

## Early Years Advisory Committee

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<b>Approval by:</b>	Council	<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Manager Early Years
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### 1. Purpose

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

The purpose of the Early Years Advisory Committee (EYAC) is to provide advice and advocate to Council on matters impacting families and children and the related services within the Knox community.

### 2. Objectives

The objectives of the Early Years Advisory Committee will be to:

- Consult with community members (inclusive of children) to share current strengths and issues in the Knox community from the perspectives of young children and families.
- Provide a broad lens to all matters impacting children and families and the broader community from a range of community and professional backgrounds to Council for consideration when implementing change in the community.
- To work with Council officers to ensure that all of Council's policies, programs and protocols reflect the needs and rights of children and families as Knox residents.
- To promote awareness of children's voice within Council and wider Knox community.
- As a collective, focus on the child friendly cities principles when advocating for increased awareness and understanding of issues and opportunities, impacting children and families and the broader community in Knox.

The Committee will provide advice and recommendations against all five Key Directions within the Knox Community Plan 2021-2031 and the Knox Council Plan 2021-2025 (and its successor) as they pertain to children and families:

- Opportunity and innovation
- Neighbourhoods, housing and infrastructure
- Natural environment and sustainability
- Connection, resilience and wellbeing
- Civic engagement and integrity

### 3. Membership Terms, and Method of Appointment

The Early Years Advisory Committee shall comprise of the following:

- A maximum of 6 community members
- A maximum of 4 industry members (including any relevant government agency representatives)
- 2 Councillors

### 3.1 Selection and Recruitment of Community and Professional Industry Representative Members

The process to appoint community and professional industry representative members will be on Council's internet site and through local networks. Applicants must make application via an expression of interest process.

Eligible community members may include individual residents and/or representatives of Knox focused organisations who have an interest in, and understanding of issues impacting families and children and are not directly employed by Knox City Council.

Eligible professional industry representative members may include people with specialist knowledge and experience of the early years' service system, other levels of government and professional practice and/or research, who can represent a Knox focused organisation who have an interest in, and understand the issues impacting families and children and who are not directly employed by Knox City Council.

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

- Community and professional/ industry members will be selected by a panel comprising a Councillor and 2 Council Officers from the Early Years Department.
- The method of appointment will be via an expression of interest process.
- Members will be appointed for a two year term.
- All members will be eligible to re-apply for appointment, however continuous membership for longer than four years will not be considered.
- Council will be responsible for appointing all Councillor, community and professional/industry representative members; and
- Casual vacancies which occur due to community members being unable to complete the full term of their appointments may be filled by co-opting suitable candidates from a previous selection process for the remainder of the previous incumbents' terms. The selection panel will make a recommendation to the CEO, who will have the authority to appoint the recommended candidate to the committee for the remainder of the previous incumbent's term.

Professional/industry representatives unable to attend a committee meeting are able to nominate a proxy or alternate member from the organisation they represent. Any proxy attendance should be notified to Council's nominated officer at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. It is expected the appointed professional/ industry representative will provide an appropriate briefing of the committee purpose and objectives and relevant meeting notes to enable active participation and contribution of the proxy representation to the meeting.

The committee may invite observers to meetings from time to time. This is at the discretion of the committee.

Guests may also be invited to attend and participate at meetings, this would generally be for a specific purpose and/or specified period of time. This is at the discretion of the committee.

*All elected representatives who are Council volunteers and industry representatives are required to undertake prescribed Child Safe Training and any other training required by Council within their term on an Advisory Committee. This is a legislative requirement as part of reforms from the State Government to ensure all Committee representatives are aware of child safety practices in the event a relevant issue arises.* This requirement relates to the following Committees who have volunteer and community members: Early Years Advisory Committee, Youth Advisory Committee, Active Ageing Committee, Environment Committee, Community, Safety, Health and Wellbeing Committee, City Futures Committee, Disability Committee, Multicultural Committee, Arts and Culture Committee and the Community Development Fund Panel.

## 3.2 Councillors

Council will appoint Councillor representation annually.

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

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

## 3.3 Council Officers

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

Roles of Council officers are as follows:

Position Title	EYAC Responsibility
Councillor	Chairperson
Director Connected Communities	Participant/Advisor
Manager Early Years	Participant/Advisor
Strategic Planning and Partnerships Lead	Participant/Advisor
Strategic Project Officer (Early Years)	Secretariat
Policy and Planning Support Officer (Early Years)	Minute Taker

## 4. Delegated Authority and Decision Making

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

## 5. Meeting Procedures

The Early Years Advisory Committee will meet on a bi-monthly basis and an annual schedule of meetings will be agreed upon at the first meeting of the committee in each year.

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

At the commencement of each financial year the committee will develop and agree upon a work plan for the upcoming year which details meeting discussions, presentations and information sharing topics. Topics will generally be aligned with the current Community and Council Plans. The committee may also highlight any emerging issues which will also be documented as part of the work plan and/or meeting minutes. For efficiency purposes the business of the committee throughout the ensuing year should align with the work plan and list of emerging issues.

Meetings will follow standard meeting procedure protocols:

- Commence on time and conclude by the stated completion time;
- Be scheduled and confirmed in advance with all relevant supporting information distributed (as appropriate) to

each member;

- Encourage fair and reasonable discussion, participation and respect for each other's views;
- Focus on the relevant issues at hand; and
- Provide advice and recommendations to Council (in context of committee authority and objectives) on a consensus basis.

## 6. Chair

The position of Chairperson shall be held by a Councillor for a duration of one year. A review of the Chairperson is conducted annually in October, immediately following the Knox Councillor appointments period. The position of Chairperson is to be agreed upon between Councillors. When this cannot be achieved, the Mayor of the day shall determine the Chair.

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

## 7. Agendas and Meeting Notes

Agendas and meeting notes must be prepared for each meeting.

The Agenda must be provided to members of the committee not less than 7 days before the time fixed for the holding of the meeting via a digital format with the only exception being when a public holiday falls on the day agendas are due, in which case agendas are to be provided close of business 6 days in advance.

Officer reports that fail to meet the timelines will only be permitted to be included in the relevant agendas of; Ordinary Council Meetings, Strategic Planning meeting, Issues Briefings or Special Committees, with the approval of the Mayor, and Council Committees with the approval of the Chair of the Committee.

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

The meeting notes of a Council Committee must:

- (a) contain details of the proceedings and recommendations made;
- (b) be clearly expressed;
- (c) be self-explanatory; and
- (d) incorporate relevant reports or a summary of the relevant reports considered by the committee.

Draft meeting notes must be:

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

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

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

## 8. Voting

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

## 9. Conflict and Interest Provisions

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

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

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

**Councillors must:**

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

Where a member of staff or a community member has a conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest in relation to a matter before the Group, they must disclose the matter to the group before the matter is considered or discussed. Disclosure must include the nature of the interest and be recorded in the meeting notes. It will be at the discretion of the Chairperson if the staff and/or community member remains or leaves the room whilst the matter is discussed, and this must also be recorded in the notes of the meeting.

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

## 10. Reporting

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

## 11. Administration Support

Administration support for EYAC will be provided by the Early Years Department as part of the Connected Communities Directorate.

## 12. Contact with the Media

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

## 13. Review Date

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

## 14. Meals

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

## 15. Administrative Updates

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