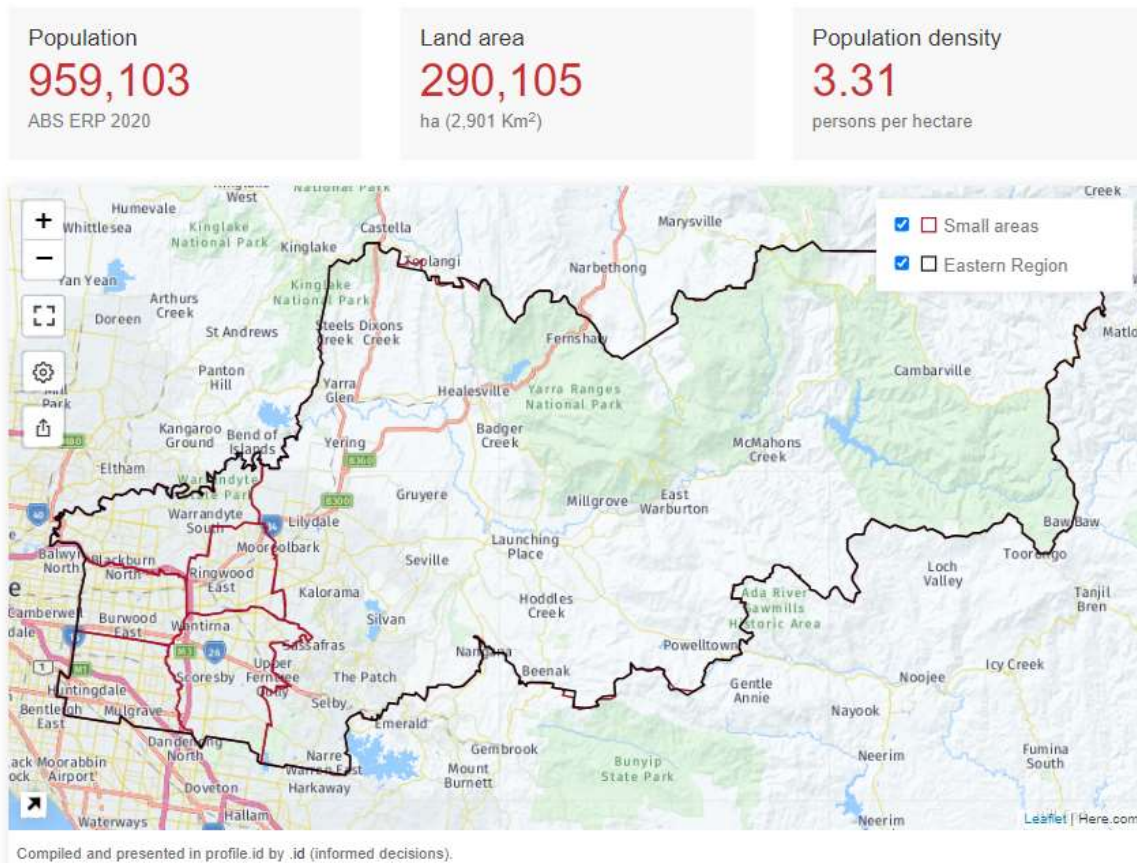
COVID Recovery

Consistent with cities globally, we are working towards the swiftest and strongest possible recovery for our communities. The C40 Mayors Agenda for a clean and just recovery identifies that *“the global pandemic has exacerbated a wider social and economic crisis, which has fundamentally altered societies everywhere. The measures taken to contain COVID-19 are estimated to have wiped out 400 million full-time jobs in the second quarter of 2020, resulting in a 14% contraction in working hours compared with pre-crisis levels (at the end of 2019)¹.”*

While Australia has fared well globally, for the eastern region some areas have been disproportionately impacted. Over the year since the COVID-19 pandemic began, the outer east suffered the second largest year on year fall in the number (and third highest percentage loss) of people employed out of all regions in Victoria. The importance of local connections and being able to access jobs, services and amenities close to home has never been greater.

¹ <https://www.c40.org/other/agenda-for-a-green-and-just-recovery>

The Eastern Region



The region extends from 15km to Melbourne's CBD eastwards into the Yarra and Dandenong Ranges. It is a major population centre with a significant industry base with specialisations in advanced manufacturing, wholesale /distribution, health services, education (including Universities and TAFE institutes), as well as retail, tourism and other service industries.

There are almost 1 million residents, 20 per cent of Melbourne's total metropolitan resident population. Over 75,000 businesses create 350,000+ jobs. The gross revenue or total sales/income generated in the region is estimated at \$98,868.937 million². The region's Gross Regional Product (GRP) was \$55,333M in 2019.

The manufacturing sector is of greatest value but not the largest employer. The top five employing industries are health care & social assistance; retail trade; education & training; manufacturing; and construction.

	ERG total	Knox	Manningham	Maroondah	Monash	Whitehorse	Yarra Ranges
Population	959,103	165,147	128,929	119,401	204,936	180,735	159,462
Jobs	365,398	66,244	30,572	44,187	145,328	72,416	41,700
Businesses	75,342	13,860	14,048	9,000	22,096	16,784	13,400
GRP (SGS)	\$58,970M*	\$8.839M	\$4,085M	\$5,384M	\$16,811M	\$10,552	\$4,896M
Council budget	\$1.05B	\$174M	\$126M	\$157M	\$191M	\$205M	\$193M

Table 1 Summary of ERG region council population, number of jobs, businesses and economic output in 2019

² REMPLAN <https://login.remplan.com.au/economy/>

Strategic Priorities

The challenges of COVID-19 have strengthened our communities' connections to their local area, and so the concept of the 20 minute neighbourhood underpins many of our priorities and actions. Improving access to services, access to safe footpaths and trails, and increasing job choices closer to home are central to achieving our vision of a connected, healthy, sustainable and prosperous region.

Over the next four years we will draw on our shared strengths - knowledge, experience and data to address challenges around four areas or pillars: community, environment, economy and infrastructure.

	Regional outcomes	Objectives
 <p>Our communities</p>	<p>More resilient and cohesive, communities who enjoy an improving quality of life, with better health and wellbeing and great access to services.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Empower communities to take active responsibility for their own and each other's wellbeing, safety and health 2. Respond to homelessness and increase social housing supply 3. Tackle family violence, mental health and social inclusion 4. Create opportunities for inclusive, creative and cultural experiences 5. Improve pathways to employment for youth and over 50's across key sectors in our region
 <p>Our Environment</p>	<p>A region known for its environmental stewardship and regional responses to sustainability (water, waste, energy and emissions), with spaces for people and nature, and where healthy ecosystems support healthy people and growing economies.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Urban greening and increased canopy trees for shade, clean air and high amenity 20-minute neighbourhoods 7. Reduce regional emissions to support global emissions reduction aligned with the Paris Agreement 8. Increase active transport and accelerate roll-out of electric vehicles 9. Seek funding for councils to replace cost-shared street lights and implement smart city technologies 10. Improve recycling and waste management through education, joint procurement and new technologies
 <p>Our Economy</p>	<p>Diverse local employment opportunities support an adaptable workforce, ready for the jobs of the future who enjoy a connected, competitive, diverse and prosperous future.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Encourage working locally to retain local economic benefits and reduce congestion 12. Support regional economic development and investment attraction through data, analysis and research 13. Utilise shared service opportunities to support economic growth, Better Approvals, and deliver campaigns
 <p>Our Buildings & Infrastructure</p>	<p>Our buildings and infrastructure promote social cohesion, support equality of opportunity, resource efficiency and health in a region that's easy to get around and where active or public transport is preferred for short distances.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Improved transport options, integration and service levels through bus service network reviews, and addressing missing rail and service links 15. Coordinate land use planning to deliver sustainable, resilient, adaptable and healthy buildings and increased social and affordable housing 16. Explore options to improve the contribution of planning and building systems to climate resilience and ESD
 <p>Our Operations</p>	<p>Our mission is to work together to make lives better, create better places and deliver better performance across all councils. The ERG is a catalyst for collaboration and a trusted voice on regionally significant matters.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Strong engagement and productive working relationships with members, and with groups active in the region and stakeholders critical to our success. 18. Clear communication with members and stakeholders 19. Good governance and management of ERG resources

Our Communities

Improving community health and wellbeing is central to diverse, inclusive and successful communities that are better able to withstand major shocks and stresses. Equity of access to opportunity and addressing hardship and disadvantage builds social cohesion, increases community safety and reduces conflict, and improves employment and life outcomes.



We want to achieve More resilient and cohesive, communities who enjoy an improving quality of life, with better health and wellbeing and great access to services.

Regional objectives

1. Empower communities to take active responsibility for their own and each other's wellbeing, safety and health
2. Respond to homelessness and increase social housing supply
3. Tackle family violence, mental health and social inclusion
4. Create opportunities for inclusive, creative and cultural experiences
5. Improve pathways to employment for youth and over 50's across key sectors in our region

Key Partners

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| ➤ Community Service Directors | ➤ Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA) | ➤ South Eastern Volunteers |
| ➤ Eastern Health | ➤ Eastern Access Community Health (EACH) | ➤ Eastern Metropolitan Partnership |
| ➤ Eastern Volunteers | | |

Be Kind campaigns

Yarra Ranges was an early adopter of the Be Kind initiative, quickly extending it to include: Be Kind to Business, Be Kind to Others and Be Kind to Yourself supported by resources and interactive media.

Working together, the initiative quickly extended across Melbourne's East reinforcing key messages and providing a consistent look and feel to councils' range of support services and activities. The program provided a range of coordinated support to the community during the unprecedented and difficult pandemic - making sure that help was available to those people who needed it most.



Be Kind Yarra Ranges

YouTube · Yarra Ranges Council
16 July 2020



Yarra Ranges Council - Be Kind Yarra Ranges

Facebook
16 July 2020



Be Kind to Business in five simple steps

Facebook
9 July 2020

Our Environment

Globally there is significant concern about the future of the planet and the need to address climate change for sustainable living. Human activity has become the leading cause of climate change causing hotter drier summers, droughts, bushfires and more extreme weather events. Resource conservation and climate action can also help accelerate economic recovery and enhance social equity. Access to clean air, water and to nature are central to health and wellbeing.



We want to be a region known for its environmental stewardship and regional responses to sustainability (water, waste, energy and emissions), with spaces for people and nature, and where healthy ecosystems support healthy people and growing economies.

Regional objectives

- 6. Urban greening and increased canopy trees for shade, clean air and high amenity 20-minute neighbourhoods
- 7. Reduce regional emissions to support global emissions reduction targets aligned with the Paris Agreement
- 8. Increase active transport and accelerate roll-out of electric vehicles
- 9. Seek funding for councils to replace cost-shared street lights and implement smart city technologies
- 10. Improve recycling and waste management through education, joint procurement and new technologies

Key Partners

- Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA)
- Integrated Water Management Forum
- Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Sub-group (MWRRG sub-group)
- Sustainability Victoria
- Eastern Region Trails Working Group

Australian-first collaboration will accelerate emissions reduction

Greenhouse alliances have taken collaboration to another level with ground-breaking national negotiations towards significant financial savings and emission reduction.

The coordinated negotiation by councils led by EAGA, GMCA, SECCCA and Ironbark with AusNet Services has secured a \$6.9M towards the upgrade of old mercury vapour lights to LEDs, reducing emissions by 220,000 tonnes over 20 years and adding to the \$22M in savings to date through the 2016-21 EDPR submission. Victorian Greenhouse Alliances led [two sector-wide submissions](#) to the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) which will save EAGA councils \$1.8M by 2026 and \$3.8M thereafter. See council savings [estimates here](#). This also improves the business case for major roads lighting upgrades.



Our Economy

The region's economy is significant and diverse. In our activity centres and across specialised activity clusters are 16 per cent of Greater Melbourne's jobs that contribute around \$57 million in Gross Regional Product (GRP). Our regional economy enjoys well-developed infrastructure and access to a highly skilled workforce. A growing number and diversity of local jobs and businesses are needed to sustain local communities and support a high quality of life. Resource conservation and climate action can stimulate the uptake of new technologies as well as the creation of new industries and jobs.



We want to ensure that diverse local employment opportunities support an adaptable workforce, ready for the jobs of the future who enjoy a connected, competitive, diverse and prosperous future.

Regional objectives

11. Encourage working locally to retain local economic benefits and reduce congestion
12. Support regional economic development and investment attraction through data, analysis and research
13. Utilise shared service opportunities to support economic growth, Better Approvals, and deliver campaigns

Key Partners

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------|
| ➤ Melbourne's East Regional Economic Development Group (MEREDG) | ➤ Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENS) | ➤ SEMMA |
| ➤ Economic and Planning Working Group (EPWG) | ➤ Secondary and Tertiary education sectors | ➤ NORTH Link |

"Engage. Innovate. Create" - VMS19 at Knox

Victorian manufacturing is world class and Melbourne's east is a key player .

Showcasing Victoria's manufacturing and its strong roots in the region, Melbourne East Regional Economic Development Group (MEREDG) worked with the Victorian Government and the Industry Capability Network to host the Victorian Manufacturing Showcase 2019.

The Minister for Jobs, Innovation and Trade, the Hon. Martin Pakula took time to meet many of the 100 businesses on show. 70 students from Monash Tech School were able to see a Kenworth truck, made in the Bayswater Business Precinct, intricate metalwork of Knox based firms Catten Industries and New Touch and explore the myriad of employment pathways and opportunities related to their studies in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).

MEREDG supports collaboration, business support training, and advocacy for essential economic infrastructure and the leading industry sectors across the region.



Our Infrastructure & Buildings

Covid restrictions and a growing population have increased demands on public spaces and changed the way we move around. Active local centres support our economic, social and cultural activities essential for high levels of amenity and to achieve a region of 20-minute neighbourhoods. Transport connections across the region have not kept pace with needs and must improve to enable equitable access to jobs and services. For now, investment in bus services is a practical and cost-effective way to address the need for people to access work, study and services.



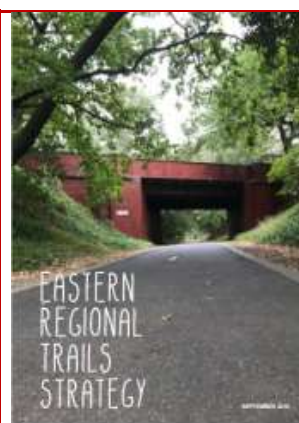
We want our buildings and infrastructure to promote social cohesion, support equality of opportunity, resource efficiency and health in a region that's easy to get around and where active or public transport is preferred for short distances.

Regional objectives

14. Improved transport options, integration and service levels through bus service network reviews, and addressing missing rail and service links
15. Coordinate land use planning to deliver sustainable, resilient, adaptable and healthy buildings and increased social and affordable housing
16. Explore options to improve the contribution of planning and building systems to climate resilience and ESD

Key Partners

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| ➤ Eastern Transport Coalition (ETC) | ➤ Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) | ➤ SEMCAM (asset managers) |
| ➤ Eastern Region Trails Working Group (ERTWG) | ➤ Council Alliance for Sustainable Built Environments (CASBE) | ➤ Infrastructure Victoria |
| ➤ Homelessness and Social Housing Charter Group | | ➤ Department of Transport |
| | | ➤ Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) |



World-class regional trails network

Taking a regional approach to establishing a world class network of trails for walking, cycling and even horse riding, the Eastern Region Trails Strategy provides a strong basis for coordinated council action and advocacy to address gaps in the network and to support marketing and promotional activities.

Significant progress has been made with over \$5.59M invested in 54.5 km of trails. A priority initiative is marketing the Melbourne to Warburton Trail - just 10 per cent (or 45,000) more visitors would increase network users to 1.5 million by June 2023, creating a total economic benefit of \$4.716M with long term job creation for 34 people.

How we work



The ERG facilitates collaboration and partners with government, industry, academia and community sectors on major issues of mutual benefit and / or regional need. We complement without duplicating the work of the many other regional groups.

Our mission is to work together to make lives better, create better places and deliver better performance across all councils. The ERG is a catalyst for collaboration and a trusted voice on regionally significant matters.

Collaboration and partnership are critical to how we work. Our approach is informed by our level of concern, control or influence. Many areas impacting the region involve shared responsibilities, while other areas are beyond local government's direct control. Our responses range from awareness raising to direct action and fall into four areas.

ERG actions support:

- Integrated Planning (built and social)
- Shared Services
- Advocacy
- Joint Procurement

Prioritisation criteria

Our Strategic Plan is implemented through a small number of regional actions that are prioritised annually from a rolling list according to the following criteria:

- Is it a big issue for the region (impacting / benefitting all councils)?
- Will this lead to better community outcomes?
- Is it achievable – will we make a difference?
- Will we create shared value for ERG councils?
- Will we reduce duplication / competition?

Our Operations

Operational objectives

17. Strong engagement and productive working relationships with members, and with groups active in the region and stakeholders critical to our success.
18. Clear communication with members and stakeholders
19. Good governance and management of ERG resources

Ongoing actions

- Deliver effective ERG meetings, CEO meetings and project activity meetings
- Ensure regular communications with members through meeting papers, Annual Report, website and other channels to maintain a strong regional identity.
- Coordinate and support strategic and opportunistic advocacy with stakeholders for regional priorities
- Foster productive relationships with key stakeholders, including the Minister for Local government and local state and federal members of parliament

Regional action summary: 2021 - 2025

#	Action	Year				Key partner	Project type					Strategic Alignment			
		1	2	3	4		JP - Joint Procurement SS - Shared Services IPB / IPS - Integrated Planning Social / Built Ad - Advocacy					Community (social)	Economy	Environment	Built Infrastructure
							JP	SS	IPS	IPB	AD				
1	Regional economic development & investment attraction strategy					MEREDG						✓			
2	Transforming movement around the east					ETC						✓			✓
3	Regional Sport & Recreation Infrastructure Strategy 2021- 2030					SRV						✓			✓
4	Advocacy - election, targeted and opportunistic					various						✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Accelerate joint procurement					LGV						✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Reconciliation Advisory Group and Action Plans					AAV						✓			
7	Eastern Region Land Use Framework Plan					EMP							✓		✓
8	Promote trails for tourism, health and movement					ETC						✓	✓		✓
9	Housing needs and site identification					EAHA						✓			✓
10	Regional road, rail & bus priorities					ETC									✓
11	Council data used Smarter											✓	✓	✓	✓
12	Deliver shared services incl. 'back of house', joint procurement, transformation											✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Support sustainable living and business - focus on waste					EAGA							✓		
14	Reduce energy use and GHG emission					EAGA						✓	✓	✓	✓
15	Review and update Strategic Plan					various						✓	✓	✓	✓
16	Council Elections 2024											✓			
17	Council Plans 2025											✓	✓	✓	✓
18	ERG operations - Deliver ERG meetings, CEO meetings. project support & Annual Report - Communicate with members regularly & maintain website and social media - Coordinate and support strategic and opportunistic advocacy - Foster productive relationships with key stakeholders					various						✓	✓	✓	✓

ERG discrete project
 Implementation / monitoring project outcomes
 Ongoing / BAU activity

Detailed Actions

#	Action	Detail	Year
1	Regional economic development & investment attraction strategy ERG led Project	This project will undertake joint research into the regional economy, including impacts of COVID on major industry sectors to develop strategies to support recovery, identify and leverage areas of strength and opportunities to grow and add value towards our preferred future jobs profile. Ensure the report is a strong input to council reviews/development of economic development strategies and supports investment attraction. Utilise the process to engage with major sector employers, Universities and government, in particular the EPWG who have collated baseline data relevant to the study (Dan Nichols - data & strategy)	1
2	Transforming movement around the east ERG led Project	Major transport projects such as Level Crossing Removals, North East Link and the Suburban Rail Loop when considered together have the potential to fundamentally change how people can move around Melbourne's east. We want to ensure that the significant opportunities for mode shift to sustainable / active travel, economic uplift and value capture and placemaking are realised. This project will create the vision of an integrated transport system for Melbourne's east in 2040 in a low carbon world, with on-demand and autonomous vehicles that anchor and enable 20-minute neighbourhoods and facilitate a network of movement options (anywhere to anywhere) to inform government and private sector investment.	2
3	Regional Sport & Recreation Infrastructure Strategy 2030 ERG led Project	Support ERG councils refresh the 2016 Melbourne East Regional Sport & Recreation Strategy to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accommodate increasing demand for stadium sport - improve participation for all genders and abilities - identify opportunities to share or better use facilities regionally - engage with the Education Department regionally to identify shared priorities Advocate for funding to deliver regional priorities	1
4	Advocacy - election, targeted and opportunistic ERG BAU / Project	Develop a strategy to advance identified advocacy priorities with a focus on the 2021/22 Federal election and the 2022 State budget and election Work with regional groups to align priorities and advocacy efforts and support others' advocacy campaigns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mental Health - access, wait times and service level gaps across the east - Community safety & inclusion; Gambling Alliance - Understanding of community housing to support Big Build roll out 	1
5	Accelerate Joint Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finalise and implement the Eastern Region Procurement Framework and demonstrate collaborative (joint) procurement and shared services 	1

	ERG led Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyse data, develop roadmap and report twice a year to the ERG on progress, benefits realized, upcoming contract renewals and opportunities for collaboration - Seek co-contributions towards a project support officer 	
6	Reconciliation Advisory Group and Action Plans BAU	Explore regional engagement with Indigenous communities through a Regional advisory/reference group to support Reconciliation Action Plan development and implementation	1
7	Eastern Region Land Use Framework Plan BAU	This plan is being led by the Eastern Metropolitan Partnership and remains in draft. To effectively monitor progress and facilitate input to the draft Framework Plan we need to have a coordinated response, informed by Council Plans. ERG will coordinate regional input and advocate for resources to support implementation of regional priorities.	1
8	Promote trails for tourism, health and movement BAU	Build support for flagship trails (Melbourne to Warburton etc) and promote hidden gems through marketing and promotion. Seek funding to build missing links and improve trails across the region.	1
9	Housing needs and site identification ERG with EAHA	Work with the Charter group of councils to explore application of the EAHA/Knox Housing Needs analysis methodology region-wide to understand and quantify specific local housing needs. Facilitate site identification and opportunities for social housing in areas of greatest need. Advocate for mandatory contributions towards affordable and social housing through mechanisms such as Inclusionary Zoning.	1-2
10	Regional road, rail & bus priorities ERG - ETC led	Work with the ETC and Infrastructure Directors to develop strategies and advocate to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve access, connectivity and levels of service for increased public transport patronage - Leverage better place and connectivity outcomes from major projects such as the SRL - Identify and fund major regional road improvements - Increase regional funding for local road safety and to support sustainable transport / 20-minute neighbourhoods - Address missing rail links and upgrades (e.g. rail to Rowville, Doncaster & Knox) - Support the bus service review - increase in bus routes/service levels particularly for key routes linking Latrobe, Deakin, and Monash Uni; the NS oval route and to connect to the SRL 	1-2
11	Council data used Smarter BAU	Post COVID and with the loss of local papers communication and engagement has become more challenging. There is an opportunity to better use technology to capture data, seek feedback, provide targeted information and utilise the expertise of segments of the community more effectively. Investigate and support more effective engagement and communications through a regional approach to the use of technology and council data to support effective and targeted community engagement.	1

12	Deliver shared services and shared 'back of house' services / joint procurement & transformation ERG BAU / Project	Initiate a business transformation network with an annual project nomination/pitch to ERG CEOs for support with a target of 3 pilots / proof of concept per year. Support working groups through benchmarking, convening and research Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Payroll; Training; Legal advice; Insurance; Internal Audit - After-hours services / customer service - Workforce planning; Employee assistance programs; recruitment - Hubs for shared skills to support integrated planning; - Back end support to community service providers Service areas such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School crossing supervisors: Knox and Yarra Ranges pilot NFP community model - Animal shelter: Animal control. - Food safety and health (inspections; policies; staff). - Street sweeping and similar services. - Integrated regional library administration 	2
13	Support sustainable living and business ERG led Project	Planning for FOGO - develop a common approach, engage with the MWRRG and seek funding from Sustainability Victoria or other source to support programs that increase recycling, reduce contamination and drive innovation (e.g. waste to energy)	2
14	Reduce energy use and GHG emission BAU - EAGA led	Support and build on EAGA led examples: PPA, solar/wind farms, road lighting, Solar savers (noting Manningham exploring solar over carparks; Knox and Yarra Ranges exploring solar over landfill) Advocacy for national policy responses to support energy efficiency and emissions reduction	On-going
15	Review and update ERG Strategic Plan ERG led project	Further develop the multi-council and stakeholder vision for the Eastern Region through the regular update and review of the 4 year ERG Strategic Plan. Close out progress with member councils and present draft strategy to new members post 2024 elections. Explore opportunities for integrated planning and major capital investment such as through City Deals.	3
16	Council Elections 2024 ERG led Project	Encourage collaboration to support Council elections, including candidate information, communications, elections and on-boarding activities	4
17	Council Plan 2025 ERG led Project	Council Plan - joint research, using latest census data to inform the Council Plans 2025 - 2039	4
18	Ongoing operational actions BAU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliver ERG meetings, CEO meetings. project support & Annual Report - Communicate with members regularly & maintain website and social media - Coordinate and support strategic and opportunistic advocacy - Foster productive relationships with key stakeholders 	On-going



ERG advocacy platform 2025



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Indigenous acknowledgement

The ERG recognises the Traditional Custodians of the land we call the eastern region. We acknowledge their rich cultural heritage and spiritual connection to the land. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and value their ongoing contribution to the cultural heritage of the region.

Region overview

The eastern metropolitan region of Melbourne is growing and changing...

The Eastern Region Group of Councils (ERG) comprises five local government authorities of eastern Melbourne - Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges. The ERG councils collaborate and partner on shared priorities through advocacy, integrated planning, shared services, and joint procurement to benefit the region's communities.

Our vision for a connected, healthy, sustainable, and prosperous region is progressed through a focus on four strategic pillars:

- **Our communities** - improved health, wellbeing, and social cohesion
- **Our environment** - sustainable living and access to nature
- **Our economy** - a connected, competitive, diverse and prosperous region
- **Our infrastructure and buildings** - promote social, economic, and environmental opportunities

The region extends from 15 kilometres to Melbourne's CBD eastwards into the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges. It is a major population centre with a significant industry base with specialisations in advanced manufacturing, wholesale /distribution, health services, education (including Universities and TAFE institutes), as well as retail, tourism and other service industries. The region includes the Box Hill Metropolitan Activity Centre, Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre and the Bayswater Business Precinct.

Residents enjoy a broad choice of health and recreation facilities, local and regional shopping destinations, and access to leading schools, universities, and other tertiary institutions. The region functions as 'Melbourne's lungs', with extensive green wedge areas, mature canopy trees and is Melbourne's primary water catchment.

The region's economy is significant, containing 11 per cent of Greater Melbourne's jobs and over \$49.5 billion Gross Regional Product (GRP). The manufacturing sector is of greatest value but not the largest employer. The top five employing industries are health care & social assistance; retail trade; education & training; manufacturing; and construction.



Total population

746,067

(Approx. 14% of Greater Melbourne's total)



Total land area (hectares)

282,115

(28% of Greater Melbourne's 999,251 hectares)



Gross regional product (\$B)

\$49.5

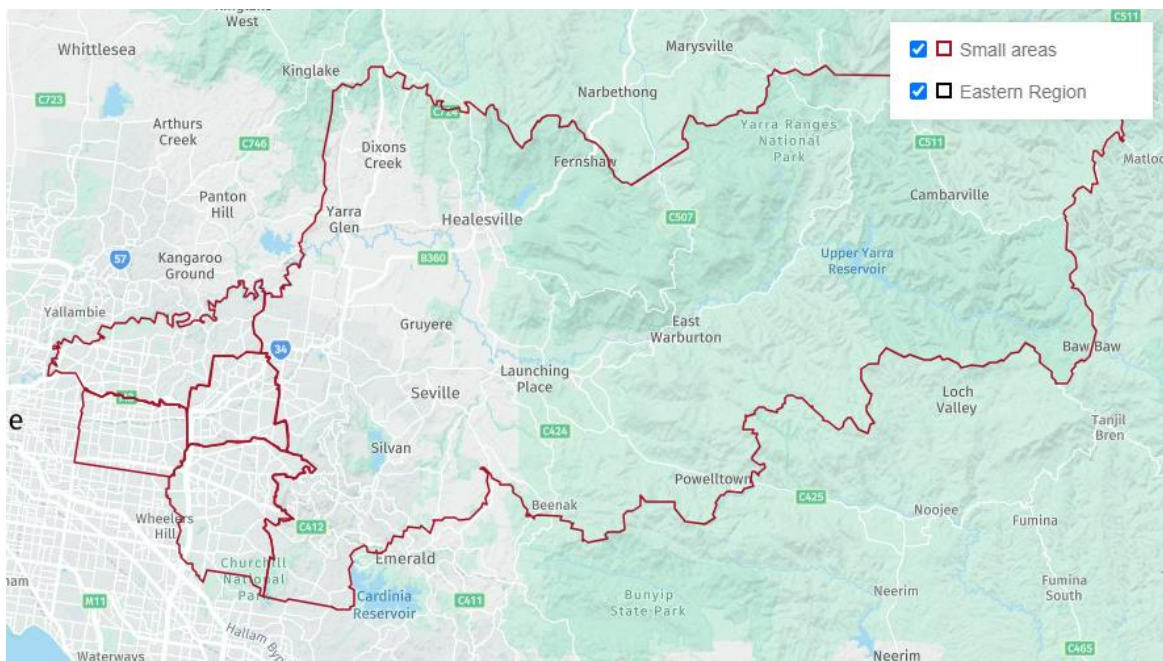
(Approximately 11% of Greater Melbourne's total)

Summary of asks

The ERG has identified four key themes for advocacy with clear 'asks' from Government. Estimated funding and likely funding source have been provided to assist discussions and decision making.

Outcome	ERG pillar	Ask	Cost to Govt.	Funding source
Address financial sustainability				
Financially sustainable councils	All	The Federal Government increase Financial Assistance Grants to councils to at least one per cent of Commonwealth taxation revenue.	1 per cent of taxation revenue	Federal Government
Support housing growth				
Liveable and growing neighbourhoods	Communities Infrastructure & buildings	The Federal Government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> commit to a five-year \$1 billion funding program for community infrastructure allow applications without the need for an invitation to apply allow applications for both scoping/business case funding as well as construction funding enable a local government peak body to apply for funding incorporate annual indexation collaborate on a tri-partite infrastructure guideline to assist in evaluating community infrastructure proposals. 	\$1 billion	Federal Government Dedicated community infrastructure Fund - to be established
	Communities Environment	The Federal Government commit to collaborate with the ERG and co-fund the Eastern Region Open Space Strategy, Implementation Plan and priority actions.	Co-contribution Study: \$150,000 Implementation: \$25 million	ERG councils Federal Government
Safer communities	Communities	The Federal Government commit to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> collaborate with the ERG and State Government on safety around public transport interchanges continue to fund crime prevention initiatives. 	No cost	NA
Build climate resilience				
Accelerated climate adaptation	Environment	The Federal Government establish a multilevel governance model involving all three levels of government to coordinate and address the fragmented approach to climate policy, funding, and resourcing.	No cost	NA
Reduced flood risk	Communities Environment Infrastructure & buildings	The Federal Government partner with the ERG and relevant agencies and research partners, to improve flood infrastructure planning, prioritisation, and delivery for regional water outcomes at the sub-catchment level.	\$1 billion over 10 years	ERG councils Federal Government
Improved health and increased biodiversity	Communities Environment	The Federal Government fund the development of a 10-year Greening the East implementation plan and contribute to the cost of revegetation for five years.	Co-contribution Study: \$125,000 Implementation: \$15 million	ERG councils Federal Government

More resilient council assets	Infrastructure & buildings Economy Environment	The Federal Government fund the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action to extend the Adaptive Community Assets project to buildings, drainage, and natural assets.	Co-contribution \$350,000	EAGA councils
Transform movement in the east				
Stronger local economy	Communities Economy	The Federal Government jointly fund a regional initiative to educate businesses and promote employment through social enterprises (as a pathway to private-sector employment) to reduce the economic challenge faced by women and primary carers in the eastern region.	Co-contribution \$250,000	ERG councils Federal Government
Better access to jobs and services	Communities Economy Infrastructure & buildings	The Federal Government commit to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jointly fund the State Government and ERG to prepare a publicly available Integrated Transport Plan for the eastern metropolitan region with identified funding priorities Create an active transport funding stream so that active transport initiatives do not have to compete with sport and recreation facilities Fund a rapid bus pilot along the Suburban Rail Loop route 	\$10 million	ERG councils State Government Federal Government
Improved freight movement	Economy Infrastructure & buildings	The Federal Government co-fund a \$300 million program with ERG councils to seal a further 300 kilometres of unsealed roads to improve access to agribusiness and increase productivity.	\$300 million	ERG councils Federal Government



Compiled and presented in profile.id by [.id](#) (informed decisions).

Financial sustainability

The financial sustainability of all councils in Australia is under increasing threat from:

- an increasing population and associated infrastructure and service needs
- rate capping - despite significant cost increases arising from inflation
- cost shifting from both Federal and State Government - for example for kindergarten funding.

Financial Assistance Grants provide councils with funding certainty enabling them to plan and respond to local needs. Councils are providing a very wide range of free and low-cost facilities, services, events, and programs essential to community cohesion, wellbeing, and safety.

Over time, the amount provided to councils has been reduced from one per cent of Commonwealth taxation revenue to around 0.55 per cent. A substantial increase to Financial Assistance Grants to councils would support local government to continue to provide support for communities struggling during the cost-of-living crisis.

The ERG has explored measures such as shared services and joint procurement in an effort to reduce costs. Despite these measures, and given the extent of cost increases, it is inevitable that local government will need to cut services and reduce capital expenditure to remain solvent unless further assistance can be provided by the Federal Government.

Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) advocacy is seeking Financial Assistance Grants to be restored to at least one per cent (ideally two per cent) of Commonwealth taxation revenues. The ALGA has also asked for an additional one-off payment of \$3 billion to address the practice of bringing forward payments.

The ERG supports this request from the ALGA towards a financially sustainable local government sector.

Ask:

The Federal Government increase Financial Assistance Grants to councils to at least one per cent of Commonwealth taxation revenue.

Support housing growth

Infrastructure needs

Increased provision of housing to meet population growth is a critical focus for both the Federal Government’s *National Housing Accord*¹ and the State Government’s *Victoria’s Housing Statement*.²

Recent draft targets set by the State Government suggest that ERG Councils will need to provide for an additional 202,000 dwellings by 2050, an increase of 79 per cent on existing dwelling stock. This has significant implications on community infrastructure that will either need to be newly provided or upgraded to meet future demand.

For the Eastern Region, data comparison³ undertaken by the ERG shows that the targets are 35 per cent higher than current trend and planned growth.

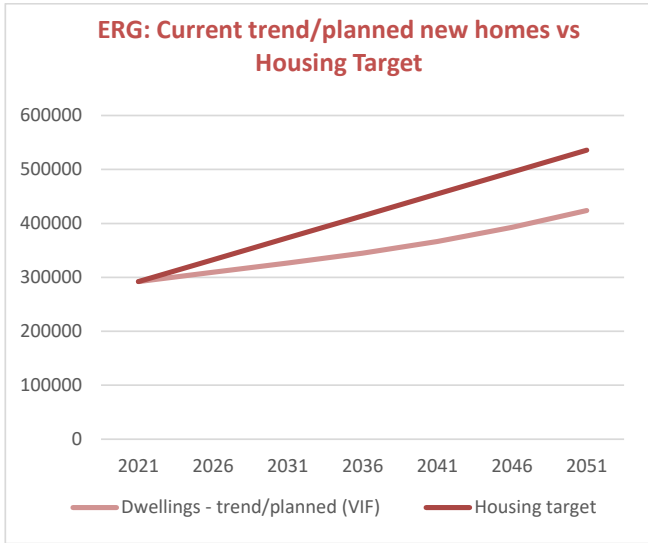


Figure 1: Victoria in Future projections versus the draft Victorian housing targets.

	2023 - Existing	Draft	2051 - Total	% growth rate	% growth rate
Number of homes	homes	Target	homes	(homes)	(population)
Knox	63,100	47,000	110,100	74%	
Manningham	51,000	39,000	90,000	76%	
Maroondah	48,000	44,000	92,000	92%	
Whitehorse	74,000	79,000	153,000	107%	
Yarra Ranges (Green Wedge)	62,700	28,000	90,700	45%	
Total ERG	298,800	237,000	535,800	79%	
Total Metro Melbourne	2,134,200	2,001,000	4,135,200	94%	63%

Table 1: Victoria’s draft housing targets

The Federal Government’s *draft National Urban Policy*⁴ has two goals relevant to housing growth and commensurate infrastructure needs. The first of these is liveability:

¹ *National Housing Accord*, Australian Government, 2022
² *Victoria’s Housing Statement*, Victorian Government, 2024
³ *Housing Targets and Impacts on the East*, Eastern Region Group of Councils, July 2024
⁴ *National Urban Policy - Consultation Draft*, Australian Government, May 2024



Where people can live in a place of their choosing, within their means, suitable to their needs. This is a safe, well designed, well-built city that promotes active, independent living, quality of life and connections within the community.

Factors directly within the control of local government that can determine liveability and quality of life include:

- access to green and open space
- opportunities for recreation, arts, sport, cultural connection, and social interaction
- safety
- connectivity to community places and employment centres

It is these elements that are in danger of being forgotten in the push for faster housing provision. If new housing is not well designed and situated, its liveability will be compromised. It may also impact on the liveability of surrounding residents as facilities and services are stretched to meet demand. Loss of canopy trees on private land will accelerate urban heating. Purposeful placemaking and timely provision of community infrastructure is required to achieve wellbeing and build social cohesion.

The second relevant goal in the *draft National Urban Policy* is equity:



Where everyone has fair access to resources, opportunities and amenities, no matter where they live or their socio-economic status.

Factors influencing equity include:

- access to jobs, services, education opportunities, transport, and digital and social infrastructure
- the provision of affordable housing, social housing, and homelessness services
- provision and access to targeted services, responsive to groups who need them, including women, young people, and First Nations communities.

Local government provide many of the support services targeted to these factors. These services are already under strain and delays in establishing additional services are likely.

National urban planning policy will fall short of achieving its objectives without real action 'on the ground' and an on-going funding commitment. While traditionally there have been a number of funding streams, future funding for local community infrastructure and support services, such as open space, recreation and cultural facilities is uncertain.

The *Housing Support Program* and the *Priority Community Infrastructure Program* (PCIP) have been of great assistance to local government seeking to achieve shared goals such as detailed in the *draft National Urban Policy*, however it is understood that uncommitted funding in the PCIP was removed as part of the 2024/2025 federal budget. Additionally, there are times when it is unclear why one project has been favoured over another and further clarity around prioritisation is sought.

Ask: The Federal Government:

- **commit to a five-year funding program (1 billion) for community infrastructure**
- **allow applications without the need for an invitation to apply**
- **allow applications for both scoping/business case funding as well as construction funding**
- **enable a local government peak body to apply for funding**
- **incorporate annual indexation**
- **collaborate on a tri-partite infrastructure guideline to assist in evaluating community infrastructure proposals.**

Regional open space, sport and recreation priorities

The ERG is conscious of the growing demand for open space and recreation facilities and the fair distribution of those facilities across the region. Interconnected open spaces benefit communities, enhance biodiversity, and create urban forest opportunities.

An additional 1,500 hectares of open space is estimated to be required over 30 years.⁵ The *Victorian Housing Statement* foreshadowed dwelling growth at rate faster than population growth, as households become smaller and the nature of housing ownership changes which will reduce private open space available to some dwellings and increase pressure on public open space. Despite these plans for rapid growth no additional parks, other open space, nor additional infrastructure has been identified.

To address these issues a Regional Open Space Strategy is required. This will update the ERG *Regional Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2032*⁶ to respond to State growth targets and include open space. This forms part of the ERG's Strategic Plan for 2025-29. The Strategy will be broad in scope and seek to:

- Improve connections between open spaces across the region
- Improve tree cover, particularly along active transport routes
- Improve biodiversity, ecosystem services and mitigate risk
- Ensure recreation facilities are provided and upgraded to meet existing and forecast demand
- Ensure a fair distribution of recreation facilities across the region
- Provide business case justification for key facilities and expanded open space.

As the Federal Government often provides funding for the construction of local government open space and recreational facilities it is critical that both the Federal Government and the ERG maximise the outcomes achieved and direct funding to where it will have the greatest impact. A collaborative effort between the ERG and the Federal Government would act as a model for other regions across Australia.

Ask:

The Federal Government commit to collaborate with the ERG and co-fund the Eastern Region Open Space Strategy, Implementation Plan, and fund priority actions.

Community safety

The ERG is increasingly concerned about community safety. Crime statistics⁷ indicate double digit growth in crime rates for most ERG councils.

The draft *National Urban Policy* highlights several areas relevant to community safety and that our 'urban areas are safe' when there is:

- Inclusivity and safety in public spaces
- Safety for marginalised groups
- Crime prevention; and
- Safety in movement

Local Government cannot address these areas alone. Cooperation of both Federal and State Governments is essential. Placemaking can help to discourage crime in public spaces through measures such as adequate lighting and passive surveillance, access, movement, and sightlines.

⁵ *Plan East: A proposition for sustainable growth*, Eastern Region Group of Councils & SGS Economics and Planning 2024

⁶ *Regional Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2032*, Eastern Region Group of Councils, 2022

⁷ Latest Crime Data by Area, Victorian Crime Statistics Agency, 2024

Creating safe places must be an essential component to the fast rollout of new housing and must be 'built in' rather than left behind.

The ERG would prioritise collaboration with Federal and State Governments around transport interchange safety (including bus stops) and for the continuation of grants such as the *Creating Safer Places* and the *Empowering Communities* Grants.

Ask:

The Federal Government commit to:

- ***collaborate with the ERG and State Government on safety around public transport interchanges***
- ***continue to fund crime prevention initiatives.***

Build climate resilience

Working together

Currently the approach to climate policy, funding and resourcing is fragmented.

The key extreme risks for the Eastern Region documented in a regional risk assessment⁸ are:

- Service delivery failure in extreme weather
- Increased demand on council facilities during heatwaves
- Inadequate building design
- Strategic failure to plan for climate change
- Bushfire damage to assets
- Increased flood damage
- Reduced asset lifespan.

Currently, the annual cost of damage due to climate events is high, and this is expected to double within a generation.⁹

Council	Average annual damage (\$000)			% change in AAD from present day	
	Present day	Nearer future (~2050)	More distant future (~2100)	Nearer future (~2050)	More distant future (~2100)
Knox	2,439	6,790	9,958	178%	308%
Manningham	1,998	6,003	8,682	200%	334%
Maroondah	962	3,006	4,327	212%	350%
Whitehorse	1,234	3,795	5,475	208%	344%
Yarra Ranges	2,459	7,340	10,620	199%	332%
TOTAL for ERG	9,092	26,934	39,062	200%	334%

Table 2: Summary of existing and forecast annual damage for the Eastern Region.

The draft *National Urban Policy* recognises the importance of working together to build climate resilience and that cooperation of all levels of government, along with industry and the community is required.



Where governments, industry and community work together to appropriately plan for urban growth, reduce emissions, promote a circular economy and adapt to climate change to ensure that our urban areas meet the needs of diverse communities and that our natural environments are rehabilitated for future generations.

Ask:

The Federal Government establish a multi-level governance model involving all three levels of government to coordinate and address the fragmented approach to climate policy, funding, and resourcing.

⁸ *Adapting to Climate Change in Melbourne's East - A Regional Risk Assessment*, Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action, Victorian Adaptation and Sustainability Partnership and the Victorian Government, 2013

⁹ *Adaptive Community Assets (Phase 2): Quantifying the economic costs of impacts*, Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action, 2023

Flood mapping

Stormwater flooding is prevalent in urban areas of the Yarra River and Dandenong Creek catchments across the Eastern Region.

While overall annual rainfall will reduce due to climate change, the region is predicted to see more frequent and intense rainfall events that will increase the risk of flooding.¹⁰ Flooding is exacerbated by an increase in impervious surfaces and associated stormwater flows unless this risk is properly managed.

The ERG councils are working with Melbourne Water to improve flood mapping across local government areas. However, there is a low level of confidence that appropriate infrastructure measures will be planned, prioritised, and implemented to address known and projected climate change risks in a timely manner.

Ask:

The Federal Government partner with the ERG and relevant agencies and research partners, to improve flood infrastructure planning, prioritisation, and delivery for regional water outcomes at the sub-catchment level.

Greening

In 2018, the Eastern Region had around 26 per cent urban tree cover, almost double the metropolitan average of 15.3 per cent.¹¹ The region accounted for 40 per cent of Melbourne's overall urban tree canopy coverage, with tree canopy varying across the region. Most urban tree canopy is on residential land, parkland and linear infrastructure such as streets.

Between 2014 and 2018 the Eastern Metro Region lost more tree canopy than any metropolitan region.¹² Maroondah and Whitehorse had the highest average loss of tree canopy of all metropolitan local government areas. All Councils in the Eastern Region have adopted the *Living Melbourne Urban Forest Strategy* that specifies targets of 30 per cent total tree canopy and 50 per cent total tree and shrubs canopy by 2050.¹³

The *Priority Urban Greening Analysis 2023* undertaken as part of the Living Melbourne work describes the factors influencing loss of canopy cover:

*'The large-scale expansion and intensification of urban development to accommodate the future population is driving the loss of trees, shrubs, and grasses (collectively, the urban forest). As the urban forest declines, the critical habitat for native fauna and the myriad of other benefits the urban forest provides are lost. At the same time, climate change and changing urban land use means the city is getting hotter, with more frequent, longer and more severe heatwaves impacting human health, productivity, and our way of life. Urban greening is one of the most effective ways to mitigate climate change impacts in cities.'*¹⁴

Investment targeted to reverse the decline in urban greening and address the growing challenges of excessive heat and habitat loss is required. The ERG would like to build on this analysis further to identify the region's priority areas, the cost to revegetate detailed in a 10-year 'Greening the East' implementation plan and co-fund revegetation for five years.

Ask:

The Federal Government fund the development of a 10-year Greening the East implementation plan and contribute to the cost of revegetation for five years.

¹⁰ *Draft Eastern Metro Land Use Framework Plan*, Eastern Metropolitan Partnership and the Victorian Government, 2017

¹¹ *Melbourne Vegetation Cover 2018 - Eastern Region*, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2019

¹² *Vegetation Cover Change in Melbourne 2014 - 2018*, Hurley, J., Saunders, A., Both, A., Sun, C., Boruff, B., Duncan, J., Amati, M., Caccetta, P. and Chia, J. (2019) Urban Centre for Urban Research, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia 2019

¹³ *Living Melbourne Urban Forest Strategy*, The Nature Conservancy and Resilient Melbourne, 2019

¹⁴ *Priority Urban Greening Analysis*, Living Melbourne, 2023

Adaptive Community Assets

The ERG supports the work of the Victorian Climate Change Alliances who co-operatively are quantifying the costs and benefits of climate change adaptation options for local government owned assets. This work includes:

- thorough assessment of economic impacts
- to identify and scope adaptation options for assets
- assessment of costs and benefits of options
- prioritisation of hazard responses
- development of a scaleable risk mapping tool.

The Alliances have self-funded part of the project to address council roads as a priority. They now wish to include buildings, drainage and natural assets however there is a shortfall of funding to undertake that work.

The ERG also supports the Australian Local Government Association's call for a \$200 million climate change fund to implement local adaptation actions to limit disruption to communities and local services. If established, this fund could be utilised to support the Alliances priorities.

Ask:

The Federal Government fund the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) \$350,000 to extend the Adaptive Community Assets project to buildings, drainage, and natural assets.

Transform movement in the east

Working closer to home

Despite strong levels of employment self-containment, access to jobs in the Eastern Region is primarily by car.

With 53.1 per cent of the Eastern Region's resident workers employed locally¹⁵, and over 85,000 Small-Medium Employers (SMEs)¹⁶ there is significant opportunity to transform movement in Melbourne's east through initiatives to grow local employment and increase the number of jobs readily accessible by public and active transport.

The Federal Government's North East Local Jobs Plan¹⁷ recognises the challenges of:

- limited transport options for those living outside of main transport hubs, particularly in peri-urban and rural areas with dispersed populations. This is even more difficult for individuals looking to travel north-south and east-west across the outer suburbs
- employment for people with a disability, women over 45, or who are primary carers, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people, disengaged youth and First Nations people
- expansion of recruitment pathways beyond traditional options by small and medium businesses
- fragmented awareness of the range of skills, training, and employment support pathways available.

Ask:

The Federal Government jointly fund a regional initiative to educate businesses and promote employment through social enterprises (as a pathway to private-sector employment) to reduce the economic challenge faced by women and primary carers in the eastern region.

Movement of people

The Eastern Region comprises a highly car dependent population, with 79 per cent of trips made by cars and most households (59 per cent) having two or more vehicles. Only 7.3 per cent of trips are made by public transport¹⁸. Towards the inner western part of the region, access to public transport is reasonably good with both rail and bus connections. However, in the eastern part of the region public transport access is poor and only readily available to those along the rail corridor.

The Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) project could provide tangible benefits for communities. Done well, it will improve connections between major employment and retail precincts and provide quicker, more reliable travel for many within the region. It is understood that an acceptable business case is yet to be provided to the Federal Government. To establish an acceptable business case, the ERG makes three suggestions:

- trial a rapid bus along the SRL route to demonstrate the direct benefits of the route and embed transport behaviour change
- recommend changes to bus routes connecting to the SRL route to achieve the widest possible benefit
- provide clarity about social and community infrastructure delivery, including social housing and ongoing local employment as part of the project deliverables.

Infrastructure Victoria research¹⁹ found that buses present a huge opportunity for Melbourne as the most cost-efficient public transport system. The weaknesses and opportunities in the bus network in the Eastern Region are documented by

¹⁵ Melbourne Functional Economic Region, Infrastructure Victoria, 2019

¹⁶ Number of small-medium employers by local area, REMPLAN

¹⁷ North-east Local Jobs Plan, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Australian Government, 2024 (modified)

¹⁸ Victorian Integrated Survey of Travel and Activity (VISTA), Department of Transport and Planning Victorian Government, 2020

¹⁹ Get on Board: making the most of Melbourne's buses, Infrastructure Victoria, 2024

the ERG Councils in partnership with the Eastern Transport Coalition (ETC)²⁰. The ETC suggests priority bus lane, route extensions, and increased frequency among other interventions to optimise the region's bus network.

Priority projects to improve access to jobs and services are listed in Appendix 1.

Within the region there is significant opportunity to reduce the number of short trips made by car. About 12 per cent of trips are made by walking and a very small percentage of trips (0.75 per cent) are made by bicycle.²¹ Safe and attractive walking and cycling routes (including for e-bikes to counter distance and topography) to and within Activity Centres is a key objective of the ERG councils.²²

Priority projects for active transport can be found in Appendix 1.

A reduction in through traffic in the region will improve safety, reduce road congestion, and enabling freight and employment outcomes. There is significant movement of people from outside the region toward the Melbourne CBD as well as movement of people within the region to employment centres. High-capacity public transport is required to reduce car trips and improve the public transport experience.

The ETC has identified projects²³ in Appendix 1 to assist to meet this objective.

Ask:

The Federal Government commit to:

- ***Jointly fund the State Government and ERG to prepare a publicly available Integrated Transport Plan for the eastern metropolitan region with identified funding priorities***
- ***Create an active transport funding stream so that active transport initiatives do not have to compete with sport and recreation facilities***
- ***Fund a rapid bus pilot along the Suburban Rail Loop route***

Movement of goods

Key road freight routes within the Eastern Region are limited, primarily being freeways linking to Dandenong, Port of Hastings and Port of Melbourne. The North East Link will better link the region to Melbourne Airport and the Hume corridor. However, freight challenges still exist in the form of congestion to main routes and the quality of access to agribusiness. The 'last mile' access for agribusinesses is inhibited by unsealed roads which damage produce and contaminate crops.²⁴ The economic output for agribusiness alone represents \$1,300 million each year.²⁵

The Federal Government previously assisted local government seal roads under the *Roads for the Community* initiative. Yarra Ranges Council was able to seal 180 kilometres of road over nine years through this program.²⁶

A similar commitment is sought to design and construct 300 kilometres of sealed roads and reach key local producers.

Ask:

The Federal Government co-fund a \$300 Million program with ERG councils to seal a further 300 kilometres of unsealed roads to improve access to agribusiness and increase productivity.

²⁰ *Better Transport for Melbourne's East*, Eastern Transport Coalition, 2022

²¹ *Victorian Integrated Survey of Travel and Activity (VISTA)*, Department of Transport and Planning Victorian Government, 2020

²² *Eastern Regional Trails Strategy*, Eastern Region Group of Councils, 2018

²³ *Better Transport for Melbourne's East*, Eastern Transport Coalition, 2022

²⁴ *Advocacy Agenda 2022*, Shire of Yarra Ranges, 2022

²⁵ Value of industry, REMPLAN (ABS 2024 data release 1)

²⁶ *Advocacy Agenda 2022*, Shire of Yarra Ranges, 2022

Appendix 1 - Priority transport projects

Priority projects to improve access to jobs and services:

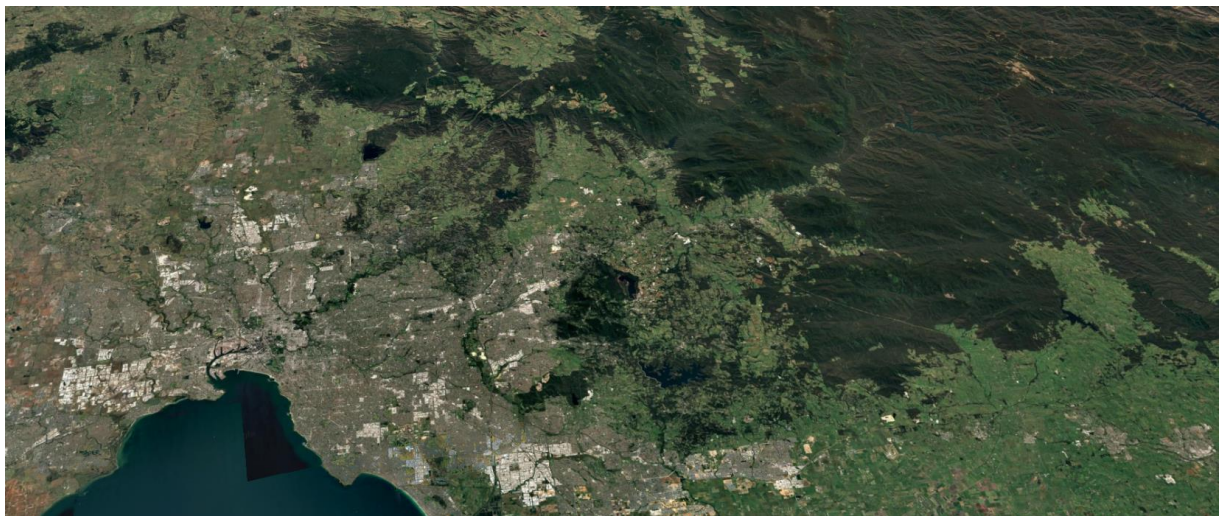
- Upgrade the Doncaster Road bus corridor between Mitcham Station and the Eastern Freeway entrance
- Bus priority measures along Mt Dandenong Road, Canterbury Road and Wantirna Road
- Upgrade the Box Hill transit interchange
- New premium bus route Manningham - Templestowe Road
- New routes along the Canterbury Road corridor, the Maroondah - Ringwood circuit, and from Stud Park, Rowville to Bayswater Station
- On demand services

Priority active transport projects:

- Box Hill Rail Trail - connecting Mont Albert and Box Hill
- Ringwood to Croydon Rail Trail - filling 6.5 kilometres of missing pathways
- Main Yarra Trail - connecting the trail to the Warrandyte Township

Priority projects to reduce through traffic, improve safety and enable freight and employment:

- Caulfield to Rowville high-capacity rapid transit to access the Monash National Employment and Innovation Cluster
- Duplicate the Lilydale Rail Line from Mooroolbark Station to Lilydale to increase the number of services and improve performance
- Extend Route 75 tram along Burwood and Mountain Highways



Contact

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easternregiongroup.org.au



Jobs and Skills Roadmap

**Think
Regionally
Achieve
Locally**

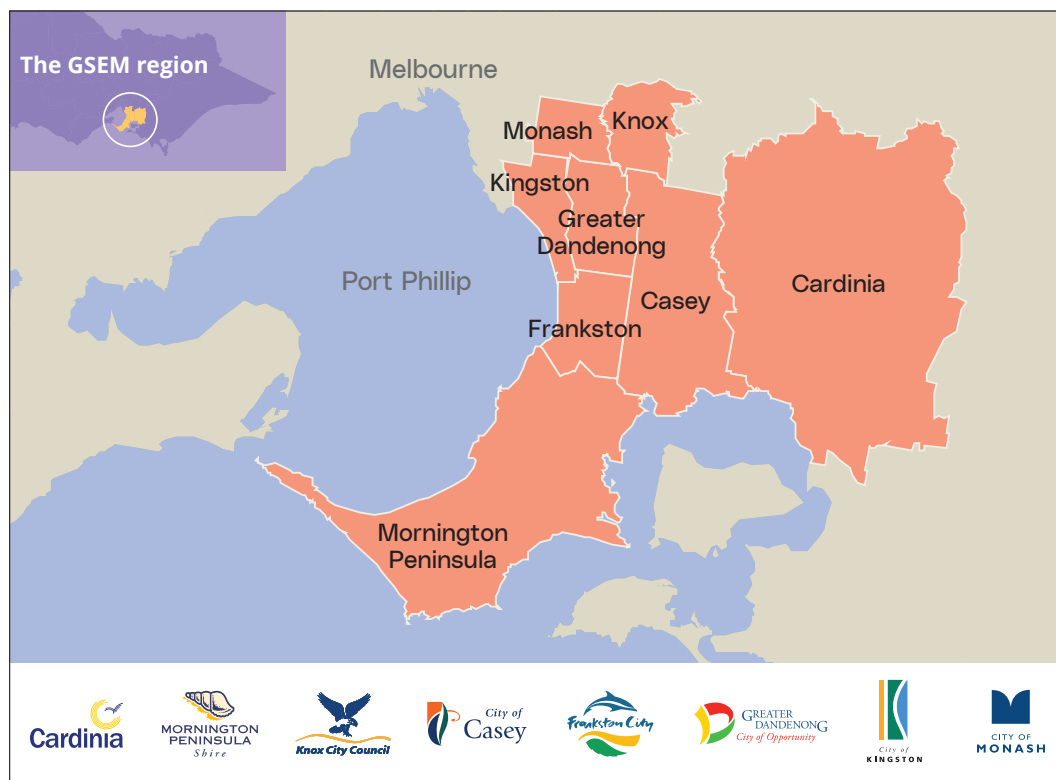
Overview

On Friday 3 May 2024 more than 200 industry, community, education, and government leaders from across the Greater South East Melbourne region came together. Their task was to share experiences and knowledge around jobs and skills to develop a roadmap for regional success.

GSEM is a regional alliance of eight local governments – the shires of Cardinia and Mornington Peninsula, and the cities of Casey, Frankston, Greater Dandenong, Kingston, Knox and Monash, alongside independent Directors James Merlino, Margaret Fitzherbert and Simon McKeon (Chair).

Greater South East Melbourne (GSEM) advocates for jobs, infrastructure, investment, liveability, sustainability and wellbeing for the southeast and everyone who works and lives in the region.

The Greater South East Melbourne region



Think Regionally Achieve Locally | 3

Greater South East Melbourne (GSEM) is an important economic region that has seen significant expansion in recent years.



Exploring future opportunities: Simon McKeon, GSEM Chair; Emma Dawson, Executive Director, Per Capita; Honi Walker, CEO, South East Melbourne Manufacturing Alliance (SEMMA), and moderator Michael Rowland.

Summit insights

The discussion at the Summit was wide-ranging and covered a variety of viewpoints.

The key takeaways were:



Regional leadership is needed

The only way to secure investment for the region is to present a strong regional voice.



Greater collaboration

Greater collaboration needs to be fostered within the region and between the region and governments.



Supporting our people is the key to regional success

We need to build on what and who is already in the region by listening to those with lived experience. There should be a focus on migrants who are being blocked from fully contributing, women who have lower participation and young people who are under-engaged in study and in work.



The connection and links

The connection and links between industry, education and community need to be strengthened and supported.



Start earlier and plan for the future

Addressing skills gaps and overcoming barriers should start at primary school. We need to better understand and plan for our future workforce need.



We need to be strategic

Emerging digital industries, innovation, high value manufacturing, the care sector and the clean economy are key future opportunities the region should be preparing for now.

Our Roadmap

For GSEM to grow and to be a place where people from all backgrounds can succeed, we need to have a roadmap that addresses the challenges now and plans for the opportunities of the future.

Underlying Principles

Our approach to Jobs and Skills and the development and implementation of this roadmap are built on three key underlying principles.



Lived Experience and Participatory Design

The experience of the people who live and work in the region should be a core element of the work this roadmap does. We commit to a participatory approach that utilises co-design, and human-centered design to ensure that initiatives are responsive to the needs of all community members. Listening to and incorporating lived experiences and acknowledging diversity are crucial for creating effective and inclusive solutions.



Equity and Fairness

Equity and fairness must be at the heart of our skills development initiatives. GSEM acknowledges that residents and workers have different backgrounds and perspectives, many facing unique obstacles requiring targeted support.

Inclusivity and equal opportunity are essential for regional prosperity. At its core the roadmap will actively work to remove barriers and create pathways for full participation in education, learning, and employment, focusing on those facing multiple barriers to work and well-being.

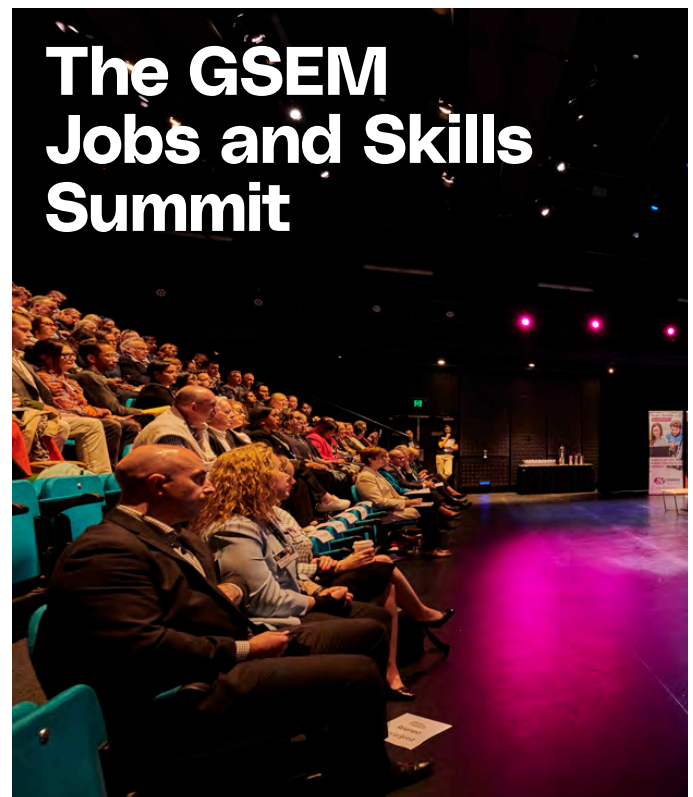


Partnerships for Outcomes

Achieving this roadmap vision requires strong partnerships with government, education, industry and community partners to ensure resources, opportunities and support are allocated to address disparities and promote a level playing field.

Achieving this vision
requires strong partnerships
with government, education,
industry and community
partners.





The Greater South East Melbourne (GSEM) Jobs and Skills Summit was held on 3 May 2024.

More than 200 attendees were Welcomed to Country by the Bunurong Land Council, before discussing a range of topics and solutions outlined in this document.

Speakers included industry, community, manufacturing, and political leaders, along with people with lived experience.





Our Vision for Change

Short Term



Foster Regional Leadership and Collaboration

Through targeted support, partnerships can be built and existing links strengthened to create a mutually beneficial environment for sustainable growth for industry and employment pathways for people across the region.

We are calling for:

- Funding GSEM to continue the Jobs and Skills Working Group to implement this roadmap and be a collaborative voice for the region on this key issue. The group would be responsible for:
 - Supporting the creation of a formal collaboration framework between local, state, and federal governments, industry, education providers, lived experience representatives, and community organisations.
 - Development of an implementation plan for this roadmap and facilitating regular meetings and workshops to maintain momentum, track progress and report back to GSEM and the region.

Right: Nathan Carolus, Youth Adviser, Brotherhood of St Laurence; Nikita Rodgers, Holmesglen student with lived experience of Autism; Mel Godinho Flores, Foundation Coordinator, MEGT Australia; and Rebecca Packer, Bachelor of Social Work student who lives with a disability.



Strengthen Workforce Planning and Knowledge Sharing

With more than 500,000 jobs and 83,500 businesses, Greater South East Melbourne is a key economic region for Australia. Until now the approach to industry growth and jobs and skills in the region has been piecemeal.

There is a need to improve our understanding of the evolving landscape and identify current and future workforce and skills needs for the region. By developing a strategic regional approach to skills development, we ensure that our community is prepared for the opportunities of tomorrow.

We are calling for:

- Funding to complete a regional jobs and skills strategy that fully evaluates the skills in the region, and understands the gaps, the challenges, and the opportunities.





Address Immediate Barriers to Employment

More needs to be done to support people to achieve their potential.

Many people coming to our region as refugees or migrants are unable to use their skills because the current system doesn't work. There are already existing programs that should be continued and expanded.

We are calling for:

- Immediate funding for education providers in the region to provide targeted foundation education programs for migrants and other disadvantaged groups.
- Work with GSEM and other representatives to simplify and expedite the process for recognising overseas qualifications.
- The formation of a regional task force with representation from lived experience representatives, local education institutions, community organisations and key providers to develop a strategy to reform English competency testing to better accommodate migrants and refugees.
- An expansion of the programs that support students to earn while learning, removing barriers to providing hands-on experience. Extend the current payment for the placement scheme to a broader range of courses and career pathways and increase the payment to a liveable wage.



Support Regional Initiatives

There are many initiatives and ideas in the region that need resourcing to continue contributing to growth.

We urge an approach that ensures that initiatives with a record of success have the financial support they need to make a lasting impact.

We are calling for:

- The continuation and expansions of the successful GameChange program and the Dandenong Employment Hub pilot to be expanded across the region with the establishment of employment hubs in each sub-region.
- Increased resources to expand the Wellsprings for Women 'Beyond the Basics' program – which provides advanced literacy program for migrant and refugee women – to support women facing multiple disadvantages.
- Ongoing funding for the Young Mothers Transition Program, the only program of its type in Australia, which supports young mothers with case management to overcome barriers and access education, training, and employment. This program should be replicated and expanded rather than wound up.
- Support for the Expanding Horizons program, which currently supports Monash based businesses to employ people with disabilities.

Our Vision for Change

Medium Term



Enhance Educational Pathways and Early Promotion

Our commitment to education and skills pathways is unwavering. By forging strategic partnerships, we need to facilitate accessible and tailored education opportunities, ensuring that individuals can develop the skills required for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

We are calling for:

- Government to work with the region to identify existing resources and consolidate them into a regional platform for job opportunities, training programs and educational resources.
- Initiatives to highlight the workforce opportunities in primary and secondary skills. These resources will be tailored to the region, working with industry and community to ensure they address the needs of the region.
- Explore opportunities to expand local TAFE and University offerings to accommodate population and employment growth in the Casey and Cardinia municipalities.



Support Emerging Industries and Innovation

Cultivating innovation is also a priority for the region. Support for emerging industries, providing the resources necessary for their growth, especially ensuring there is a well-trained local workforce to draw from. By cultivating new sectors, we contribute to a diverse range of job opportunities for the region and secure the economic future of the South East.

Work needs to be done to identify and prioritise key industry sectors for growth in the GSEM region in the workforce strategy, particularly digital technology, innovation, and the green economy.

We are calling for:

- The development of a regional industry policy, developed by a GSEM industry advisory group representing all education providers, key industries, digital, care sector, manufacturing, green economy.
- Innovation and start-up activities in the region to drive regional economic growth. Provide specific funding to establish an innovation hub in the region.



Manufacturing Skill Demands and Trends: Todd Hartley (Managing Director, Hilton Manufacturing), Hacia Atherton (Founder & CEO, Empowered Women in Trades, EWIT), Couteney Munn (Project Officer – Women in Manufacturing, AMWU Victorian Branch); and Daniel Prins (Chisholm, Project Manager – Jobs Victoria Engineering Project).



Promote Industry-Education-Community Connections

By extending our efforts across the entire region and helping to establish strong connections we will be able to bridge gaps and think regionally to ensure that the benefits of all the initiatives are accessible at a local level.

Work with regional education providers and industry to develop targeted training programs aligned with these emerging sectors.

We are calling for:

- Funding to expand the success of Skills and Jobs Networks already in operating in Dandenong, Casey-Cardinia, and Frankston Mornington Peninsula. These groups should be expanded across the GSEM region and include more employer and industry representation to work on regional projects and enhance collaboration on specific employment issues.
- Support for education providers to have the resources they need to ensure the sector has the capacity to deliver.

Our Vision for Change

Long Term



Sustain and Scale Regional Growth

A comprehensive regional industry policy that sets the framework for sustainable growth, jobs and skill pathways is needed. By developing an industry policy that specifically aligns and responds to regional needs, we will create an environment for businesses to thrive and communities to prosper.

We are calling for:

- Long-term investment and funding to support sustained regional development. An integrated plan to attract investment in projects that have regional benefit.
- Support for key regional priorities such as the development of a future South East airport and the extension of Thompsons road.



Promote Inclusive Growth and Reduce Disadvantage

We believe that at the heart of our region's success is our incredibly diverse population. The GSEM region has people from a wide variety of backgrounds and abilities. We need to do more to empower the people in our community so they can access the opportunities we are seeking to foster.

In particular, we acknowledge that not everyone has the same starting point in life. Programs, initiatives and pathways should acknowledge this and be created and implemented in a way that promotes access and incorporates the views of people with lived experience.

We are calling for:

- Governments to advocate for and implement policies that ensure growth is inclusive, particularly for immigrants and disadvantaged groups.
- The application of an intersectional gender lens to all skills and workforce development policies.
- Support for equitable education pathways to ensure that all individuals, regardless of socio-economic status, have access to quality higher education and training opportunities.



Conor Mullan from Chisholm Institute presents on education and industry.



Strengthening Local and Global Competitiveness

Manufacturing is a key pillar of the region's economic success. The south east produces \$85 billion in Gross Regional Product and is one of Australia's largest manufacturing regions, with more manufacturing jobs than greater Adelaide and Western Sydney.

The GSEM region has an important part to play in securing manufacturing sovereignty.

Melbourne's southeast is one of Australia's largest manufacturing regions, with more manufacturing jobs than greater Adelaide and Western Sydney.

We are calling for:

- Support for existing industries to ensure that established sectors receive the assistance needed to adapt, innovate, and remain at the forefront of the evolving market.



For more information

Contact us at info@gsem.org.au



Visit GSEM online
gsem.org.au



Follow us on LinkedIn
[@greatersoutheastmelbourne](https://www.linkedin.com/company/greatersoutheastmelbourne)

The GSEM Jobs and Skills Roadmap
was developed by The Agenda Group.
theagendagroup.com.au



Federal Election Platform

Live, work and succeed
in the South East



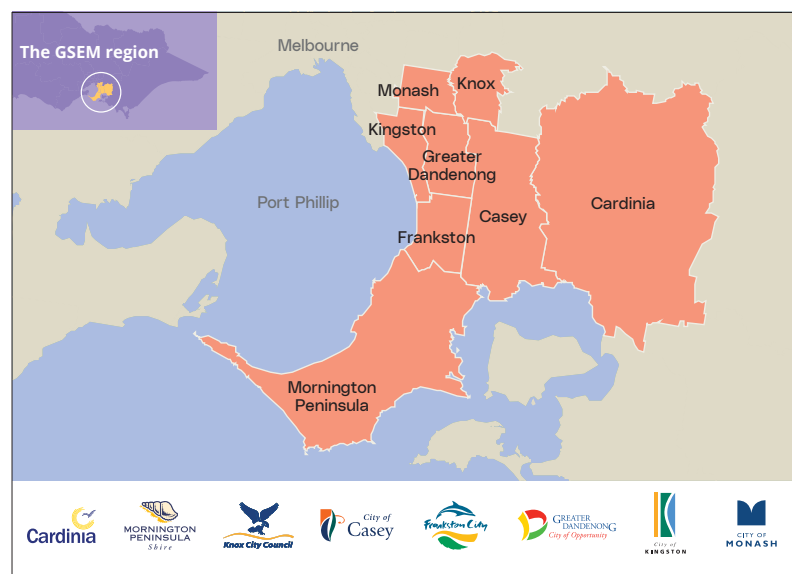
About Greater South East Melbourne

Growth has not created opportunities equally. Many of the people who have come to call the region home are not able to access the training, education or jobs they need. The region has higher long-term unemployment than the Melbourne average and concerning rates of female and youth unemployment.

Greater South East Melbourne (GSEM) advocates for jobs, infrastructure, investment, liveability, sustainability and wellbeing for the south east and everyone who works and lives in the region.

GSEM includes representation from the shires of Cardinia and Mornington Peninsula, and the cities of Casey, Frankston, Greater Dandenong, Kingston, Knox and Monash alongside

The Greater South East Melbourne region



Independent Directors James Merlino, Margaret Fitzherbert and Simon McKeon AO (Chair).

The GSEM region has more than 1.5 million residents, due to grow to 2 million by 2036. It stretches from the northern borders of the City of Monash and Knox City Council, to Fort Nepean on the tip of the Mornington Peninsula, to the edge of Gippsland in Cardinia Shire.

The south east produces

\$85 billion

in Gross Regional Product and is one of Australia's largest manufacturing regions, with more manufacturing jobs than greater Adelaide and Western Sydney.

Jobs and Skills

GSEM wants to create a robust and future-focused workforce by supporting investment in education, training, and employment pathways that align with community and industry needs in the region.

With input from more than 200 stakeholders, GSEM has developed a Jobs and Skills Roadmap, identifying a range of areas for immediate investment. GSEM is calling for:

Project Name	Project Description	Location	Federal Electorate	Cost
Jobs and Skills Working Group	Funding to support the GSEM region implement its Jobs and Skills Road Map.	All	All	\$10 million
Young Mothers Transition Program	The only program in Australia that supports young mothers to overcome barriers and access education, training and employment.	Greater Dandenong, Casey and Cardinia	Bruce, Hotham Isaacs, Holt, La Trobe	\$1 million to continue \$3 million to expand across GSEM
Employment Hub	Employment Hub will provide community members with a better way to find the right support, with people in "connector" roles to empower, navigate and link stakeholders in the system.	Dandenong based – expand into surrounding LGAs	Bruce, Hotham	\$1.5 million for the development of a Dandenong Employment Hub \$400,000 annually for five years to continue the GameChange – Employment System-Change Initiative.

Housing Affordability and Availability

Housing is an issue across Australia, the GSEM region included. Parts of the GSEM region have been a significant contributor to housing growth across Melbourne. However, new housing is often unaffordable and not accompanied by necessary infrastructure and service support.

GSEM is calling for more investment in the region to meet growing demand, support population growth, and ensure accessible housing for all socio-economic groups.

Project Name	Project Description	Location	Federal Electorate	Cost
Homelessness and affordable housing	Funding stream to support all GSEM councils to develop social and affordable housing projects and initiatives.	All	All	\$20 million
Electrification for all homes – government backed electrification loan scheme	<p>Non-profit organisation Rewiring Australia have developed a costed model, based on the US Inflation Reduction Act, for an Electrify Everything Loan Scheme (EELS). EELS is designed to remove one of the biggest barriers to action – cost. Under the scheme, home owners could receive a government secured loan which doesn't need to be repaid until the house is sold.</p> <p>We propose to the federal government support GSEM to work with Rewiring Australia and other financial partners on developing a pilot project in the GSEM region to rollout the scheme.</p>	All	All	\$5 million



Infrastructure and Transport

Our region has been a powerhouse for economic growth. This now needs to be supported by infrastructure investment across the region.

Our priorities:

Project Name	Project Description	Location	Federal Electorate	Cost
Thompsons Road Upgrade and Extension	Publically release the business case for this project.	Casey and Cardinia	Holt and Latrobe	No cost
South East Melbourne Airport	Support to establish a working group to develop a master plan.	Cardinia	La Trobe	\$5 million
Regional cycling connectivity program	Constructing links between shared user paths (SUPs) across the GSEM region with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peninsula Link to Baxter Trail SUP – Robinsons Road – \$2.5m • Frankston Dandenong Road, from Boundary Rd to Thompsons Rd – \$1.6m • Baxter Park to Peninsula Link \$1.5m • Eel Race Road – From Station Street Carrum to Paterson River Secondary College – \$3.63m • Fletcher Road from Beach Street to Baxter Trail – \$2.5m 	All	All	\$11.7 million
Caulfield to Rowville Trackless Rapid Transport	Pending completion of the business case, funds are required to implement the preferred solution.	Knox and Monash	Aston, Chisholm Hotham	\$1.4 billion
Regional Transport Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transport • Roads • Active transport 	Funding for a regional transport assessment and strategy.	All	All	\$10 million



Livability and community resilience

We want to enhance liveability across Greater South East Melbourne by improving access to essential services, amenities, and recreational spaces while building a resilient and connected community.

Our region is diverse and this should be celebrated and supported.

- 40% of the population was born overseas, the most common countries were China, India, England and Sri Lanka
- 60% of the population had at least one parent born overseas
- 100 nationalities are represented across the region

GSEM is calling for:

Project Name	Project Description	Location	Federal Electorate	Cost
Wellsprings for Women	Beyond the Basics – advanced literacy program for migrant and refugee women.	Dandenong based – expand into surrounding LGAs	Bruce, Chisholm, Hotham, Holt, Dunkley	\$600,000 over 4 years (\$150,000 pa)
Future proofing industry – activating net zero precincts	Build relationships, knowledge, and capacity across industry in the south east that will support and speed up the transition to a net zero emissions economy.	All	All	\$10 million



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8.4 Response to Notice of Motion 164 - Eastern Transport Coalition

Final Report Destination: Council
Paper Type: For Noting
Author: Director Infrastructure, Grant Thorne
Executive: Chief Executive Officer, Bruce Dobson

SUMMARY

Knox Council is a member of a number of regional groupings that comprise multiple Councils coming together in a formal way to advocate for particular outcomes. These groupings include the Eastern Transport Coalition (ETC), which currently comprises seven Councils – Greater Dandenong, Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges.

The ETC advocates for accessible, integrated and environmentally sustainable transport in the eastern region of Melbourne to improve liveability and reduce car dependence and vehicle emissions.

This report provides a summary of the achievements of the ETC over the last 3-5 years, as requested by Council in Notice of Motion 164 considered at the 28 January 2025 Council meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to receive and note this report.

1. DISCUSSION

This report has been prepared in response to Notice of Motion 164 as presented at the 28 January 2025 Council meeting, which called for a report to Council on the achievements of the ETC over the past 3-5 years.

By way of background, the ETC currently comprises seven Councils – Greater Dandenong, Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges.

The ETC's Mission Statement reads 'to advocate for accessible, integrated and environmentally sustainable transport in the eastern region of Melbourne to improve liveability and reduce car dependency and vehicle emissions.'

The purpose of the ETC is to:

- Advocate for transport projects which improve connectivity, liveability, sustainability, productivity and efficiency throughout Melbourne's eastern region.
- Work cooperatively with councils, stakeholders and governments.
- Support transport improvements when they occur.

Each member Council may nominate one Councillor and at least one officer as its ETC representatives. Each Councillor representative has one vote when decisions are made. Knox Council appointed Councillor Peter Lockwood as its ETC representative at its mid-month Council meeting on 10 February 2025.

The ETC meets monthly and is supported by The Agenda Group as its secretariat. Membership fees support advocacy, projects and the secretariat's role.

The ETC does not publish an annual report, however a list of key ETC activities and achievements has been included in past Eastern Region Group annual reports. These have been drawn-on in summarising ETC achievements over the last five years, as set-out below. In addition, **Attachment 1** includes a summary of advocacy outcomes supported by the ETC, prepared in September 2023.

Topics discussed by ETC to date in the **2024/25** financial year have included preparation for the 2025 Federal election, regional trails strategy and campaign, Plan for Victoria, road safety grants, bus network reform, and State and Federal budget transport priorities.

2023/24

The ETC, over the course of this financial year, prioritised working with the Eastern Regional Trails Strategy working group (ERTS).

Prioritising regional trails. The ERTS comprises transport officers from the Councils of Knox, Yarra Ranges, Maroondah, Whitehorse and Manningham, Monash and Boroondara.

The ERTS priority projects, first developed in 2018, have been at the heart of active transport advocacy by the ETC at state and federal elections over the past five years.

As many of the projects have successfully received funding or part-funding, there was a need to review and update the ERTS priority project list, resulting in ten priority projects that have been agreed by Councils.

A draft advocacy campaign plan for the next federal (likely 2025) and state (Nov 2026) elections has been prepared with in-principle endorsement from the ERTS and ETC. The development of a detailed and costed advocacy campaign plan is now underway.

A better bus network. The ETC continued its long running campaign for improvements to regional bus services and for a full bus network review across the eastern region.

The ETC and Councils supported the community campaign, run by transport activist Peter Parker, resulting in a State Government budget funding announcement for the 80 bus route. This will reinstate Sunday services, improve Saturday frequency and extend operating hours on the popular Princes Highway bus route.

Improving pedestrian safety. The ETC priority list of mid-block arterial road pedestrian crossing projects was positively received when presented to the State Government for funding, however the package was not funded in the budget, and remains a key advocacy priority.

The ETC continues to closely monitor the SRL precinct planning process run by the State Government, and the completion of the business case process for the Caulfield – Rowville Trackless Rapid Transit project.

2022/23

Advocacy focussed on the November 2022 State election formed a major part of the ETC 2022-23 activities, with post-election follow up on key initiatives. This saw the ETC working closely with stakeholder partners to sustain advocacy and ensure State and Federal Government commitments are delivered.

Years of sustained ETC advocacy and a clear [Plan for Better Bus Services](#) saw a major review of Melbourne's north and north-eastern bus networks (including Manningham) announced and reforms proposed to the planning and delivery of bus routes and services.

Caulfield-Rowville Trackless Rapid Transit project: Knox and Monash Councils, Monash University and Vicinity Centres have worked successfully with the ETC to ensure the State and Federal

Governments fund and prepare the promised business case. This process has now commenced with preliminary results expected by the end of 2023. In anticipation of a positive outcome, the ETC and partners are preparing for the next stage of advocacy for government funding to design and construct this much needed transport link.

Eastern Region Trails Strategy: Following the State election the ETC has worked with the Eastern Region Trails working group to review its advocacy priorities and approach. This has prompted an update to refine priority projects which will each have a tailored advocacy strategy developed to maximise their chances of receiving government support.

To improve local safety and access, ETC member Councils have identified their priority pedestrian crossing projects so that they form part of advocacy efforts in the lead up to the 2024/25 state and federal budgets.

2021/22

The ETC has prioritised the consideration of improvements to the **bus network** over the past year. This work has been informed by both the State Government's release of the Victorian Bus Plan and the upcoming November 2022 State election.

A Bus Network Review Working Group, comprising officers from each of the seven ETC member councils, completed significant work to identify shortcomings and opportunities to improve the bus network and supporting infrastructure throughout the east.

This work has been shared with the Minister for Public Transport and his office, as well as with senior bureaucrats in the Department of Transport, and key recommended initiatives will be reinforced by the ETC's election advocacy.

Election advocacy will also include the ETC policy platform which covers rail, active transport and road projects.

Further advocacy activity is taking place with other stakeholders, including Monash University, to support the call for State and Federal governments to work together on a business case for the **Caulfield to Rowville Trackless Rapid Transit** proposal.

2020/21

Pleasingly, the release of the **Victorian Bus Plan** by the Victorian Government in June 2021 reflected many of the areas of improvement the ETC had identified in the ETC Bus Review Working Group Issues and Case Studies document. Opportunities for engagement and promotion of local projects with DoT are being pursued.

The ETC and member Councils continued their campaigning for further **level crossing removals** on the Lilydale and Belgrave lines and the building of a new rail station at Croydon.

The ETC identified a number of congestion-alleviating capital works projects in their **Bus Priority Infrastructure advocacy** document for the upcoming Federal Election. Further road projects for advocacy are currently under consideration.

2019/20

ETC led a '**Commuters Count**' campaign and have consistently called for a bus network review, with a policy document garnering strong stakeholders support across the sector and across Melbourne. This provides a basis for developing stronger relationships with the Department of Transport and other key partners necessary for improved bus services.

A technical working group is demonstrating the justification for specific proposals across the region, recognising that **local bus services** will become increasingly important for local communities.

2. ENGAGEMENT

There has been no external consultation undertaken in relation to this report.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Adequate and appropriate transport is critical for people in our community in many different ways including for employment, retail activities and social connection. Work through the ETC has contributed to achieving necessary transport options.

4. CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS

Availability of increased public transport options, for which the ETC advocates, can reduce the reliance on motor vehicles and in turn have a positive impact in reducing transport emissions.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no further environmental implications to highlight in this report.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Council membership fees for the ETC are currently \$12,000 per annum (excluding GST). An additional contribution of \$6,000 over two years for an advocacy campaign leading into the Federal election in 2025 and the State election in 2026 was agreed in June 2024.

7. RISKS

There are no specific risk implications to highlight in this report.

8. KNOX COMMUNITY AND COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025

Neighbourhoods, Housing & Infrastructure

Strategy 2.3 - Provide, maintain and advocate for accessible and sustainable ways to move around Knox.

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. STATEMENT OF COMPATIBILITY

There are no legislative obligations under the Human Rights Charter, Child Safe Standards or the Gender Equity Act that are incompatible with the recommendation in this report.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

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

ATTACHMENTS

1. ECT Summary of Advocacy Outcomes [8.4.1 - 5 pages]



Advocacy Outcomes Supported by the ETC
September 2023



Active Transport

The following trail projects have been funded or delivered:

- Lilydale to the Tarralla Creek trail section to connect the Carrum - Warburton Rail Trail
- Waverley Rail trail (Beatrice Ave to Huntingdale Rd)
- Waverley Rail Trail (Jordanville Station to Mount Waverley Station)
- Box Hill to Ringwood Rail Trail (Middleborough Rd to Blackburn Rd)
- Box Hill to Ringwood Rail Trail (Nunawading station to Walkers Rd)
- Anniversary Trail (Riversdale Rd to Prospect Hill Rd)
- Dandenong Creek Trail and Burwood Highway link and bridge.
- Gardeners Creek Trail link from Sycamore Street to Station Street.
- Sections of the Ringwood to Croydon Trail as part of level crossing removal projects.
- The Ringwood gap in the Ringwood to Belgrave Rail Trail, part of the Bedford Road level crossing removal.
- Main Yarra Trail (Doncaster East to Warrandyte)



Rail

Projects:

- State and Federal Government funding for the Caulfield – Rowville Trackless Rapid Transit business case
- Croydon station upgrade and level crossing removal (Coolstore Rd)
- Bedford Rd Ringwood level crossing removal
- Ringwood East station upgrade and Dublin Rd Ringwood East level crossing removals
- Removal of levels crossings at Surrey Hills (Union Rd) and Mont Albert (Miont Albert Rd)
- Lilydale (Maroondah Hwy) and Mooroolbark (Manchester Rd) level crossing removals
- Mooroolbark Station car park upgrade
- Belgrave Station carpark upgrade
- Cave Hill Rd Lilydale level crossing removal
- Additional commuter parking spaces and safety lighting at Ferntree Gully Station.
- Bicycle parking infrastructure at Bayswater Station



Bus

Projects:

- Inclusion of Manningham Council and part of Whitehorse City Council in the State Government's first round of Bus Network Reform pilot areas, and development of the new Bulleen Park & Ride facility.
- Increased bus services to Deakin University, Burwood (Routes 903, 201, 766, 271)
- Upgrades to routes delivering better interpeak frequency and better weekend services in several key areas including:
 - route 733 Oakleigh – Box Hill via Clayton, Monash University and Mt Waverley, as well as
 - route 767 Southland – Box Hill via Chadstone, Jordanville and Deakin University.
 - Route 685 Lilydale – Healesville via Coldstream and Yarra Glen to include Route 686 Healesville – Badger Creek
- Supporting the introduction of a zero emissions bus fleet with Australia's first enroute offsite charging station has been installed at Monash University bus interchange at Clayton campus.
- Trial of FlexiRide bus services in Rowville and Lilydale, Chirnside Park, Mooroolbark and Croydon.



Road

Projects:

- A bridge over the Cranbourne Rail line between Remington Drive and Pound Road West
- Federal funding for the intersection enhancements at Henderson Road and Ferntree Gully Road.
- Federal funding for the signalisation of Lewis Road and Boronia Road to enhance safety
- Federal funding for the signalisation of Kelletts Road and Henderson Road to enhance safety
- Federal funding for cycle lanes on Mountain Hwy through Bayswater as part of Bayswater Level Crossing Removal



8.5 Response to Notice of Motion 165 - Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance Achievements

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Noting
Author:	Manager Community Strengthening, Kerry Jansons
Manager:	Manager Community Strengthening, Kerry Jansons
Executive:	Director, Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley

SUMMARY

Knox City Council has a long history of research, advocacy, and strategic development in relation to social and affordable housing. It is a founding member of the Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA) which currently comprises six Councils in the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR) of Melbourne: Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Whitehorse, and Yarra Ranges.

The formal Alliance was established in 2009 in response to the growing need for more social and affordable housing in the region and the lack of action by State and Federal Governments.

EAHA's framework consists of an Executive Committee that features a Councillor and a Manager from each Council, alongside a Steering Committee comprising of Managers and specialist Officers from each Council. Specific projects may require the formation of working groups.

In response to Notice of Motion 165 at the Meeting of Council held on 28 January 2025, this report provides a summary of highlights and achievements from EAHA over the past 3-5 years.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to receive and note this report.

1. DISCUSSION

This report has been prepared in response to Council Motion 165, as presented at the 28 January 2025 Meeting of Council, which called for a report to Council on the achievements of the Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA) over the past 3-5 years.

As per the Terms of Reference (TOR), the EAHA Executive Committee, which consists of a Councillor and a Manager from each Council, is required to meet six times per year and the Steering Committee, comprising Managers and specialist Officers from each Council, meet ten times per year.

In 2022, the EAHA Strategic Plan 2022-2026 (see Attachment 1) was established, along with the updated Memorandum Of Understanding (see Attachment 2) and TOR 2022-2026 (see Attachment 3).

EAHA, over the course of the past five years has participated in a number of advocacy initiatives and policy recommendations.

In the lead up to the 2019 Federal election and beyond, EAHA successfully campaigned for the appointment of a Federal Housing Minister and a National Housing Strategy.

In preparation for the May 2022 Federal election and the November 2022 State election, Policy Position papers were developed and distributed to key stakeholders, along with presentations to major parties and all candidates.

EAHA has made significant contributions to the Regional Local Government Homelessness and Social Housing Charter Group's submissions to the Productivity Commission Review - National Housing and Homelessness Agreement and the MAV/Homes Vic Local Government Affordable Housing Draft Compact.

In 2022-23, EAHA completed a 12-month research project 'Preventing Homelessness among Older Women'. Funded by the Victorian Government's Metropolitan Partnerships Development Fund, this research-based project explored current service gaps and on-ground place-based solutions to contribute to better social and economic outcomes and produced key findings as well as local solutions to help address homelessness in single women over 55 years old - the fastest growing cohort experiencing homelessness in the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR) and Australia-wide.

Key recommendations included advocating for funding to support a home sharing project pilot, supporting building owners to provide temporary crisis accommodation and collaborating with State Government to establish a housing opportunities portal to generate ideas and solutions. During 2024, with the assistance of the Deakin University FreelanceHUB, a prototype Housing Opportunities Portal was created.

EAHA also has an important role in educating the community on social and affordable housing and the challenges that vulnerable members of our community face. EAHA co-hosted an EMR-wide webinar event during National Homelessness week in 2024 that focused on responding to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness and affordable, alternate and appropriate housing for people over 55 years old.

To represent the interests of its member councils and raise EAHA's profile, EAHA continues to connect with sector stakeholders such as Council to Homeless Persons, the Inter-Council Affordable Housing Forum, the Eastern Homelessness Service System Alliance, Housing All Australians, MAV - Affordable Housing Policy/Project, Homes Victoria, the Homelessness Charter Working Group and other LGA affordable housing alliances across Victoria.

2. ENGAGEMENT

No community consultation was undertaken in relation to this report.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Knox City Council has established an approved Social and Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan for 2023-27 to address the growing demand for housing solutions in Knox. The 2021 Census reported that 2,920 households in the area were experiencing rental stress, while 3,154 households faced mortgage stress. Additionally, there were 365 individuals either homeless or in precarious living conditions. These figures are likely to increase due to the ongoing impacts of the rising living costs and a persistent shortage of rental properties.

Projections indicate that by 2041, Knox will need at least 1,290 additional social housing units and 5,950 more affordable rental homes. In the EMR, there is currently a deficit of 9,360 dwellings, with an annual requirement of approximately 1,170 additional units to meet expected demand by 2032.

While it is promising that Homes Victoria has funded or acquired 155 new social and affordable homes in Knox through the Big Housing Build project—marking a 10% increase in the current social housing supply—there remains a considerable gap in meeting overall demand.

Knox City Council's active involvement in the EAHA helps enhance community awareness of the urgent need for affordable housing in Knox. This engagement has the potential to foster community support for policy initiatives and create a robust political impetus to tackle the ongoing housing crisis.

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 IMPLICATIONS

The current Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance Action Plan does not include policy recommendations that conflict with Knox City Council's existing policies or strategies relating to environmental and amenity issues.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Currently member Councils contribute \$15,000 towards EAHA each financial year. The EAHA budget includes allocation to the EAHA Lead Officer role and an allocation for agreed projects.

7. RISKS

No risks associated with this report.

8. KNOX COMMUNITY AND COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025

Neighbourhoods, Housing & Infrastructure

Strategy 2.1 - Plan for and support diverse housing to meet changing community needs.

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. STATEMENT OF COMPATIBILITY

There are no legislative obligations under the Human Rights Charter, Child Safe Standards or the Gender Equity Act that are incompatible with the recommendation in this report.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

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

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment 1 - EAHA Strategic Plan 2022-2026 [**8.5.1** - 2 pages]
2. Attachment 2 - Unsigned - MOU - Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance 2022- 2026 - 2022-06 [**8.5.2** - 5 pages]
3. Attachment 3 - TOR - EAHA 2022-26 [**8.5.3** - 11 pages]

Attachment 1



Strategic Plan 2022-2026

Vision

The Eastern Metropolitan Region is a place where everyone has a safe, secure, affordable home that is appropriate to their needs.

Mission

The Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA) advocate for increased Affordable Housing in the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne to respond to current and future housing needs.

Each Council has its own context concerning Affordable Housing but provides a united voice for the Region.

EAHA's Role

1. **Represent** the Affordable Housing needs and priorities of the region and significant parts of it.
2. **Share knowledge and build capacity** within the Alliance to enable effective advocacy for actions for improved housing affordability.
3. **Advocate** for improvements in housing affordability that have region-wide benefits.
4. **Advocate** to State and Federal governments and other appropriate parties for increased Affordable Housing supply, finance and housing subsidies.
5. **Work cooperatively** with Councils, governments, statutory planning authorities, registered housing agencies and other stakeholders to increase the supply of Affordable Housing.
6. **Provide** a democratic and consultative decision-making process in determining regional Affordable Housing needs and Alliance activities, in conjunction with State and Federal governments and including appropriate community participation.

Strategic Framework

EAHA's Strategic Plan (see TABLE 1) details the overarching strategic directions, objectives and rolling actions the Alliance will undertake to deliver its vision and mission. The four-year strategic plan includes indicative evaluation criteria. The strategic plan will be evaluated and updated every four years. This process will include a review of the role and scope of the Alliance.

Each year, EAHA will develop an annual implementation plan detailing the specific projects and operational tasks EAHA will undertake to deliver the strategic plan over 12 months. This plan will allocate responsibilities, timelines and provides an indication of potential resources (such as external funding opportunities). The annual implementation plan is an internal document and will be used to inform the annual reporting process.



Table 1. Strategic Plan 2022-2026

STRATEGIC DIRECTION	OBJECTIVES Sets out what EAHA wants to achieve over the period	ACTIONS Defines how EAHA will deliver each objective. Actions are articulated to provide sufficient flexibility for EAHA to be opportunistic and adaptable over the period	EVALUATION Sets out the broad parameters against how success will be measured
Advocacy and Engagement	Use EAHA's scale, reputation and member's commitment to influence Affordable Housing policy, funding and programs within local, state and federal governments and build community support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactively advocate to governments and other stakeholders Establish partnerships and work collaboratively across other Affordable Housing Alliances, networks and groups to support advocacy activities Promote advocacy activities through networks and web channels Develop and support community engagement programs to increase community support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects funded or policy changes attributable to advocacy activities Progress against annual advocacy plan Level of community participation/engagement
Action and Projects	Leverage the network of EAHA to ensure the implementation of new and innovative projects that promote Affordable Housing solutions and facilitate increased supply in the EMR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen relationships with registered housing providers and key sector players Identify and implement research projects that inform local solutions for the EMR Identify and implement initiatives that facilitate affordable housing outcomes in the EMR i.e. via partnerships or the planning system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress against annual implementation plan Impact and outcomes of the EAHA's projects or initiatives
Collaboration and capacity building	Build the capacity of EAHA's members and stakeholders through collaboration, partnerships and effectively sharing information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise the profile of EAHA within member Councils through proactive engagement including twice-yearly reports to councils and an annual update to ERG Identify and implement opportunities to build the capacity of EAHA's members and stakeholders to support project delivery and advocacy initiatives Implement information sharing initiatives to support effective stakeholder engagement and collaboration Leverage Affordable Housing and Council Alliances for information sharing and cross-regional collaborative opportunities including active participation on the Regional Charter Group Coordinators Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Twice-yearly report to councils (including Annual Report) Annual update to ERG Participation of staff and Councillors from across EAHA's membership in EAHA's meetings, events and projects Impact and outcomes from information sharing and capacity building initiatives Impact and outcomes from cross Alliance forums and initiatives
Governance	Develop partnerships to secure resources for projects whilst maintaining strong governance structures and an engaged membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure funding sources to support project implementation and management Develop and maintain clear governance and processes that support accountability, responsible and timely decision making Deliver transparent and timely reports to members on outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four year MOU signed by the EAHA members Annual Report (public via EAHA website) Annual Financial Report (internal)

Attachment 2

EASTERN AFFORDABLE HOUSING ALLIANCE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

Knox City Council ABN 24 477 480 661 as (host organisation)

and

<Insert member name> and ABN as (member)

1. PARTIES

1.1 The Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance is a formal alliance of councils working together on joint programs that increase the provision of Affordable Housing across the region, including:

- Knox City Council
- Maroondah City Council
- Monash City Council
- Manningham City Council
- Whitehorse City Council
- Yarra Ranges Council

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

2.1 The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to articulate the arrangements and expectations of member councils by:

- 2.1.1 providing a framework to guide collaborative work and meet the objectives of EAHA's Strategic Plan
- 2.1.2 defining the roles and obligations of the host and member councils and EAHA's governance structure
- 2.1.3 establishing an agreed membership funding commitment

3. PERIOD

3.1 From 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2026.

4. DEFINITIONS

Host organisation means Knox City Council who will host EAHA Lead Officer and administer EAHA's finances as described in Sections 9 and 10 of this MOU.

Member means each full fee paying council as listed in Section 1 and defined in Section 8.

5. BACKGROUND

- 5.1 EAHA was formed in 2010 in response to community concerns about housing affordability and the increasing demand for Affordable Housing in the region.
- 5.2 In 2012, EAHA's member councils signed the first MOU formally establishing EAHA's governance structure. Over the 2012-21 period, the Alliance implemented a range of high profile regional affordable housing initiatives delivering evidenced-based collective advocacy for members and their communities.

6. PRINCIPLES

- 6.1 In all matters arising under this MOU, the parties agree to the following principles:
 - 6.1.1 openness, collaboration, sharing information and learning from each other
 - 6.1.2 communicating regularly amongst member councils
 - 6.1.3 pursuing a consensus approach to decision making
 - 6.1.4 acting in good faith, foremost in the interests of the region
 - 6.1.5 transparency and fostering a culture of regular monitoring and review

7. GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

- 7.1 EAHA members commit to maintaining a robust governance structure to ensure:
 - 7.1.1 objective and effective decision-making
 - 7.1.2 appropriate processes for accountability
 - 7.1.3 effective communications and information exchange within EAHA's networks
- 7.2 EAHA undertakes its work under the guidance of:
 - 7.2.1 an Executive Committee: overseeing and endorsing EAHA's strategic directions
 - 7.2.2 a Steering Committee: managing projects, consistent with EAHA's strategic direction
 - 7.2.3 Working Groups: project implementation and technical discussion (meeting as required)
 - 7.2.4 A Lead Officer: to support and resource these governance structures and facilitate delivery of EAHA's initiatives

- 7.3 Representation on EAHA's committees, their roles, responsibilities and operational processes are detailed in the attached Terms of Reference.

8. FUNDING COMMITMENT

- 8.1 Each EAHA member will contribute an annual membership fee of \$15,000 + GST every July commencing in 2022/23 up until and including the 2025/26 financial year.
- 8.2 The parties recognise that EAHA's contractual and operational obligations extend over multiple financial years. This includes the delivery and administration of significant externally funded initiatives and maintaining the employment contract with EAHA's dedicated staff resource. The annual membership fee is therefore intended to provide investment certainty and ensure sufficient resources can be allocated to meet the Alliance's ongoing commitments. Member councils are committed to applying for EAHA annual membership fees in their annual budget process.
- 8.3 There will be an annual review of membership contributions to consider the appropriateness of existing contributions against any increasing cost impediments (eg. labour, projects etc).

9. HOSTING STAFF

- 9.1 The EAHA Lead Officer will be hosted and employed at Knox City Council on behalf of all members.
- 9.2 The EAHA Lead Officer will be accountable to the EAHA Executive Committee and EAHA Steering Committee and will report to the Coordinator Integrated Social and Community Planning at Knox City Council on day to day issues and in regard to employment conditions. Annual work plan reviews will be undertaken by Coordinator Integrated Social and Community Planning in consultation with the Executive Committee and Steering Committee.
- 9.3 Additional EAHA project staff may be employed at any time during the period of the MOU as required. This will be arranged and managed between the relevant councils participating in the particular project. The parties agree to reach a mutually satisfactory hosting arrangement that best meets the needs of all members and/or the initiative in question.

10. FINANCE ARRANGEMENTS

- 10.1 Knox City Council will be responsible for managing EAHA's finances. Funding received from member councils will be used for the core operation of EAHA which includes staff salary and on-costs (including, superannuation, WorkCover accrual, long service leave accrual, sick leave and leave loading, on-costs) and other operational costs. The host council will absorb overhead and administrative costs associated with the EAHA Lead Officer position.
- 10.2 The host council will report to member councils on an annual basis in regard to the EAHA funds spent in each financial year and the budget balance (the EAHA Reserve). The host council will invoice each member council for their membership fees in July of each year.
- 10.3 Any surplus in the EAHA Reserve may be used for supporting project work and capacity building opportunities via agreement between EAHA members. Additional funding to facilitate

priority projects will be sought from member councils and via funding applications to state and federal government and other organisations as opportunities arise.

- 10.4 In accordance with Knox City Council redundancy provisions as outlined in its Enterprise Agreement, at the date of the program being identified as decommissioned or reduced, all currently participating EAHA Councils agree to share in the full compensation of affected and eligible staff members should redundancy be necessary.

11. SHARING OF INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- 11.1 All council members will aim, where reasonably possible, to share information relevant to the Alliance with each other. In the normal course of events, the members will work on the assumption that information should be freely exchanged.
- 11.2 The members agree that it may be necessary to share confidential information to further the objectives of this MOU and that such information is to remain confidential.

12. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

- 12.1 If any dispute or difference arises between the parties in carrying out the principles of this MOU that cannot be resolved, then the parties will seek an agreed independent mediator to resolve the difference.

13. ADDITIONS TO MEMBERSHIP

- 13.1 Any additional council wishing to join EAHA can express interest in writing to the EAHA Executive Committee. The decision to accept new members will be made by a majority vote of the EAHA Executive Committee.
- 13.2 Additional councils who join EAHA as members in the future will need to sign a Deed that would make them party to this MOU. This Deed would be an attachment to the MOU and Terms of Reference.

14. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP AND DISSOLUTION

- 14.1 Any party may cease being party to this MOU at any time by giving twelve month's advance notice to the host organisation. Any unspent fees will not be refunded to the exiting council member.
- 14.2 Any obligations and commitments agreed to before the date of exit are to be fulfilled by the exiting party. Exiting member councils are also to provide any information required to fulfil any contractual obligations beyond the time of exit.
- 14.3 The Alliance may be dissolved by a vote of the Executive Committee, through processes as described in the attended Terms of Reference.
- 14.4 The trigger for a vote of dissolution is when membership declines to a point where the Alliance's ongoing operation is no longer financially viable.

15. MOU REVIEW PROCESS

- 15.1 All member councils commit to conducting regular and ongoing reviews of the aims and their respective participation and if at any time any party decides that the aims are not viable, they may withdraw their participation in accordance with Section 14 of this MOU.

16. EXECUTION

SIGNED for and on behalf of **Knox City Council**)
(**host organisation**))

by:) _____
(Name of signatory) (Signature)

Date:

SIGNED for and on behalf of **<insert name of council>**)
(**as member**))

by:) _____
(Name of signatory) (Signature)

Date:



Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance

Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference should be read in conjunction with EAHA's 2022-26 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and EAHA's Strategic Plan 2022-26. These Terms of Reference have been developed in line with the MOU, as a means of delegating powers to EAHA to ensure:

- Sound and effective decision-making
- Appropriate processes for accountability to EAHA as an entity and to individual members
- Effective communications and information exchange within EAHA's networks are maintained

EAHA pursues its work agenda under the guidance of:

- An Executive Committee
- A Steering Committee
- EAHA Lead Officer
- Working Groups (informal).

Vision

The Eastern Metropolitan Region is a place where everyone has a safe, secure, affordable home that is appropriate to their needs.

Mission

The Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA) advocate for increased Affordable Housing in the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR) of Melbourne to respond to current and future housing needs.

Each Council has its own context concerning Affordable Housing but provides a united voice for the Region.

Definition of Affordable Housing

The EAHA uses the definition of Affordable Housing in the [Victorian Planning and Environment Act](#) which is housing, including social housing, that is appropriate for the needs of very low, low and moderate-income households. Rent or mortgage repayments are priced so households are able to meet their other essential basic living costs.

Social housing includes:

- Public Housing, owned and managed by the State Government and
- Community Housing, owned and/or managed by an accredited Housing Agency.



Affordable housing includes a broad range of other housing types that are appropriate for and allocated to households with low and moderate incomes. It can be affordable rental (a discount on market rent) or affordable purchase through a program like shared equity.

Appropriate affordable housing considers allocation, affordability, tenure, demographic housing needs, type of housing (form and quality), location, integration and reference to housing need.¹

Is it the same as housing affordability?

No. Affordable housing and housing affordability are not the same concept. Housing affordability refers to the broader housing market forces that impact the cost of housing including rent and purchase. Local housing affordability impacts the demand for Affordable Housing, as rising housing costs can mean private market housing is unaffordable for low and moderate income households. The EAHA have a role in advocating for improvements in housing affordability but it's main focus is increasing supply of Affordable Housing in the region.

Our Role

1. **Represent** the Affordable Housing needs and priorities of the region and significant parts of it.
2. **Share knowledge and build capacity** within the Alliance and with partners to enable effective advocacy.
3. **Advocate** for improvements in housing affordability that have region-wide benefits.
4. **Advocate** to State and Federal governments and other appropriate parties for increased Affordable Housing supply, finance and housing subsidies.
5. **Work cooperatively** with Councils, governments, statutory planning authorities, registered housing agencies and other stakeholders to increase the supply of Affordable Housing.
6. **Provide** a democratic and consultative decision-making process in determining regional Affordable Housing needs and Alliance activities, in conjunction with State and Federal governments and including appropriate community participation.

Strategic Objectives

1. Use EAHA's scale, reputation and member's commitment influence Affordable Housing policy, funding and programs within local, state and federal governments and build community support.
2. Leverage the network of EAHA to ensure the implementation of new and innovative projects that promote Affordable Housing solutions and facilitate increased supply in the EMR.
3. Build the capacity of EAHA's members and stakeholders through collaboration, partnerships and effectively sharing information.

¹ Ministerial Notice Planning and Environment Act 1987 Specified Matters Under Section 17. May 20183AA(2), https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/214092/Final_Specified-Matters-Under-Section-3AA2-Ministerial-Notice.pdf



4. Develop partnerships to secure resources for projects whilst maintaining strong governance structures and an engaged membership.

Who we are

1. The EAHA consists of six EMR Councils:
 - 1) Knox City Council
 - 2) Maroondah City Council
 - 3) Manningham City Council
 - 4) Monash City Council
 - 5) Whitehorse City Council
 - 6) Yarra Ranges Council, and
 - 7) Other Councils as agreed.

Strategic Framework

EAHA's Strategic Plan (Attachment 1) details the overarching strategic directions, objectives and rolling actions the Alliance will undertake to deliver its vision and mission. The four year strategic plan includes indicative evaluation criteria. The strategic plan will be evaluated and updated every four years. This process will include a review of the role and scope of the Alliance.

Each year, EAHA will develop an annual implementation plan detailing the specific projects and operational tasks EAHA will undertake to deliver the strategic plan over a 12 month period. This plan will allocate responsibilities, timelines and provides an indication of potential resources (such as external funding opportunities). The annual work plan is an internal document and will be used to inform the annual reporting process.

Reporting

Formal reporting raises awareness of EAHA activities with member councils and holds EAHA accountable for its strategic plan. EAHA will report to member councils at least twice per year. An annual update will be provided to the Eastern Region Group of Councils (ERG). The EAHA minutes will be shared with the ERG Executive Officer to support collaboration with the ERG.

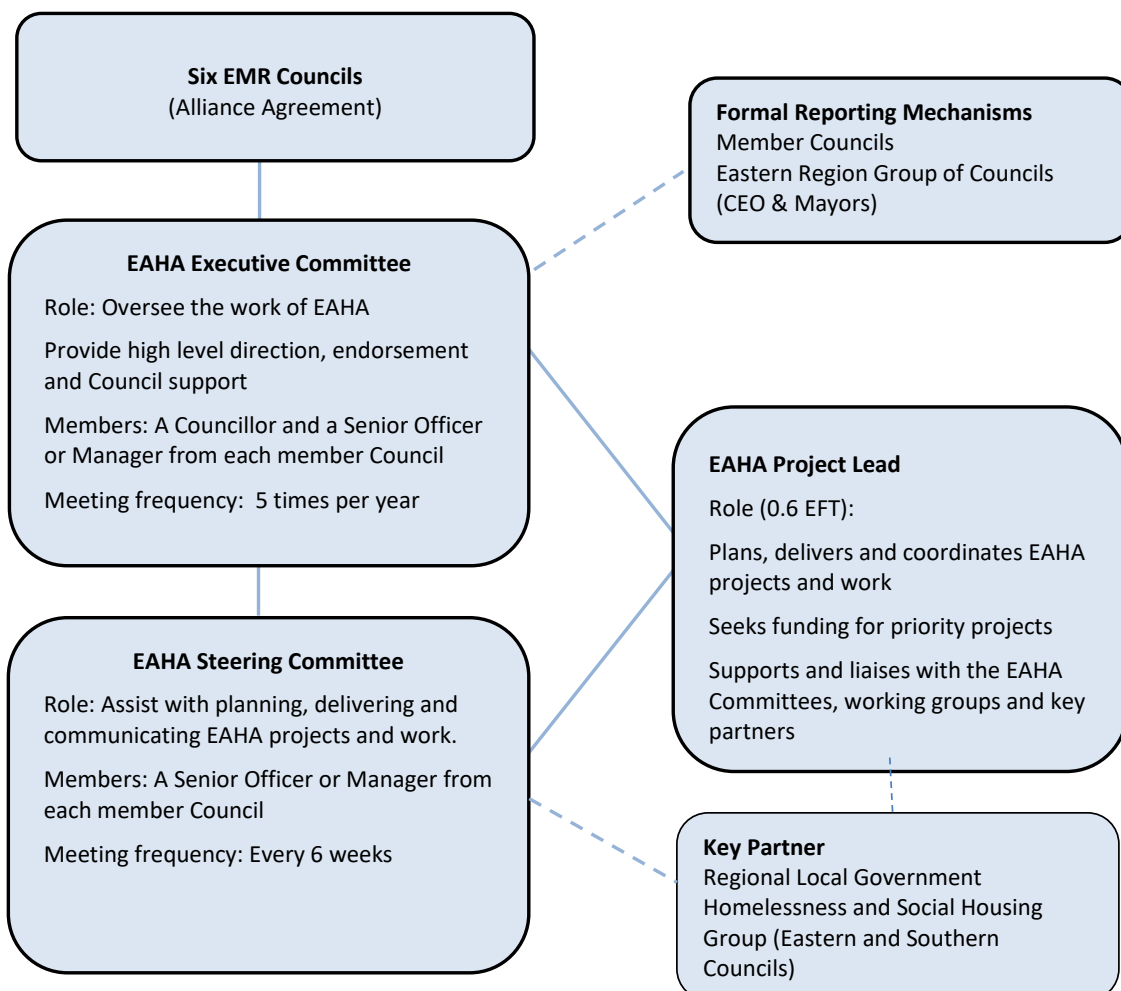
An Annual Report will be made public via the EAHA website. An Annual Financial Report will be circulated to EAHA member Councils.

Sunset Clause

These Terms of Reference and the MOU will be reviewed and signed by the EAHA members every four years (the next review will be in 2026).



Governance Structure



Executive Committee

The Executive Committee will consist of a Councillor and Senior Officer or Manager from each member Council including the capacity for Councillors to nominate a substitute or proxy to attend meetings on their behalf. The Executive Committee will meet 5 times per year. Additional meetings can be called as required. Each representative must attend no less than two Executive Committee meetings per calendar year.



Role of the Executive Committee

- Inform and authorise EAHA's strategic plan (every four years) and annual implementation plans
- Authorise and endorse funding submissions and contractual agreements on behalf of their council
- Identify advocacy issues and authorise advocacy submissions on behalf of their councils
- Oversee EAHA's finances and endorse financial reports
- Ensure high level engagement with EAHA's stakeholders within each member Council
- Actively promote EAHA's activities and effectively communicate the benefits of alliance membership to decision makers and other key stakeholders
- To recommend to the Steering Committee changes to the MOU and Terms of Reference
- To report periodically on the activities and resolutions of the EAHA Executive Committee
- Advocate for initiatives that improve access to affordable housing and housing support services
- Ensure all EAHA members have equitable access to resources and projects developed by and available to EAHA
- Regularly meet and liaise with their respective Steering Committee representatives to ensure effective information exchange and facilitate efficient decision making processes.

Decision making and voting

- 1) Where possible, member councils will work towards consensus
- 2) Each Council may only hold one vote in the absence of the Councillor or proxy, an Officer representative may vote on behalf of a Council
- 3) A proxy form must be completed when a proxy is attending an EAHA meeting on behalf of a voting member (see Appendix A), chairperson will have casting vote
- 4) Decisions will be made by a majority vote
- 5) Voting can only occur when there are at least four Councils represented at a meeting
- 6) Timeframes for decision making will be specified in all electronic communications and Councils agree that a failure to respond to communications within the timeframe constitutes de-facto support for the proposition
- 7) When in-meeting decision making is not possible the following process will be followed:
 - a) Officers discuss options and devise one or two evidence-based recommendations,
 - b) Recommendations are put to the Executive for vote via email, with the Chairperson having the deciding vote,
 - c) Where time does not allow for the above process the Chair Person and the Deputy Chair Person can be called in to make an executive decision.



Chair Person

The Executive Committee will nominate and appoint a Chair Person (for one year, or longer by agreement) who will:

- Chair meetings of the Executive Committee
- Provide ongoing direction and active support to the EAHA Lead Officer
- Ensure appropriate conduct and procedures are followed by the Executive Committee
- Ensure all members of the Executive Committee are treated even-handedly and fairly irrespective of their role or formal position at the council they represent
- Encourage all members of the Executive Committee to make a contribution to Executive deliberations

A Deputy Chair Person will be nominated (for one year, or longer by agreement) to fill the primary Chair Person's role if absent

Meeting procedures

At the first meeting each year the EAHA shall:

1. Elect a Councillor as the Chairperson and a Deputy for a twelve-month period. The election process will proceed as follows:
 - i) nominations will be called no later than a week prior to the election meeting
 - ii) at the election meeting, the Chair and Deputy Chair will step down from their positions and hand proceedings over to an interim chair. The interim chair will be the officer representing the Council who is hosting the meeting
 - iii) the interim Chair will give each nominee an opportunity to state their reason/s for nominating for the said position
 - iv) voting will take place in the form of a silent vote
 - v) the nominee with the most votes will be appointed to the nominated position
 - vi) in a situation where there is only one (1) nominee for a position, the nominee will be automatically appointed to the position, negating the need for a vote.
 2. set the annual membership financial contribution for the following financial year
- It is the responsibility of each Council to ensure continuous representation on the Alliance
 - Confirmation of an intention to attend the EAHA Executive Committee must be given to the hosting Council at least five days prior to the date of the meeting.
 - The Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance Executive Committee shall meet at least 5 times annually.
 - Meetings will rotate across the 6 member Councils and will commence at 6.30 pm and conclude no later than 8.30 pm unless an alternative time is agreed on. Meetings may also be held online if required.



Steering Committee

Role of the Steering Committee

- To establish and manage EAHA projects, consistent with the strategic direction and priorities endorsed by the EAHA Executive Committee
- To develop advocacy submissions consistent with the issues and priorities endorsed by the EAHA Executive Committee
- To review and manage EAHA's budget in consultation with the EAHA Lead Officer
- To receive EAHA Working Group's reports and recommendations
- Assist with developing the Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plans
- Assist with project development and delivery using Council processes and by identifying Council needs
- Assist with project reporting
- Provide input on communication and promotional material
- Share resources and knowledge
- Regularly meet and liaise with their respective Executive Committee representatives to ensure effective information exchange and facilitate efficient decision making processes

Composition of Steering Committee

The EAHA Steering Committee will consist of a Manager or Council Officer from each participating Council, as well as the EAHA Project Lead.

Meetings

Meetings 6 weekly. Minutes will be taken by the EAHA Lead Officer or shared as agreed. Meetings will be hosted online or at each council on a rolling basis and chaired by the EAHA Lead Officer. Papers will be prepared by the EAHA Lead Officer.

The EAHA Lead Officer

The below should be read in conjunction with the position description for the EAHA Lead Officer. The officer will be based at Knox City Council unless otherwise decided.

Role of the EAHA Lead Officer

- Support the Executive and Steering Committees by coordinating committee meetings, and where appropriate, EAHA working group meetings and workshops including preparing agendas, reports and minutes for these meetings
- Facilitate the development of EAHA's strategic plan, annual implementation plan, advocacy plan and monitor, evaluate and report on the Alliance's performance against these plans



- Coordinate the review of governance, policy, procedures and finance to reduce the risk to Alliance operations and long term viability
- Identify and secure funding, sponsorship and other external resources to assist the Alliance deliver initiatives
- Develop and coordinate communications with stakeholders, including promotional material relating to EAHA projects, programs and initiatives, including material for media releases, websites and other engagement channels
- Represent the EAHA on the Regional Local Government Homelessness and Social Housing Group
- Maintain strong governance structures and an engaged membership
- Manage dispute resolution between Alliance members

Media and communication

1. The Chairperson is authorised, as the principal spokesperson, to make written and verbal public comments on behalf of the Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance
2. Individual Councillors will be the primary representative for comment on local issues, in accordance with, or adapted to comply with, member Councils' relevant media policies
3. All public representation of the Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance will be to accurately represent or support its objectives
4. Media releases will be issued in accordance with the EAHA Communication Guidelines (Attachment 2).

Authorisation of submissions

Authorisation is delegated to the EAHA Lead Officer via their manager and the EAHA Executive Chair for all submissions that are consistent with EAHA advocacy priorities and EAHA's Strategic Plan.

For formal submissions, the authorisation process involves:

- The EAHA Lead Officer drafts submissions with input from the Steering Committee (or nominated Working Group if required)
- Draft submissions to then circulated to EAHA Executive members
- It will be assumed that Executive members approve unless explicitly stated to the contrary, with response required within 3 working days from receipt of draft Executive representatives will facilitate support and authorisation by individual EAHA member organisations through active engagement and communications.

Financials

1. The annual financial contribution will be \$15,000 (exc. GST) confirmed at the last meeting of the financial year and must be paid in July of the following financial year (unless a different date is agreed by Alliance members).



2. This will provide funding for a 0.6 EFT Project Lead position (Band 7) and project and research costs where relevant.
3. Alliance funds will be expended in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Council that is hosting the secretariat position.
4. A report on the financial statement is to be included as a standard item on each Executive Committee meeting agenda.

Administration

1. A provision for an EAHA Lead Officer and administrative support will be included as part of the member contributions to the EAHA
2. It is expected that any additional support required by the Chairperson will be provided by their Council.

Agenda and Minutes

1. An agenda will be prepared for each meeting and circulated at least one weeks prior to the next meeting
2. Minutes will be taken at each meeting and distributed within four weeks of that meeting
3. Minutes of each meeting will:
 - a. Contain details of the proceedings, decisions made and any actions required, and
 - b. Identify relevant reports or information circulated at the meeting.

Meals at meetings

Where meetings are held in person, the hosting Council will provide an evening meal.

Confidential matters

- Meetings may be closed to discuss confidential matters
- A resolution to close and reopen a meeting and the reason must be taken and recorded in the minutes
- The members must keep confidentiality and not allow, make or cause any disclosure of or in relation to the confidential information without the prior written consent of the other members

The members must not:

- Use or permit any person to use confidential information for any purposes other than for those agreed by the members.
- Disclose or in any way communicate to any other person any of the confidential information except as authorised by the party who has disclosed the confidential information.
- Permit unauthorised persons to have access to places where confidential information is displayed, reproduced or stored.
- Make or assist any person to make any unauthorised use of the confidential information.
- Confidential information means any information provided by one member to the other member, which that member specifies as being confidential, or if disclosed, would be



contrary to the public interest or would damage the interests of the parties involved, which provided the information.

Declaration of interests

- Members of EAHA Committees are required to declare at a meeting any interests or conflict of interests
- The Committee members will comply with all the provisions of the Act in regard to Interests and Conflicts of Interest as per the provisions of the Local Government Act 1989

Calling of special meetings of the Executive Committees

- Special meetings of Executive Committee may be called by any of the EAHA Councils
- The elected representatives of a majority of four EAHA Councils must consent in writing for a special meeting to be called
- Reasonable notice must be provided for any special meetings called

Requesting and receiving information for the EAHA Committees

- Information relevant to meetings and decision making processes will be provided to the EAHA Committees by the EAHA Executive Officer 3 business day before each meeting
- The EAHA Lead Officer will distribute information via email and electronic transfer
- Each Steering Committee member will actively engage and brief their Council's respective Executive Committee member ahead of each Committee meeting on any technical or contextual issues necessary to streamline decision making and build Committee capability

Presentations requested to the EAHA Committee

- Both the Executive and Steering Committees can request presentations by guests, stakeholders or interested parties and will be coordinated through the EAHA Lead Officer.
- Requests for presentations shall be made through the EAHA Lead Officer



Appendix A

Proxy Form

Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance Executive Committee

I, _____, being a voting member of the Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance hereby appoint (name and position) _____ as my proxy to act generally at the meeting on my behalf and to vote in accordance with the following directions (or if no directions have been given, as the proxy seems fit) at the Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance meeting to be held on (date) _____.

Items of Business (Indicate preference)	For	Against	Abstain
1.			
2.			
3.			

Please Note: If you mark the Abstain box for an item you are directing your proxy not to vote on your behalf and your votes will not be counted in computing the required majority.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

8.6 Response to Notice of Motion 169 - Council Support for the Knox Business Awards Run by the Rotary Club of Rowville and Lysterfield

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Decision
Author:	Coordinator Economic Development, Michelle Bishop
Manager:	Manager City Futures, Shiranthi Widan
Executive:	Director City Liveability, Matt Kelleher

SUMMARY

This report has been prepared in response to Notice of Motion 169 adopted by Council at its meeting of 24 February 2025 (Attachment 1) which requested:

That a high level report be presented to Council at the March 2025 Meeting of Council outlining:

- 1. What Council is doing to assist with the Knox Business Awards being organised by the Rotary Club of Rowville and Lysterfield; and*
- 2. The potential opportunities for how these awards can be widened to the whole of Knox and include all kinds of businesses.*

The Knox Business Awards were re-established in 2024 by the Rotary Club of Rowville – Lysterfield and Knox Business Network to celebrate the achievement and strengths of the local business community. The Knox Business Network is a newly formed network of local businesses wishing to connect and network.

Given existing resources and priorities of Council's Economic Development team, officers recommend support be provided to the Knox Business Awards through ongoing promotional support of the Awards through the Economic Development service's existing digital communications channels as outlined in Attachment 2.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Endorses the Knox Business Awards for the 2025 program being delivered by the Rowville – Lysterfield Rotary Club and Knox Business Network as a form of Council's support of the Awards.
2. Continues to support the Knox Business Awards through its Economic Development service and communication channels as outlined in Attachment 2.

1. DISCUSSION

From 1995 - 2005, the Knox Leader (print media) delivered the original Knox Business Awards to recognise the importance of local businesses within the Knox community. In 2024, after a long period of absence, the Rotary Club of Rowville – Lysterfield and Knox Business Network established a new Knox Business Awards program with support from Council's Economic Development officers. The 2024 Awards program consisted of the following five awards categories with 65 businesses across Knox nominated:

- Young Achievers Award
- Sole Trader Business Award
- Environment and Sustainability Award
- Business Impact Award
- Business of the Year Award.

Council's support included extensive communication to local businesses through Council's Knoxbiz website and fortnightly newsletter reaching 3,000 businesses across the municipality. The Economic Development Coordinator also provided mentoring support to Awards organisers over the course of the program and attended the Awards breakfast event in October 2024. The Awards breakfast was also attended by some Councillors and local MPs.

After a successful 2024 Knox Business Awards, the Rotary Club of Rowville – Lysterfield and Knox Business Network have requested support from Council to expand the award categories and increase the awareness of the program from 2025 onwards. This request has resulted in Notice of Motion 169 being adopted by Council at its meeting of 24 February 2025.

Key dates for the 2025 Knox Business Awards are:

- Promotional period – late March – June 2025
- Nominations open – late March/ early April 2025
- Nominations close – 30 June 2025
- Award nominees announced for all categories– early August 2025
- Awards breakfast event and category winners presentation – mid September 2025.

The awards are beyond the capacity of the Economic Development service plan and team resources are already allocated to existing programs and activities, so available officer support is limited. Due to this and the relatively high engagement amongst the business community in Knox Biz and other digital platforms, officers recommend Council continue to support the Awards program through promotions of the nomination process through existing Economic Development communication channels.

Council has also launched a new digital platform called Experience Knox, which was a priority action of the Council's adopted Retail Activation Strategy. The platform supports retailers to profile and promote their respective businesses and aims to engage the local community in discovering and strengthening their relationship with their local shopping centres and retailers. Through the recently launched Experience Knox Facebook and Instagram pages, Council will be able to further support the Awards program and assist in reaching businesses across the municipality.

The planned communications and support plan for the Awards program is provided in Attachment 2.

The Rowville-Lysterfield Rotary Club is seeking Council's endorsement of the Knox Business Awards program as the official business awards program for Knox. They are seeking this endorsement as they believe this would elevate the awards program and raise its profile amongst businesses and give it a level of support that is being sort by Rotary.

With Rotary delivering the Business Awards program, this provides a level of independence by ensuring the process is managed by a respected community focused organisation rather than a single business or industry group. This can enhance credibility, reduce conflicts of interests and promote fairness in the assessment process. As ongoing support for this Program in addition to the communications support mentioned, Council's Economic Development team is able to provide mentoring advice to the Rotary Club on the current and future programs. This advice would be in the form of providing a 'sounding board' to the Rotary Club as they plan and implement their program. Officers can also attend the Awards event and participate in judging, where there is available capacity.

Given current resourcing and priorities of the Economic Development team, it is not recommended to provide support beyond what is outlined in this report. This includes financial support as budget is not allocated or available for such purposes. Further, it is also not recommended that Council run its own Awards program. Any changes to Council's role in planning, facilitating and promoting a Council led Awards program would need to be considered in the context of other service priorities, resource commitments and future budgets.

2. ENGAGEMENT

The Economic Development Coordinator has been engaging with the Rowville - Lysterfield Rotary Club since early 2024, providing mentoring and ongoing support for the program. This also involved Council's Economic Development Coordinator presenting the 2024 Sole Trader Business Award at the Awards breakfast last year. Discussions for the planning of the 2025 Awards program and revised award categories have commenced with Officers attending a meeting with Award organisers on 25 February 2025, foreshadowing the level of support being offered by Council which in turn was supported and appreciated by the organisers.

Separately, the Experience Knox working group was established in late 2024 to support the website and social media platforms. The working group, comprising of representatives from local retail businesses, will assist in the distribution of 2025 Award information to local retail businesses. The working group will also support a broader awareness of the program through their networks and contacts.

The Economic Development team received positive feedback from local businesses who registered for the 2024 Awards program and attended the Awards breakfast in October last year. As outlined in Attachment 2, officers will continue to support the promotion of the 2025 Awards program through existing digital communication channels including Knox Biz, Experience Knox and other Economic Development communication channels.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report and its recommendations are not considered to have any negative social implications to the local community. The Knox Business Awards program gives local businesses an opportunity to showcase their business, economic and social contribution to Knox and to celebrate and acknowledge their significant achievements and innovations. The program is considered to contribute positively both socially and economically towards the local community and economy.

4. CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS

Implementation of the recommendations of this report 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 IMPLICATIONS

There are no identified environmental implications identified as part of this report.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The ongoing support and recommendations outlined within this report will be delivered within the existing City Futures Operating Budget 2024/25. Any changes to Council's role in planning, facilitating or promoting this Awards program or future program may result in resource impacts.

7. RISKS

Officers are not aware of any other Knox specific Business Awards program underway (or planned), or an organisation interested in delivering a similar Business Awards program in Knox within the last 15 years. Therefore it is unlikely that another organisation would be interested in delivering such awards. If Council resolved not to support the Awards program, this may limit exposure of the program and uptake within the local business community, however it is noted that the Rotary has sought advice from neighboring Awards program organisers to assist in growing the program.

The potential risk to Council in endorsing the Knox Business Awards is reputational. Without Council having direct involvement in defining the scope and format of the program, or managing its delivery, any negative fallout or outcomes resulting from the program may be attributed to Council. Additionally, formally endorsing the program may prevent Council in future from providing support to other programs. On the other hand, as mentioned earlier in the report, with a third party such as Rotary delivering the awards provides a level of independence from Council or a single business or industry group by ensuring the process is managed by a respected community focused organisation.

To limit potential reputational risk, officers recommend that Council's endorsement be for the 2025 program and contribution in the form of support outlined in Attachment 2. Officers will review any promotional collateral associated with the Program to ensure Council is not identified as a partner. Officers involvement at the Awards event itself should also be limited to being an attendee rather than being a judge or decision maker for any award recipient.

8. KNOX COMMUNITY AND COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025

Opportunity & Innovation

Strategy 1.1 - Maximise the local economy by supporting existing businesses and attracting new investment.

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. STATEMENT OF COMPATIBILITY

There are no legislative obligations under the Human Rights Charter, Child Safe Standards or the Gender Equity Act that are incompatible with the recommendation in this report.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

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

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment 1 - 2025-02-24 - Minutes - Meeting of Council - Notice of Motion 169 - Council Support for the Knox Business Awards Run by the Rotary Club of Rowville and Lysterfield [8.6.1 - 1 page]
2. Attachment 2 - Knox City Council Economic Development Communications Support [8.6.2 - 2 pages]

2025-02-24 - Meeting Of Council

10.3 Notice of Motion No. 169 - Council Support for the Knox Business Awards Run By the Rotary Club of Rowville and Lysterfield

The following notice of motion was lodged by Councillor Lockwood in accordance with Council's Governance Rules:

I hereby give notice that it is my intention to move the following motion at the Council Meeting on 24 February 2025:

That a high level report be presented to Council at the March 2025 Meeting of Council outlining:

1. What Council is doing to assist with the Knox Business Awards being organised by the Rotary Club of Rowville and Lysterfield; and
2. The potential opportunities for how these awards can be widened to the whole of Knox and include all kinds of businesses

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Pearce

SECONDED: Councillor Lockwood

That a high level report be presented to Council at the March 2025 Meeting of Council outlining:

1. What Council is doing to assist with the Knox Business Awards being organised by the Rotary Club of Rowville and Lysterfield; and
2. The potential opportunities for how these awards can be widened to the whole of Knox and include all kinds of businesses.

CARRIED



Economic Development



2025 Knox Business Awards (Rowville-Lysterfield Rotary)

Council Communications Support and Mentoring

Summary of communication and mentoring support by Knox City Council Economic Development team for the 2025 Knox Business Awards organised by Rowville-Lysterfield Rotary.

Support and Mentoring by Economic Development Coordinator – attend meetings as required and contribute as Awards Judge. The following are activities already undertaken or planned. There is likely to be further support provided in the lead up to the closing of nominations, and Award event.

DATE	ACTIVITIES
February 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KCC Economic Development Coordinator attended Rotary Knox Business Awards meeting
March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knoxbiz fortnightly eNewsletter* – Rotary Business Awards article announcing 2025 Awards, summary of last year's winners and key dates
April 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knoxbiz fortnightly eNewsletter – Story with link to registration and Rotary Business Awards Flyer Knoxbiz website - Rotary Business Awards Flyer and link to registration (noted as a highlight on website front page) Instagram / Facebook boosted post via Experience Knox Instagram / Facebook organic post focusing on retail businesses LinkedIn post on Bayswater Business Precinct (BBP) account - relevant industry categories highlighted Economic Development to highlight the Awards program with the Experience Knox Working Group for promotion through their networks



DATE	ACTIVITIES
May 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knoxbiz fortnightly eNewsletter – Rotary Business Awards Flyer and link to registration • Knoxbiz website - Rotary Business Awards Flyer and link to registration (noted as a highlight on website front page) • Instagram / Facebook boosted post via Experience Knox • LinkedIn post on Bayswater Business Precinct (BBP) account - relevant industry categories highlighted
June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knoxbiz fortnightly eNewsletter – Rotary Business Awards Flyer and link to registration • Knoxbiz website - Rotary Business Awards Flyer and link to registration (noted as a highlight on website front page) • Instagram / Facebook boosted post via Experience Knox calling for nominations posted week 1 • Instagram / Facebook boosted post via Experience Knox – final call out for nominations by 30 June posted week 3 or early week 4

*Knoxbiz enewsletter subscribers – 3,000 Knox Businesses (March 2025)

9 Supplementary Items

10 Notices Of Motion

10.1 Notice of Motion No. 172 - Connecting Council with the Knox Community (Reports by Councillors)

The following notice of motion was lodged by Councillor Atwell in accordance with Council's Governance Rules:

I hereby give notice that it is my intention to move the following motion at the Council Meeting on 24 March 2025:

That Council resolve:

1. To note that the order of business for monthly Council Meetings makes provision for *Reports by Councillors*, which ordinarily include a summary of attended events and engagements, community meetings, committee meetings, and the particulars of Ward-specific and Council-wide issues of note.
2. To note that *Reports by Councillors* form part of Council meetings (including livestreaming and recordings) and are summarised in the Minutes of Council Meetings published on the Agendas and Minutes page of Council's website.
3. To receive a report to a Council meeting no later than May 2025 (unless deferred to a later date in consultation with the Mayor) including:
 - a) Amendments or alternatives to current arrangements for "Reports by Councillors" to make the information provided in these reports more dynamic and accessible to the Knox community
 - b) An assessment of how these amendments or alternatives could enhance transparency and improve access to information about the activities, engagements and issues of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors
 - c) An assessment of privacy and safety considerations arising from those options and how they might be addressed

10.2 Notice of Motion No. 173 - Connecting Council with the Knox Community (Ward Meetings)

The following notice of motion was lodged by Councillor Atwell in accordance with Council's Governance Rules:

I hereby give notice that it is my intention to move the following motion at the Council Meeting on 24 March 2025:

That Council resolve:

1. To recognise the importance of convening 'meet your councillor' style Ward Meetings as collaborative round-table discussions where attendees can raise issues and initiatives that are important to them and directly with local Councillors and senior Council staff; and
2. To include in the imminent review of the Councillor Expenses and Support Policy:
 - a) Consideration of the existing provisions regarding Ward Meetings and whether they remain fit for purpose and align with expectations regarding engagement and representation with the Knox community;
 - b) Options to refresh and renew the format and frequency of Ward Meetings and any relevant cost considerations; and
 - c) A year-by-year breakdown of Ward Meetings held between 2016 and 2024

10.3 Notice of Motion 176 - Service Planning Information

The following notice of motion was lodged by Councillor Lockwood in accordance with Council's Governance Rules:

I hereby give notice that it is my intention to move the following motion at the Council Meeting on 24 March 2025:

That Council resolve to receive a report to a Council meeting no later than June 2025 (unless deferred to a later date in consultation with the Mayor) including:

- a. Details of actions taken or not taken in all Service Reviews produced over the past 3 years; and
- b. For any Service Reviews not acted upon that an explanation be provided along with a schedule for implementation.

10.4 Notice of Motion No 179 - Street Trees in Bristol Place

The following notice of motion was lodged by Councillor Pearce in accordance with Council's Governance Rules:

I hereby give notice that it is my intention to move the following motion at the Council Meeting on 24 March 2025:

That Council resolve to receive a report to a Council meeting no later than May 2025 (unless deferred to a later date in consultation with the Mayor) regarding street trees in Bristol Place Rowville, including:

1. An outline of how Council assesses street trees for potential removal;
2. An outline of reasons why any street trees in Bristol Place have been removed over the past 15 years;
3. Details of the last inspection date for each of the remaining trees in Bristol Place and an indication of whether there are any current plans for further street tree removals in the near future; and
4. An outline of specific tree complaints received from residents concerning street trees in Bristol Place over the past 10 years.

11 Urgent Business

12 Questions Through the Chair

13 Confidential Items