

Knox Bright Ideas Network

Thursday, 8 May 2025- 1.30pm – 3pm
Knox Library – Westfield Knox

We are the voice of Over 55s in Knox. We work on events, projects and issues that are important.

We acknowledge that we are on the traditional land of the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation and pay our respects to elders past and present.

Attendees: Names withheld.

Apologies: Names withheld.

The purpose of the meeting was to reflect on the Bright Ideas journey and how we transition this wonderful program/resource to provide more input and continue to provide growth and opportunities for the 55+ in our community.

Background of BIN

- Established in 2016 as a partnership between Knox Council, local residents, community groups, and businesses.
- The aim is to strengthen community connection, facilitate information sharing, and support collaborative initiatives for the benefit of residents aged 55+.

Early Activities from 2017

- First meetings held in March 2017 (approx. three gatherings).
- Focus areas included:
 - Serving as a coordination tool for senior club/library leaders.
 - Sharing speaker ideas to enhance local programming.
 - Initial newsletter launched with approx. 150 subscribers.

Growth and Evolution (2018–2019)

- BIN evolved into a community-led platform, shifting focus from event coordination to empowerment and advocacy.
- Lived experience of older community members placed at the centre of storytelling and project development.

Projects included:

- **2018:** Active Ageing Expo
- **2019:** Ageism – Voices of Over 55s
- **2020:** Housing Research
- **2021:** Ongoing Housing Research
- **2022:** Housing Showcase (delivered after being postponed twice due to the pandemic)

Communications Growth

- Newsletter subscribers increased to 1,600.
- Approximately 360 printed newsletters are mailed to community members without digital access.

Resilience During COVID-19

- COVID-19 restrictions halted some momentum and delayed key projects.
- Despite this, BIN remained active through monthly online meetings and presenters, providing connection.

Current Challenges

- **Volunteer capacity and sustainability:** Difficulty in maintaining volunteer momentum and leadership succession.
- **Digital inclusion:** Continued barriers for some older members in accessing online platforms and resources.
- **Engagement post-pandemic:** Some loss of momentum and reduced participation since the peak of community engagement activities.
- **Project funding:** Limited funding avenues for new initiatives or to scale successful projects.
- **Measuring impact:** Challenges in capturing and communicating the qualitative impact BIN has on the lives of members.

Ongoing impact and legacy

- BIN continues to foster a strong, connected, and informed community of residents aged 55+.
- Flexible model and community-first approach have proven effective in responding to both planned initiatives and unforeseen challenges.
- Monthly meetings maintained connection but how can we better use this time?
- Featuring various guest speakers to keep engagement high and content meaningful.
- Focus shifted to supporting social connection during isolation, especially for vulnerable residents.

Community Forum planning summary:

Topic	Details
Forum overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Look at possible names eg- "ONE" Forum, other names to be reviewed to provide a cohesive brand - Sharing ideas and finding out information - 3–4 hours with breaks and refreshments - Use facilitators & icebreakers
Frequency and timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 2 times per year - Option for 1 per term - 2–3 per day (day x2, evening x1) - Suggested day: Friday, e.g., 12–3 PM
Promotion methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Posters, invites via clubs, email, website, local businesses, libraries, community centres, retirement homes, Zest4Life
Network ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider changing setup (more casual) - Rebrand ideas - Less casual vs formal debate
Forum format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include speakers and engaging group content - Workshop-style discussions, Q&A - Table-based idea sharing - Themed sessions
Locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Libraries, civic facilities (transport could be a challenge)
Participation issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1600 receiving BI newsletter, but not attending number seen to be declining - Barriers such as timings, frequency etc - How to engage more people
Council role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Needs to connect in a relevant, not institutional way - be transparent and provide opportunities for people to connect and share information
Suggestions for Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More men, broader group of people - Disability/multicultural
Values & Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal connection, advocacy, identity

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positive Healthy Life - Creating a Healthy Ageing Theme
Additional suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider if forums reduce individual contributions - Food offerings - Targeted topics/groups - “Meet the mayor” opportunities
Other ideas for connection	<p>Pop-up Info Desk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote future forums - On-site survey (preferably digital)

General Business

- Recreation for All Expo has been postponed due to extended car park works at Carrington Park.
- Winter Warmer Movies- four themed free movies to run from mid-June to end of July available to book into via sticky tickets.
- Seniors information book is to be delayed and set up as a project.

2025 Proposed dates

Date	Venue
Wednesday, 11 June – 1.30pm – 3pm	Bright Ideas meeting - Fairpark Community Room - Manuka Dr, Ferntree Gully
Friday, 21 November – 12.30pm – 5pm	Positive and Healthy Ageing Forum – Knox Civic Centre