

AGENDA

Mid Month Meeting of Council

To be held at the

Civic Centre

511 Burwood Highway

Wantirna South

On

Monday 8 September 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 Mid Month Meeting of Council on Monday 14 July 2025 and Monday 11 August 2025.

4 Officer Reports

4.1 Minor Grants Program and Emergency Relief Fund 2025-26 Monthly Report

Final Report Destination: Mid-Month Council
Paper Type: For Decision
Author: Coordinator Community Partnerships and Inclusion, Marni Ford
Manager: Manager Community Strengthening, Kerry Jansons
Executive: Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley

SUMMARY

This report summarises the grant applications recommended for approval in September 2025 for the 2025-26 Minor Grants Program and Emergency Relief Fund. All applications have been assessed against the criteria set out in the Knox City Council Community Grants Guidelines 2025-2026 (Guidelines).

Applications under the Minor Grants Program are limited to a maximum of \$2,500.00 within the current financial year.

Applications under the Emergency Relief Fund are limited to \$20,000.00 within the current financial year.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to:

1. Approve nine applications under the Minor Grants Program for a total of \$12,515.08 (excluding GST) as detailed below:

Minor Grants Program				
Applicant Name	Project Title	10% Contribution for Equipment	Amount Requested (inc. GST)	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
Wantirna Lions Club Inc.	Purchase of Laptop Computer and Accessories Funding is being sought to purchase a laptop computer and accessories to help extend their reach in the community and allow for online meetings with external guests.	\$249.00	\$2,056.00	\$2,056.00
Hindu Satsang Mandal of Victoria	Diwali Festival Funding is being sought to host Diwali, which is a	NA	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00

Minor Grants Program				
Applicant Name	Project Title	10% Contribution for Equipment	Amount Requested (inc. GST)	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
	prominent Hindu festival. The event will include cultural songs and dances and a sit-down dinner for the community. This organisation is based in Knox.			
Mountain District Learning Centre	MDLC Makers Market Funding is being sought to support local musicians and small businesses to attend the Makers Market to attract a wider age cohort to the market and expose them to local music and Australian wildlife.	NA	\$1,900.00	\$1,727.27 (lesser amount due to GST)
Tamil Pengal in Australia	Diwali Festival Funding is being sought to support a community Diwali celebration aimed at bringing together people of all ages, backgrounds and cultures to promote social inclusion and cultural understanding. This event will include cultural performances, traditional music and dance, food stalls, arts and crafts, and interactive activities. This organisation is based outside of Knox, however the event will be held in Knox and they have 150 Knox residents attending.	NA	\$2,500.00	\$909.09 (lesser amount due to GST) Lesser amount due to the organisation being outside of Knox. Partial amount recommended to cover venue hire in Knox as per the quote received.
Special Olympics Australia Melbourne Eastern Ranges	Precision and Play: Essential Equipment for Developing Athletes Funding is being sought to purchase stopwatches to accurately time and track progress for athletes with	\$39.85	\$260.00	\$236.36 (lesser amount due to GST)

Minor Grants Program				
Applicant Name	Project Title	10% Contribution for Equipment	Amount Requested (inc. GST)	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
	intellectual disabilities. This will allow the training sessions to run smoothly, enabling precise performance tracking in swimming. The swimming is held at Knox Leisure works.			
The Haven Day Centre	40th Birthday Celebration Funding is being sought to celebrate the Haven Day Centre's 40 years of providing social support, respite and engagement to people over the age of 65 who have dementia or memory loss. The attendees will include past and present staff, volunteers, clients, carers, board members and stakeholders.	NA	\$370.00	\$336.36 (lesser amount due to GST)
Knox Wind Symphony Inc.	Purchase of Music Equipment Funding is being sought to purchase a heavy-duty music stand, weatherproof boxes for storage and transport of sheet music to concerts and contests, and a heavy-duty road case to store and transport auxiliary percussion equipment between rehearsal/concert venues.	\$354.00	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
Fab Nobs Theater Inc.	Purchase of Haze Machine Funding is being sought for the purchase of a haze machine to be used for lighting musical theatre productions. This piece of equipment enhances	\$156.00	\$1,300.00	\$1,300.00

Minor Grants Program				
Applicant Name	Project Title	10% Contribution for Equipment	Amount Requested (inc. GST)	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
	lighting effects, making light beams more visible and adding depth to space without significantly reducing visibility.			
Greater Eastern Malayalees Melbourne Inc.	GEM Onam 2025 Funding is being sought to deliver their annual Onam Celebration, which is a multicultural event recognising the vibrant heritage of Kerala, South India. The event will feature traditional music, dance, cuisine, and participatory activities that create an immersive cultural experience. This organisation is based outside of Knox, however the event will be held in Knox and they have 250 Knox residents attending.	NA	\$2,500.00	\$950.00 Lesser amount due to the organisation being outside of Knox. Partial amount recommended to cover venue hire in Knox.
Total			\$15,886.00	\$12,515.08

2. Defer one application under the Minor Grants Program requesting a total of \$2,314.00 detailed below:

Minor Grants Program			
Applicant Name	Project Title	Reason for Deferral	Amount Requested
CASS Care Ltd.	Balance for Life: Fall Prevention for Older People	Seeking further information from applicant about their expenditure.	\$2,314.00
Total			\$2,314.00

3. Refuse three applications under the Minor Grants Program requesting a total of \$5,445.10 as detailed below:

Minor Grants Program			
Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested	Reason for Ineligibility
SalamFest	Coffee and Talks	\$2,500.00	Application was deferred from last month. The applicant has not provided evidence that the program will be undertaken in Knox.
Golden Cobra Martial Arts	End of Year Celebration	\$865.10	Funding to be used solely to purchase trophies, which are ineligible under the Guidelines.
Melbourne 7 Melody Notes	Mid-Autumn Chinese Lantern Festival Concert	\$2,080.00	This applicant has outstanding acquittals and as per the Community Grant Guidelines is ineligible for funding.
Total		\$5,445.10	

4. Note that should the recommended Minor Grants be approved by Council, the remaining budget for 2025-26 will be \$116,967.08 after GST adjustments.
5. Approve one application under the Emergency Relief Fund for a total of \$10,909.09 (excluding GST) as detailed below:

Emergency Relief Fund				
Applicant Name	Project Title	Co-contribution from the Organisation	Amount Requested (inc. GST)	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
Temple Society Australia	Access to Nutritional Food for All	Total project cost \$16,100.00, including organisational contribution of \$4,100.00.	\$12,000.00	\$10,909.09 (lesser amount due to GST)
Total			\$12,000.00	\$10,909.09

7. Note that should the recommended grants be approved by Council, the remaining Emergency Relief Fund budget for 2025-26 will be \$11,531.81 after GST adjustments.

1. DISCUSSION

1.1 Minor Grants Program

1.1.1 Background – Minor Grants Program

The Minor Grants Program provides a pool of grant funding that can respond monthly to requests for small amounts of funding to assist with short term, one-off projects or initiatives that are relatively minor in nature.

The objective of the Minor Grants Program is to be an accessible and responsive funding source to assist a wide range of community led activities across the municipality and support volunteer effort and civic participation.

It operates under the principles of other Knox Council grants programs to ensure:

- Funded projects will provide benefit to the Knox community and help meet Council objectives;
- Co-operation and collaboration between groups will be encouraged;
- The grant process will be consistent, equitable and transparent; and
- The grant process will support and strengthen community groups in developing local solutions to local needs.

Applications are assessed against criteria specified in the Community Grants Guidelines (approved in May 2025), to determine the eligibility of the applicant organisation and the eligibility of the grant application.

The Guidelines and Council's Grant Framework Policy set out an open and transparent grant program that meets the principles of good governance and is compliant with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020.

In accordance with the Guidelines, applications for funding have been assessed by the Chief Executive Officer, or delegate, for Council's approval.

This report presents to Council the recommendations for recent Minor Grant applications in accordance with the Guidelines.

1.1.2 Applications Recommended for Approval – Minor Grants Program

Thirteen applications have been assessed this month, requesting grants totalling \$23,645.10 (including GST). Of the 13 applications, nine are recommended for approval. A summary of the projects recommended is in Attachment 1.

1.1.3 Applications Recommended for Deferral – Minor Grants Program

One application is recommended for deferral to the October 2025 Mid-Month Meeting of Council as we await further information regarding their application:

- CASS Care Ltd. for their "Balance for Life: Fall Prevention for Older People" project. This project will deliver a health session designed for up to 40 Chinese residents aged 55 and over to help prevent falls and to help them lead active, independent lives. We are seeking additional information regarding their expenditure.

This group will be encouraged to provide the additional information prior to the deadline for the October 2025, Mid-Month Meeting of Council.

1.1.4 Applications Recommended for Refusal – Minor Grants Program

Three applications are recommended for refusal, requesting grants totaling \$5,445.10, including:

- SalamFest for their “Coffee and Talks”, a one-day cultural exchange event. This application was deferred from last month to seek further information. The organisation has not been able to provide evidence that the program will be undertaken in Knox and the Guidelines state that grant funds cannot be used for projects or programs that will be run outside of Knox.
- Golden Cobra Martial Arts to purchase trophies for their end of year celebration. The funding of trophies is ineligible. The Guidelines state that grant funds cannot be used for general fundraising or funding for prizes, sponsorships, donations, trophies, or gifts.
- Melbourne 7 Melody Notes for their “Mid-Autumn Chinese Lantern Festival Concert”. This applicant has outstanding acquittals and as per the Community Grant Guidelines is, therefore, ineligible for funding.

1.2 Emergency Relief Fund

1.2.1 Background – Emergency Relief Fund

The Emergency Relief Fund addresses short-term, essential support needs for Knox residents by providing better support to local organisations that provide these services. This includes food, bedding, clothing, vouchers, medication and other vital services that address immediate and essential needs of individuals requiring support in Knox.

It operates under the same principles as other Knox Council grants programs to ensure:

- Funded projects will provide benefit to the Knox community and help meet Council objectives;
- Co-operation and collaboration between groups will be encouraged;
- The grant process will be consistent, equitable and transparent; and
- The grant process will support and strengthen community groups in developing local solutions to local needs.

Applications are assessed against criteria specified in the Community Grants Guidelines.

The Guidelines and Council’s Grant Framework Policy set out an open and transparent grant program that meets the principles of good governance and is compliant with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020.

In accordance with the Guidelines, applications for funding have been assessed by the Chief Executive Officer, or delegate, for Council’s approval.

This report presents to Council the recommendations for recent Emergency Relief Fund applications in accordance with the Guidelines.

1.2.2 Applications Recommended for Approval – Emergency Relief Fund

One application has been assessed this month, requesting grants totaling \$12,000.00 (including GST). This application has been recommended for approval. A summary of the project recommended is as follows:

- Temple Society Australia seeks funding to purchase meat/eggs/dairy per month for the next 12 months for distribution through CHAMPION. This will assist in improving access to nutritious food for all. The funding will free up their Foodbank budget to purchase other essential items such as coffee, toilet paper, toiletries and tinned food.

Application details are provided in Attachment 2.

2. ENGAGEMENT

Engagement is undertaken with organisations in relation to their grant applications whenever possible and if necessary, to clarify details regarding their applications prior to Council's consideration.

Advice or information may be sought from Officers across Council in relation to either the applying organisation or the proposed project, or both, if considered necessary.

The Guidelines specify assessment can occur by the Chief Executive Officer, or delegate, and make recommendation for Council's determination.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Minor Grants Program allows Council to respond promptly to requests from Knox- based community groups for small amounts of funding to assist a variety of community-based programs, projects or activities. Council's Minor Grants are a simple and streamlined source of funding that can make a significant difference for local community organisations in need of short-term, specific purpose assistance.

The Emergency Relief Fund addresses short-term, essential support needs for Knox residents by providing better support to local organisations that provide these services. This includes food, bedding, clothing, vouchers, medication and other vital services that address immediate and essential needs of individuals requiring support in Knox.

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 CONSIDERATIONS

There are no environmental considerations associated with this report.

6. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Budget – Minor Grants Program

The approval of Minor Grants is managed within Council's adopted budget. The 2025-26 budget provides \$156,696.00 for the Minor Grants Program.

Funding commitments to date are summarised below:

Yearly Summary 2025-26	Total Amount Approved at Council Meeting (Excluding GST)
July	\$13,039.83
August	\$14,174.01
September	\$
October	\$
November	\$
December	\$
January	\$
February	\$
March	\$
April	\$
May	\$
Totals (Year to Date)	\$27,213.84

Recommended applications for the September period total \$12,515.08 (excluding GST).

If approved as recommended, the remaining Minor Grants budget for 2025-26 will total \$116,967.08 (excluding GST).

6.2 Budget – Emergency Relief Fund

The approval of the Emergency Relief Fund is managed within Council's adopted budget. The 2025-26 budget provides \$100,000.00 for the Fund.

Funding commitments to date are summarised below:

Yearly Summary 2025-26	Total Amount Approved at Council Meeting (Excluding GST)
July	\$18,181.82
August	\$59,377.28
September	\$
October	\$
November	\$
December	\$
January	\$
February	\$
March	\$
April	\$
May	\$
Totals (Year to Date)	\$77,559.10

Recommended applications for the September period total \$10,909.09 (excluding GST).

If approved as recommended, the remaining Emergency Relief Fund budget for 2025-26 will total \$11,531.81 (excluding GST).

7. RISKS

Any risks associated with administering the Minor Grant Program and Emergency Relief Fund are managed through the implementation of Council's Grant Framework Policy and the Guidelines. All Minor and Emergency Relief Fund grants must be acquitted, and evidence of expenditure must be provided by the organisation.

The Guidelines and Council's Grant Framework Policy set out an open and transparent grant program that meets the principles of good governance and is compliant with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020.

In accordance with the Guidelines, applications for funding have been assessed by the Chief Executive Officer, or their delegate, for Council or delegate approval as appropriate.

8. COUNCIL AND HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN 2025-2029

Enhancing community connection to vital services and resources

Strategy 1.3 Local businesses and our economy are strong and resilient and there are increased employment opportunities through development, attracting investment, embracing technology and innovation, and advocacy.

Strategy 1.4 Access to affordable and nutritious food is enhanced through advocacy and working in partnership with relevant organisations to raise awareness and promote available community programs.

Strategy 1.5 Our community's health and wellbeing is improved through proactive planning, delivery, partnerships and advocacy that enable access to services, education and programs.

Embracing connection, inclusion and diversity

Strategy 2.1 - Our community's diverse needs are addressed by ensuring equity and inclusion are considered in decision making and strategic planning.

Strategy 2.2 - Cultural diversity is celebrated through assisting, participating in, facilitating and delivering accessible programs, initiatives and events in partnership with our community, community groups and service providers.

Strategy 2.3 - Our community is supported to thrive during all stages of life through the promotion and provision of services, advocacy and partnerships with local service providers.

Strategy 2.4 - There are opportunities for social connection and active living through planning, provision of facilities, program delivery and support for local groups.

Leading, listening and governing responsibly

Strategy 4.1 Council demonstrates its accountability through transparent and responsible decision-making and working together productively.

Strategy 4.2 -Our diverse community is informed and has opportunities to participate and provide feedback through clear and meaningful communication and engagement,

Strategy 4.3 -Council services are efficient and optimised through ongoing improvement, and focused investment in innovation, technology and capability.

Strategy 4.4 -The changing needs of our community are met through informed policy and strategy that maximises value, collaboration and partnerships with other councils and local organisations.

Strategy 4.5 Council is financially sustainable through long-term strategic, financial and asset planning, and the responsible prioritisation, allocation and use of resources.

Being a strong voice for safety

Strategy 5.3 - Our community is more secure, connected and feel less isolated through planning, partnerships, advocacy and targeted support for our most vulnerable.

Strategy 5.4 - People feel safe in their homes and in the community through the development of partnerships, planning and promotion of programs, services and education that focus on connection, safety and respect.

Strategy 5.5 - Our community is resilient in the face of emergencies through planning, education, emergency response and support.

Planning our future city

Strategy 6.1 - There is improved access to a diverse range of housing options through effective planning, advocacy, and identifying opportunities for social and affordable housing supply.

Strategy 6.2 - High quality, integrated community services and facilities are available through planning and design that responds to population growth and our community's changing needs.

Strategy 6.3 - Our community's expectations and aspirations for housing development and land use are considered through planning, advocacy, partnerships and decision making.

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 - Minor Grants Program Application Extraction September 2025 [**4.1.1** - 18 pages]
2. Attachment 2- Emergency Relief Grant Program Application Extraction Sept [**4.1.2** - 2 pages]

Minor Grant Program Applications
September 2025

2526-MGP050

Wantirna Lions Club Inc.

Application ID	2526-MGP050
Organisation Name	Wantirna Lions Club Inc.
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	Wantirna Lions Club Inc. - Laptop Computer and external Screen and charger
Project Start Date	15/09/2025
Project End Date	01/01/2026

Request Details	Wantirna Lions Club are seeking to purchase a laptop computer and an external screen, keyboard and mouse (with associated cabling) and power bank to :- (1) allow us to extend our social media interaction with the local community and (2) allow us to provide a better visual marketing of projects when in off site locations such as fairs, stalls etc and (3) allow us to conduct online meetings and invite guests to our meetings via an online presence. We do not currently have any IT resources that provide the above.		
Community Benefit	The community will benefit directly as all funds raised by the Lions club goes directly to community projects and causes. We will be better able to undertake our activities and promote our causes with better visual representation of the causes and activities that we seek to have the public fund. Further, the clubs efficiency and outreach will be enhanced with more online social media and ability to coordinate with other groups and agencies online.		
Total Beneficiaries	19	Total Project Cost	\$2,305.00
Knox Beneficiaries	10	Total Amount Requested	\$2,056.00

Total Project Income

Income Description	Income Amount
Council grant	\$2,056.00
Wantirna Lions Contribution	\$249.00
Total Income	\$2,305.00

Total Project Expenditure

Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
Laptop, screen and accessories	\$2,305.00
Total Expenditure	\$2,305.00

Minor Grant Program Applications
September 2025**What specifically will the grant be funding?**

Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount	10% Co-Contribution Requirement (only if requesting equipment)	Co-Contribution Reflected in Total Project Income?
Laptop, screen and accessories	\$2,056.00	\$249.00	Yes the 10% contribution has been met.
Total	\$2,056.00	\$205.60 - minimum amount required	\$249.00 – exceeds minimum required

Minor Grant Program Applications
September 2025

2526-MGP051

Hindu Satsang Mandal of Victoria

Application ID	2526-MGP051
Organisation Name	Hindu Satsang Mandal of Victoria
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	Diwali project
Project Start Date	11/10/2025
Project End Date	11/10/2025

Request Details	Diwali is a prominent Hindu festival that we celebrate every year. We celebrate it with cultural songs, dances and other items and have a sit down dinner for our community. We have booked Hungarian hall for this event and request for grants to pay for the hall hire charges.		
Community Benefit	Diwali is the most looked forward to festival in the Hindu calendar. The community looks forward to celebrating this together where cultural items, songs and food is shared together. This gives opportunity to our youth to perform cultural items, learn from others and for elders to pass the cultural knowledge down through performances. This is also a time for everyone to come together under one roof and socialize by sharing sweets and dinner. Everyone looks forward to dressing up in cultural attire and provides everyone - young and old to celebrate keeping the culture alive.		
Total Beneficiaries	350	Total Project Cost	\$10,170.00
Knox Beneficiaries	300	Total Amount Requested	\$2,500.00

Total Project Income

Income Description	Income Amount
Council grant	\$2,500.00
HSMV contribution	\$170.00
Ticket sales (300x25)	\$7,500.00
Total Income	\$10,170.00

Minor Grant Program Applications
September 2025

Total Project Expenditure

Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
Hall hire (Hungarian Youth & Culture Centre)	\$2,670.00
Catering	\$4,500.00
DJ and sound	\$1,500.00
Dance groups	\$1,500.00
Total Expenditure	\$10,170.00

What specifically will the grant be funding?

Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount	10% Co- Contribution Requirement (only if requesting equipment)	Co-Contribution Reflected in Project Income?
Hall hire (Hungarian Youth & Culture Centre)	\$2,500.00	N/A	N/A
Total Grant Expenditure	\$2,500.00	N/A	N/A

Minor Grant Program Applications
September 2025

2526-MGP052

Mountain District Learning Centre

Application ID	2526-MGP052
Organisation Name	Mountain District Learning Centre
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	MDLC Makers Market
Project Start Date	29/11/2025
Project End Date	29/11/2025

Request Details	Our grant application is requested to assist with supporting and benefiting local musicians and small business. Our application will be specifically used to attract a wider age cohort to our Makers Market through music and local/Australian wildlife exposure and education for all ages.		
Community Benefit	The MDLC Makers Market is enjoying it's 5th year of annual collaboration with the FTG CFA and FTG Uniting Church Art Exhibition. The Makers Market is designed to entice, attract and support new and emerging makers, artists and small business owners in our local community. Since it's inception in 2021, our boutique style market has doubled in size and visitor numbers have steadily increased. Having the opportunity to invite and incorporate young and older local musicians as well as a local Australian Wildlife Education small business (run by young people) we believe our market will have the opportunity to be a true family event to be enjoyed by all.		
Total Beneficiaries	500+	Total Project Cost	\$1,900.00
Knox Beneficiaries	500+	Total Amount Requested	\$1,900.00

Total Project Income

Income Description	Income Amount
Council Grant	\$1,900.00
Total Income	\$1,900.00

Total Project Expenditure

Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
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Minor Grant Program Applications

September 2025

Fraser Dodds (Musician)	\$400.00
The Lizard Wizard	\$600.00
Upwey Country Music Group	\$900.00
Total Expenditure	\$1,900.00

What specifically will the grant be funding?

Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount	10% Co-Contribution Requirement (only if requesting equipment)	Co-Contribution Reflected in Project Income?
Fraser Dodds (Musician)	\$400.00	N/A	N/A
The Lizard Wizard	\$600.00		
Upwey Country Music Group	\$900.00		
Total Grant Expenditure	\$1,900.00	N/A	N/A

Minor Grant Program Applications
September 2025

2526-MGP053

Tamil Pengal in Australia

Application ID	2526-MGP053
Organisation Name	Tamil Pengal in Australia
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	Diwali Festival celebrations with Knox Community Members
Project Start Date	11/10/2025
Project End Date	11/10/2025

Request Details	We are seeking funding to support a community Diwali celebration aimed at bringing together people of all ages, backgrounds, and cultures within our council area. This event will feature cultural performances, traditional music and dance, food stalls, arts and crafts, and interactive activities for families. The celebration will promote social inclusion, cultural understanding, and community spirit, providing an opportunity for residents to connect, share, and celebrate the diversity that enriches our community.		
Community Benefit	This event will strengthen community connections by bringing residents together in a welcoming and inclusive environment. It will encourage cultural exchange, promote understanding and respect between diverse groups, and foster a sense of belonging for all participants. By celebrating Diwali as a shared community experience, the project will enhance social cohesion, create lasting relationships, and build pride in our local diversity.		
Total Beneficiaries	200	Total Project Cost	\$5,000.00
Knox Beneficiaries	150	Total Amount Requested	\$2,500.00

Total Project Income

Income Description	Income Amount
Council grant	\$2,500.00
Ticket sales	\$2,000.00
Community group contribution	\$500.00
Total Income	\$5,000.00

Minor Grant Program Applications
September 2025

Total Project Expenditure

Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
Venue hire (The Australian Indian Community Charitable Trust)	\$1,000.00
Party host	\$500.00
Food & Refreshments	\$2,500.00
Awards/recognition	\$500.00
Kids Activities & Materials	\$500.00
Total Expenditure	\$5,000.00

What specifically will the grant be funding?

Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount	10% Co-Contribution Requirement (only if requesting equipment)	Co-Contribution Reflected in Project Income?
Venue Hire (The Australian Indian Community Charitable Trust)	\$1,000.00	N/A	N/A
Party host	\$500.00	N/A	N/A
Food & Refreshments	\$1,000.00	N/A	N/A
Total Grant Expenditure	\$2,500.00	N/A	N/A

Minor Grant Program Applications
September 2025

2526-MGP054

Special Olympics Australia Melbourne Eastern Ranges

Application ID	2526-MGP054
Organisation Name	Special Olympics Australia Melbourne Eastern Ranges
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	Precision and Play: Essential Equipment for Developing Athletes
Project Start Date	01/11/2025
Project End Date	31/10/2026

Request Details	Special Olympics Australia – Melbourne Eastern Ranges delivers weekly sports programs for athletes with intellectual disabilities, helping them build skills, confidence, and community through competition. The swimming team’s stopwatches have broken, making it impossible to accurately time and track progress. Without the right equipment, coaches spend more time on workarounds and less on developing athletes’ techniques. New stopwatches will allow training sessions to run smoothly, enabling precise performance tracking in swimming. With the right tools, athletes can focus on improving, gain confidence in their abilities, and fully enjoy their sport.		
Community Benefit	New stopwatches will do more than improve training — they will show Special Olympics athletes that their abilities matter and their progress is worth celebrating. With accurate timing in swimming, athletes can clearly see their improvements, set new challenges, and take pride in their achievements. These moments of success build more than skills; they build confidence, self-belief, and a sense of belonging. For people with intellectual disabilities, having the right tools to participate fully in sport fosters wellbeing, strengthens social connections, and opens doors to greater community involvement. This project will empower athletes to feel valued, capable, and motivated to keep striving towards their personal best.		
Total Beneficiaries	25	Total Project Cost	\$299.85
Knox Beneficiaries	15	Total Amount Requested	\$260.00

Total Project Income

Income Description	Income Amount
Council grant	\$260.00
Organisation contribution	\$39.85
Total Income	\$299.85

Minor Grant Program Applications

September 2025

Total Project Expenditure

Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
Swimming stopwatches	\$299.85
Total Expenditure	\$299.85

What specifically will the grant be funding?

Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount	10% Co-Contribution Requirement (only if requesting equipment)	Co-Contribution Reflected in Project Income?
Swimming stopwatches	\$260.00	\$39.85	Yes the 10% contribution has been met.
Total Grant Expenditure	\$260.00	\$26.00 - minimum amount required	\$39.85 – exceeds minimum required

Minor Grant Program Applications
September 2025

2526-MGP056

The Haven Day Centre Ltd

Application ID	2526-MGP056
Organisation Name	The Haven Day Centre Ltd
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	40th Birthday celebration
Project Start Date	18/09/2025
Project End Date	18/09/2025

Request Details	For the past 40 years The Haven Day Centre has been providing social support, respite and engagement to people over the age of 65 who have dementia or memory loss who live at home in the local community. We provide a variety of suitable activities to our clients and support to their carers. We think that is an achievement worth celebrating with some of the people who, over the years, have helped shape our organisation to our present day. As birthday celebrations have not been budgeted for we request some assistance with funding a party for around 50 people to celebrate this special occasion. The attendees will include past and present staff, volunteers, clients, carers, Board members and stakeholders. We intend to have some entertainment, speeches, a cake and afternoon tea at the party on September 18th which falls in Dementia Action Week.		
Community Benefit	The community will benefit by reflecting the reasons The Haven Day Centre idea was conceived 40 years ago and its very real impact on providing social support, meaningful and engaging activities and respite time for carers over the years and its relevance now and into the future. The number of people living with dementia is set to increase due to an ageing population. Carers need a break from their caring role to rest and enjoy a breather while their loved one is cared for by the skilled staff at The Haven. We are proud of what we do and receive great support from our community to continue looking after people living with dementia in a safe and caring environment. The party will bring vulnerable people together to celebrate with each other the wonderful place The Haven is and has been to so many over 40 years.		
Total Beneficiaries	50	Total Project Cost	\$620.00
Knox Beneficiaries	35	Total Amount Requested	\$370.00

Minor Grant Program Applications
September 2025

Total Project Income

Income Description	Income Amount
Council Grant	\$370.00
The Haven Contribution	\$250.00
Total Income	\$620.00

Total Project Expenditure

Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
Singing Friends (entertainment)	\$100.00
Party Supplies	\$206.60
Catering supplies	\$63.40
catering supplies	\$250.00
Total Expenditure	\$620.00

What specifically will the grant be funding?

Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount	10% Co-Contribution Requirement (only if requesting equipment)	Co-Contribution Reflected in Project Income?
Singing Friends (entertainment)	\$100.00	N/A	N/A
Party Supplies	\$206.60		
Catering	\$63.40		
Total Grant Expenditure	\$370.00	N/A	N/A

Minor Grant Program Applications
September 2025

2526-MGP057

Knox Wind Symphony Inc

Application ID	2526-MGP057
Organisation Name	Knox Wind Symphony Inc
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	Music equipment
Project Start Date	15/09/2025
Project End Date	31/12/2025

Request Details	<p>The organisation has recently expanded to two large ensembles, therefore require additional equipment to service both groups. The conductor of each group requires a heavy duty music stand to carry the weight of music scores.</p> <p>Player sheet music requires secure and weatherproof boxes for storage and transport to concerts and contests. While our original ensemble has these boxes, the newer ensemble is using a makeshift plastic tub.</p> <p>A heavy duty road case is requested for storage and transport of auxiliary percussion equipment between rehearsal/concert venues.</p>		
Community Benefit	<p>The conductor leads the ensemble by reading a score comprising of all the parts being played by the musicians. Scores can be heavy with large concert works, and a regular music stand does not bear the weight of some of these scores or is simply too small. A dedicated conductor's music stand is designed for this and will meet the need of large and/or heavy music scores, allowing the conductor to better concentrate on their musicians, and improve OH&S practices through reduced lifting and improved posture.</p> <p>A single concert may have \$1000 worth of sheet music and require e.g. 20 pieces of auxiliary percussion; in order for this all to be transported safely and securely, new weatherproof cases are being requested - two for sheet music and one for percussion equipment. These will also allow easier asset management protocols as storage of these items will all be in one place.</p>		
Total Beneficiaries	100	Total Project Cost	\$2,854.00
Knox Beneficiaries	50	Total Amount Requested	\$2,500.00

Minor Grant Program Applications
September 2025

Total Project Income

Income Description	Income Amount
Grant request	\$2,500.00
Organisation contribution	\$354.00
Total Income	\$2,854.00

Total Project Expenditure

Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
Equipment purchase	\$2,854.00
Total Expenditure	\$2,854.00

What specifically will the grant be funding?

Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount	10% Co-Contribution Requirement (only if requesting equipment)	Co-Contribution Reflected in Project Income?
Conductor's music stand	\$499.00	\$354.00	Yes the 10% contribution has been met.
Percussion road case	\$1,055.00		
Music cases	\$946.00		
Total Grant Expenditure	\$2,500.00	\$250.00 - minimum amount required	\$354.00 – exceeds minimum required

Minor Grant Program Applications
September 2025

2526-MGP058

Fab Nobs Theatre Inc

Application ID	2526-MGP058
Organisation Name	Fab Nobs Theatre Inc
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	Hazer Machine purchase
Project Start Date	15/09/2025
Project End Date	16/10/2025

Request Details	<p>With this Grant money we would like to purchase a Haze Machine. Currently we hire a Hazer through a lighting company, four times per year. The cost of each hire of the machine can be up to \$250 each time. Haze machines, are an essential part of lighting our musical theatre productions. The translucent haze enhances lighting effects, making light beams more visible and adding depth to a space without significantly reducing visibility. With our own haze machine, we would reduce the cost of our lighting hire and have more flexible use of this machine over a period of time. As part of the purchase we have also included hazer fluid, cleaning solution and wood 'housing' for the machine to protect the machine itself and aid with transporting the hazer within our venue.</p>		
Community Benefit	<p>With our own haze machine, the job of our lighting designer and operator becomes much easier - with year-long access to our own machine, and no need for reliance on external lighting companies who hire out their machines multiple times within a year. These machines are often faulty and need to be replaced. This often means that our lighting schedule falls behind considerably. With our own hazer, we would ensure that it is serviced, cleaned and kept in a safe space in between productions. Our lighting plotting, which involves the Director, Assistant Director, Lighting Designer and Operator would run more smoothly, with programming and plotting progressing in a more efficient manner. This would allow more time for increased creativity, experimentation and precision with the overall design, creating a number of atmospheric effects adding to the story telling and impact of our productions for our audiences.</p>		
Total Beneficiaries	3200	Total Project Cost	\$1,456.00
Knox Beneficiaries	300	Total Amount Requested	\$1,300.00

Total Project Income

Income Description	Income Amount
Council Grant	\$1,300.00
Cash contribution	\$156.00
Total Income	\$1,456.00

Minor Grant Program Applications
September 2025

Total Project Expenditure

Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
Haze Machine	\$1,300.00
Cleaning Solution & Fan	\$156.00
Total Expenditure	\$1,456.00

What specifically will the grant be funding?

Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount	10% Co-Contribution Requirement (only if requesting equipment)	Co-Contribution Reflected in Project Income?
Antari Z390 Faze Machine and accessories	\$1,300.00	\$156.00	Yes the 10% contribution has been met.
Total Grant Expenditure	\$1,300.00	\$130.00 – minimum amount required	\$156.00 – exceeds minimum required

Minor Grant Program Applications
September 2025

2526-MGP060

Greater Eastern Malayalees Melbourne INC

Application ID	2526-MGP060
Organisation Name	Greater Eastern Malayalees Melbourne INC
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	GEM Onam 2025
Project Start Date	13/09/2025
Project End Date	13/09/2025

Request Details	<p>We are seeking funding to deliver our annual Onam Celebration in Scoresby, a signature multicultural event recognising the vibrant heritage of Kerala, South India. Drawing more than 400 community members this event features traditional music, dance, cuisine, and participatory activities that create an immersive cultural experience.</p> <p>The celebration fosters social inclusion and mutual respect by providing a platform to showcase cultural programs, building community connections, and promoting the values of diversity and harmony. It also strengthens cultural identity for the local Kerala community, while enriching the wider community's understanding of South Indian traditions.</p> <p>Grant support will enable us to enhance program quality, engage local performers, provide culturally authentic experiences, and ensure accessibility for all. Your investment will help us continue to celebrate and share Kerala's rich traditions while uniting our multicultural community in an atmosphere of joy, learning, and connection.</p>		
Community Benefit	<p>The Onam Celebration in Scoresby delivers significant benefits to our local community. It brings together more than 400 people, fostering inclusion, respect, and unity through shared experiences. By showcasing Kerala's traditional music, dance, cuisine, and customs, the event preserves and promotes cultural heritage, instilling pride within the local Kerala community and passing traditions to younger generations who are born and brought up in Australia.</p> <p>For the wider community, it offers a unique opportunity to learn about and appreciate the rich traditions of South India, strengthening cross-cultural understanding and connections. The celebration encourages active participation through performances, interactive activities, and shared meals, helping build friendships and a stronger sense of belonging.</p> <p>In addition, the event supports local performers, volunteers, and vendors, contributing to community engagement and capacity building. Overall, the Onam festival promotes multicultural harmony and strengthens the vibrant and inclusive social fabric of Scoresby.</p>		
Total Beneficiaries	400	Total Project Cost	\$14,600.00
Knox Beneficiaries	250	Total Amount Requested	\$2,500.00

Minor Grant Program Applications
September 2025

Total Project Income

Income Description	Income Amount
Sponsorship	\$4,500.00
Council Grant	\$2,500.00
Ticket Sales	\$7,600.00
Total Income	\$14,600.00

Total Project Expenditure

Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
Hall Hire (St Jude the Apostle Parish)	\$950.00
Lights, Sound, LED (hire of speakers, microphones, lights etc)	\$6,000.00
Catering	\$6,750.00
Photo & Video	\$900.00
Total Expenditure	\$14,600.00

What specifically will the grant be funding?

Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount	10% Co- Contribution Requirement (only if requesting equipment)	Co-Contribution Reflected in Project Income?
Hall Hire (St Jude the Apostle Parish)	\$950.00	N/A	N/A
Lights, Sound, LED (hire of speakers, microphones, lights etc)	\$1,550.00		
Total Grant Expenditure	\$2,500.00	N/A	N/A

Emergency Relief Grant Applications
September 2025

2526-ERF006

Temple Society Australia

Application ID	2526-ERF006
Organisation Name	Temple Society Australia
Grant Program	Emergency Relief Fund

Project Title	Access to nutritional food for all
Project Start Date	01/10/2025
Project End Date	30/09/2026

Request Details	<p>We are requesting funding to purchase up to \$1000 worth of meat/eggs/dairy each month for the next 12 months at CHAMPION (51 Elizabeth St, Bayswater) to distribute to visitors. We would purchase this from local suppliers (keeping the money in the Knox community). The cost of meat, eggs and dairy products are continually rising and all of our clients are struggling with the cost of living and putting nutritious and balanced meals on their tables. Meat is something that often our clients need to go without (or they purchase "meats" such as party pies, sausage rolls, fish fingers and other questionable "alternatives"). If we had the money to purchase bulk amounts of meat, eggs, meat alternatives and dairy this would free up our Foodbank budget to purchase other products that we run out of regularly including coffee, toilet paper, toiletries and tinned foods. Meat, eggs and cheese is rarely available from other ER sources.</p>
Community Benefit	<p>We will purchase our meat, dairy and protein sources from local suppliers, keeping money IN the Knox community. Visitors at CHAMPION will be given choices when they go through our pantry and will have food that offers a balanced, culturally sensitive diet including fruit/vegetables, bread, pantry staples, meat/protein (including eggs) alternatives and dairy products. This will enable them to cook a good variety of foods and eat a more balanced and nutritious diet while taking into account any cultural requests. By offering these products we will be able to provide recipes based on what we have to offer in the pantry/fridge and encourage them to cook nutritious meals for themselves. We will be able to offer culturally appropriate meals for people including Halal meat, Goat meat, vegan protein options and fish as well as cheese and other dairy products.</p>
Demonstration of need	<p>CHAMPION has seen a 97% increase in the number of people we are helping in the past 12 months. This increase has led to a significant stretch on what was already a strained budget. We have seen a significant change in the demographic of people accessing our food relief service with many more families, particularly single parents and older people relying on our service. Whilst we access services such as Foodbank Vic, Second Bite and Outer East Foodshare, all of which are helpful, we find it incredibly difficult to source meat, meat alternatives, eggs and dairy products to offer a balanced food selection from our pantry. Offering dairy sources is particularly important, especially for young children and older people whose</p>

Emergency Relief Grant Applications

September 2025

	nutritional needs are much higher. Many of our visitors are struggling to pay their rent, bills and petrol and offering food they will eat is a way we can help.		
Total Beneficiaries	4500	Total Project Cost	\$16,100.00
Knox Beneficiaries	4000	Total Amount Requested	\$12,000.00

Total Project Income

Income Description	Income Amount
Grant	\$12,000.00
In-Kind	\$4,100.00
Total Income	\$16,100.00

Total Project Expenditure

Income Description	Income Amount
Food Supplies - Meat, meat alternatives, dairy, eggs (see budget notes)	\$12,000.00
2-hour wages (\$44 per hour) per month for staff to purchase and collect the purchases as well as superannuation @ 12%	\$1,200.00
Administration of the grant, bookkeeping and grant acquittal	\$1,200.00
Volunteer hours of splitting and bagging purchases each month. 2 x vols @ \$30 per hour for 2 hours each month	\$1,440.00
Packaging \$65 every 3 months	\$260.00
Total Expenditure	\$16,100.00

What specifically will the grant be funding?

Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount	10% Co-Contribution Requirement	Co-Contribution Reflected in Project Income?
Food Supplies - Meat, meat alternatives, dairy, eggs	\$12,000.00	\$4,100	\$4,100.00
Total Grant Expenditure	\$12,000.00	\$4,100.00	\$4,100.00

4.2 Ferntree Gully Cemetery Trust Annual Report for the Year Ended 30 June 2025

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Decision
Author:	Head of Governance, Saskia Weerheim
Manager:	Manager Governance and Risk, Andrew Dowling
Executive:	Acting Director Customer and Performance, Liesl Westberry

SUMMARY

This report presents Council, as Trustee for the Ferntree Gully Cemetery, with relevant statutory documentation for the 2024-2025 financial year of operations for consideration and adoption, prior to submission to the Department of Health.

The report also provides Council as Trustee with an overview of work undertaken to support the Ferntree Gully Cemetery in the 2024-2025 financial year including an overview of sales and other enquiries including right of interment queries.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council, as the Trustee for the Ferntree Gully Cemetery Trust, resolve to:

1. Receive and adopt in principle the draft audited Financial Statements for the Ferntree Gully Cemetery Trust for the year ended 30 June 2025 (Attachment 1).
2. Authorise the Mayor and Councillor _____ and Councillor _____ to sign the draft audited Financial Statements for the Ferntree Gully Cemetery Trust for the year ended 30 June 2025 (Attachment 1)
3. Approves in principle the draft audited Financial Statements for the Ferntree Gully Cemetery Trust for the year ended 30 June 2025 (Attachment 1) being provided to the Independent Auditor for audit sign off.
4. Note the Independent Auditor's Report to the Trustees of the Ferntree Gully Cemetery Trust will be provided to the Trust upon completion and formal sign-off by the appointed auditor.
5. Receive and adopt the Abstract of Accounts from the Trust Members of the Ferntree Gully Public Cemetery for the 2024-2025 financial year (Attachment 2) and authorise the Mayor and Councillor _____ and Councillor _____ to sign the Abstract of Accounts on behalf of the Trust for submission to the Department of Health.
6. Note other work undertaken supporting the operations of Ferntree Gully Cemetery in the 2024-2025 financial year in as set out in the officers' report.
7. Note that an additional mid-year report of the operations of the Ferntree Gully Cemetery will be presented to Council each financial year commencing in 2025-2026.

1. DISCUSSION

Knox City Council is Trustee for the Ferntree Gully Cemetery Trust and has a statutory obligation to complete yearly reporting of the financials to the Department of Health for the Cemetery, pursuant to the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003 (Vic). This report presents the Trustee with the financials for the Ferntree Gully Cemetery along with an overview of the year's work, including sales, and an overview of the landscape master planning work that has commenced.

1.1 Financial Statements

The following documentation is provided for consideration and adoption where applicable:

- Draft audited financial statements for the Ferntree Gully Cemetery Trust for the year ended 30 June 2025 (Attachment 1); and
- Draft Abstract of Accounts from the Trust Members of the Ferntree Gully Public Cemetery for the 2024-2025 financial year (Attachment 2) for submission to Department of Health.

The above documents were prepared with the assistance of Council's Financial Operations Department. An independent audit of the Ferntree Gully Cemetery Trust Financial Statements 2024-2025 was conducted by Rizza Alexander Accountants and Auditors in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards.

The Financial Statement is required to be signed by three Trust members, being three Councillors in this instance. Following the Council meeting, the signed Financial Statements for the Ferntree Gully Cemetery Trust for the year ended 30 June 2025 (Attachment 1) will be provided to the Independent Auditor for audit sign off. The Independent Auditor Report will then be issued. The report will be provided to Councillors and published on Council's website.

The Abstract of Accounts details a summary of financial operations, right of interment and interment information and a general condition report of the Cemetery, in the form prescribed by the Department of Health. The Abstract of Accounts is required to be signed by three Trust members, being three Councillors in this instance.

1.2 Sales in 2024/2025 Financial Year

There has been an ongoing interest in new positions at the Cemetery. Over the reporting period, there were approximately 70 enquiries about new positions. These enquiries converted to 41 sales of ashes positions. There were a total of 5 ashes interment positions available for sale as at 30 June 2025.

Sales and enquiries demonstrate strong community interest for ashes positions. Work is currently underway to finalise the Cemetery Masterplan for Council's consideration. This process will take these trends into account when scoping future ashes interment and memorialisation opportunities, with the aim of continuing to provide the community with a diverse range of products across varying price points.

1.3 Historical Right of Interment Enquiries

Cemetery staff within the Governance team play a critical role in managing Right of Interment (ROI) enquiries, as required under the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003 (Vic). This responsibility ensures that all interments, memorials and maintenance works are lawfully authorised by the rightful ROI holder on behalf of the Trust.

In 2024–25, the team handled 86 ROI enquiries and 45 monument applications. Many of these matters are complex, particularly where interment rights were purchased generations ago and records are limited. These enquiries typically involve extensive customer engagement and resolving them often involves reviewing death certificates, Wills and other legal documents to establish both lineage and legal ownership.

For families, confirmation of ownership of an ROI provides reassurance and enables interments or memorials to proceed with confidence. Given the Cemetery's age and history, ROI enquiries are expected to remain both complex and steady in volume into the future.

1.4 Digitisation of Aged Records

During this reporting period, Council's Corporate Records team digitised 15 Cemetery receipt books dating from the mid-1990s to 2000.

Although some hard copy documents will still need to be retrieved from storage from time to time, this ongoing digitisation work will improve the efficiency of initial searches, particularly when investigating Rights of Interment.

1.5 Cemetery Landscape Masterplan

Work continues to finalise the Cemetery Landscape Masterplan with Council endorsing the draft Plan for a second round of community consultation at its meeting of 14 July 2025. Engagement is due to be completed on 7 September 2025, following onsite engagement at the Cemetery on Saturday 6 September 2025. Community feedback will be considered, and the draft will be finalised for Council consideration at its meeting on 8 December 2025.

1.6 Mid-Year Report

Officers are proposing to provide reports to Council on a six-monthly basis, enabling Council, in its role as the Cemetery Trust, to remain well informed on operations. This more regular reporting will support effective oversight and reinforce confidence in the ongoing management of the Cemetery and also allow the Auditor's Report to be formally tabled with Council.

2. ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Implementation of the recommendation is considered to have no direct social implications.

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

Implementation of the recommendation is considered to have no direct environmental implications.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Overall, the Financial Statements reflect a profit of \$59,771 from Ferntree Gully Cemetery operations in 2024-2025, which is a decrease of \$124,322 from the previous financial year. This reflects both extremely strong sales in the previous financial year (2023-2024) and the fact that available ashes positions for sale are now nearly exhausted.

Income

In this financial year, the Cemetery recorded 41 ashes position sales, generating income of \$158,931. This represents a decline from \$273,652 in 2023-2024, reflecting reduced availability of ashes positions and the resulting limitation on sales. There were 25 burials (down from 28 the previous year) and 60 ashes interments (up from 51 in the previous financial year), generating income of \$61,564. The Cemetery received income from monument and plaque fees totalling \$44,112.

As previously noted, there were a total of 5 ashes interment positions available for sale as of 30 June 2025 and a total of ten unsold burial positions. These burial positions are not currently being offered for sale, and instead continue to be held as reserve capacity as a risk mitigation measure; due to the quality of historical records at the Cemetery and lack of certainty that all physical positions correctly align with the rights of interment issued.

Costs

As a separate legal and financial entity, the Ferntree Gully Cemetery Trust operates its accounts separately to those of Knox City Council. Cemetery operations are funded through a cost recovery model where the Trust pays Council a management fee - \$184,737 in financial year 2024-2025 - which covers:

- Operational services provided by the Operations Department;
- Administrative, sales and management services provided primarily by the Governance and Risk Department; and
- Financial advice and accounting services, provided by Financial Operations.

Other notable one-off costs in this financial year include the engagement of a landscape architect to develop the draft Masterplan. Officers conducted a procurement process in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy to source these services. Urban Initiatives was assessed as best meeting the brief and was engaged to provide the required expertise. An outstanding balance remains, representing the final two agreed instalments for completing community engagement and finalising the draft Masterplan. These instalments are scheduled for payment in the 2025-2026 financial year. To support the development of the Masterplan and the ongoing management of the site, officers also undertook a procurement process for a feature and level survey of the Cemetery which included a title re-establishment survey.

Investments

As at 30 June 2025, the Ferntree Gully Cemetery Trust held cash and financial assets (term deposits) of \$1,481,100, an increase of approximately 8% from the previous year. The term deposits generated \$65,946 in interest income during the financial year.

While the Trust currently remains a going concern, forward projections show that at the current rate of operational payments to Council, the Cemetery's financial reserves would be exhausted within approximately 8 years. To ensure long-term sustainability, it is imperative that the Trust develops new sales opportunities to generate greater revenue; or that Council reconsiders the current cost recovery model for operating the Cemetery.

7. RISKS

The major risk identified for the Trust's consideration of the Annual Report relates to balancing the statutory obligation to ensure the Cemetery is maintained in perpetuity, with the ongoing

costs associated with that maintenance. While the Trust is required to preserve the Cemetery's condition and ensure its ongoing accessibility for future generations, this responsibility must be managed against the financial resources available.

8. COUNCIL AND HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN 2025-2029

Enhancing community connection to vital services and resources

Strategy 1.5 - Our community's health and wellbeing is improved through proactive planning, delivery, partnerships and advocacy that enable access to services, education and programs.

Leading, listening and governing responsibly

Strategy 4.1 - Council demonstrates its accountability through transparent and responsible decision-making and working together productively.

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 - FTG Cemetery Annual Financial Statement 24/25 [**4.2.1** - 16 pages]
2. Attachment 2 - FTG Cemetery Abstract of Accounts 24/25 [**4.2.2** - 8 pages]

FERNTREE GULLY CEMETERY TRUST

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

FERNTREE GULLY CEMETERY TRUST

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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In the opinion of the Trustee of the Ferntree Gully Cemetery Trust:

- Dated at Wantirna South this day of 2025

Councillor

FERNTREE GULLY CEMETERY TRUST
COMPREHENSIVE INCOME STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

		June 2025 \$	June 2024 \$
	Note		
Income			
Plot sales	1.3	158,931	273,652
Burial fees	1.3	61,564	44,720
Monument fees	1.3	5,720	3,645
Plaque fees	1.3	38,392	49,448
Grant income	1.3	-	-
Investment income	1.3	46,684	48,561
Total income		<u>311,291</u>	<u>420,026</u>
Expenses			
Management fees	5(c)	184,737	177,631
Plaques		21,519	29,182
Operating costs	2.1(a)	33,028	16,966
Utilities	2.1(b)	979	957
Depreciation	2.2	11,257	11,197
Total expenses		<u>251,520</u>	<u>235,933</u>
Profit/(loss) for the year		<u>59,771</u>	<u>184,093</u>
Total comprehensive result		<u>59,771</u>	<u>184,093</u>

The above comprehensive income statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

FERNTREE GULLY CEMETERY TRUST**BALANCE SHEET****AS AT 30 JUNE 2025**

	Note	June 2025 \$	June 2024 \$
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	3.1(a)	381,100	257,776
Trade and other receivables	3.1(c)	6,961	31,665
Other financial assets	3.1(b)	1,100,000	1,100,000
Total current assets		<u>1,488,061</u>	<u>1,389,441</u>
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	4.1	849,490	843,453
Total non-current assets		<u>849,490</u>	<u>843,453</u>
Total assets		<u>2,337,551</u>	<u>2,232,894</u>
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	3.2(a)	48,730	3,844
Total current liabilities		<u>48,730</u>	<u>3,844</u>
Total liabilities		<u>48,730</u>	<u>3,844</u>
Net assets		<u>2,288,821</u>	<u>2,229,050</u>
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		<u>2,288,821</u>	<u>2,229,050</u>
Total equity		<u>2,288,821</u>	<u>2,229,050</u>

The above balance sheet should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

FERNTREE GULLY CEMETERY TRUST
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
 FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Accumulated surplus	
	June 2025 \$	June 2024 \$
Balance at beginning of the financial year	2,229,050	2,044,957
Comprehensive result	59,771	184,093
Balance at end of the financial year	2,288,821	2,229,050

The above statement of changes in equity should be read with the accompanying notes.

FERNTREE GULLY CEMETERY TRUST**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Note	June 2025 Inflows/ (Outflows) \$	June 2024 Inflows/ (Outflows) \$
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts			
Plot sales		158,931	273,652
Burial fees		67,720	49,192
Plaque fees		42,231	54,393
Monument fees		5,720	3,645
Grants		-	-
Interest received		65,946	46,083
Net GST refund		15,709	9,365
		<u>356,257</u>	<u>436,330</u>
Payments			
Payments to suppliers		(215,638)	(246,954)
		<u>(215,638)</u>	<u>(246,954)</u>
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	6.1	<u>140,619</u>	<u>189,376</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Payments for property, plant and equipment		(17,295)	(6,050)
Proceeds from disposal of financial assets		1,100,000	1,000,000
Purchase of financial assets		(1,100,000)	(1,100,000)
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		<u>(17,295)</u>	<u>(106,050)</u>
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		123,324	83,326
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year		<u>257,776</u>	<u>174,450</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year		<u>381,100</u>	<u>257,776</u>

The above statement of cash flows should be read with the accompanying notes.

FERNTREE GULLY CEMETERY TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

Note 1 Overview

Introduction

The Ferntree Gully Cemetery was established in 1873. Knox City Council took over responsibility as Trustee in 1982. The sole purpose of the Trust is to administer the Ferntree Gully Cemetery.

Statement of compliance

These financial statements are a general purpose financial report that consists of a Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows, Statement of Capital Works and Notes accompanying these financial statements. The general purpose financial report complies with the Australian Accounting Standards (AAS), other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board, the *Local Government Act 2020*, and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.

Accounting policy information

1. 1 Basis of accounting

Accounting policies are selected and applied in a manner which ensures that the resulting financial information satisfies the concepts of relevance and reliability, thereby ensuring that the substance of the underlying transactions or other events is reported. Specific accounting policies applied are disclosed in sections where the related balance or financial statement matter is disclosed.

The accrual basis of accounting has been used in the preparation of these financial statements, whereby assets, liabilities, equity, income and expenses are recognised in the reporting period to which they relate, regardless of when cash is received or paid.

The financial statements are based on the historical cost convention unless a different measurement basis is specifically disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

The financial statements are in Australian dollars. Minor discrepancies in tables between totals and the sum of components are due to rounding.

Judgements, estimates and assumptions are required to be made about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated judgements are based on professional judgement derived from historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and also in future periods that are affected by the revision. Judgements and assumptions made by management in the application of AAS's that have significant effects on the financial statements and estimates relate to:

- the determination of depreciation on infrastructure (refer to Note 6).

Unless otherwise stated, all accounting policies are consistent with those applied in the prior year. Where appropriate, comparative figures have been amended to accord with current presentation, and disclosure has been made of any material changes to comparatives.

FERNTREE GULLY CEMETERY TRUST**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025****1.2 Going concern**

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are satisfied that the entity is trading as a going concern. However, the Trustees also note that the ability of the entity to continue as a going concern in the long term is uncertain due to the lack of sustainable operating profits or cash flows from core business activities, particularly as all available burial plots have been sold.

1.3 Revenue recognition

Income is recognised when the Trust obtains control of the contribution or the right to receive the contribution, it is probable that the economic benefits comprising the contribution will flow to the Trust, and the amount of the contribution can be measured reliably.

1.4 Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Income and expenses are recognised net of the amount of associated GST. Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is included with other receivables or payables in the balance sheet.

FERNTREE GULLY CEMETERY TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	June 2025 \$	June 2024 \$
Note 2 The cost of delivering services		
2. 1 Materials and Services		
(a) Operating costs		
Audit fee	2,000	1,900
Refund pre-purchased plots	8,747	11,418
Maintenance	-	-
Other operating costs	22,281	3,648
	<u>33,028</u>	<u>16,966</u>
(b) Utilities		
Telephone	979	957
	<u>979</u>	<u>957</u>
Total material and services	<u>34,007</u>	<u>17,923</u>
2. 2 Depreciation		
Depreciation expense	11,257	11,197
Total depreciation and amortisation	<u>11,257</u>	<u>11,197</u>

Refer to note 4.1 for a more detailed breakdown of depreciation and amortisation charges and accounting policy.

FERNTREE GULLY CEMETERY TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	June 2025 \$	June 2024 \$
Note 3 Investing in and financing our operations		
3. 1 Financial assets		
(a) Cash and cash equivalents		
Cash at Bank	20,503	19,446
Cash at Call	360,597	238,330
Total cash and cash equivalents	<u>381,100</u>	<u>257,776</u>
(b) Other financial assets		
Current		
Term deposits	1,100,000	1,100,000
Total current other financial assets	1,100,000	1,100,000
Non-current		
Term deposits	-	-
Total non-current other financial assets	-	-
Total other financial assets	<u>1,100,000</u>	<u>1,100,000</u>
Total cash and cash equivalents and other financial assets	<u>1,481,100</u>	<u>1,357,776</u>
Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits at call, and other highly liquid investments with original maturities of 90 days or less, net of outstanding bank overdrafts (if applicable).		
Financial assets including investments such as term deposits are held to maturity and measured at amortised cost.		
Other financial assets are valued at fair value, at balance date. Term deposits are measured at original cost. Any unrealised gains and losses on holdings at balance date are recognised as either a revenue or expense. Other financial assets include term deposits and those with original maturity dates of three to 12 months are classified as current, whilst term deposits with maturity dates greater than 12 months are classified as non-current.		
(c) Trade and other receivables		
Current		
Plot debtors	-	-
Accrued interest	3,545	22,807
Net GST receivable	3,416	8,858
Total current trade and other receivables	<u>6,961</u>	<u>31,665</u>

Receivables are carried at cost. A provision for doubtful debts is recognised when there is objective evidence that an impairment has occurred.

No provision has been made for doubtful debts.

FERNTREE GULLY CEMETERY TRUST**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025**

	June 2025 \$	June 2024 \$
3.2 Payables		
(a) Trade and other payables		
Current		
Trade payables	48,730	3,844
Total Current Trade and other payables	<u>48,730</u>	<u>3,844</u>

3.3 Commitments

The Trustee does not have any outstanding commitments in relation to the Ferntree Gully Cemetery.

3.4 Number of graves, ashes and interment positions available

Description	No.	No.
Foothills graves	6	6
Ashes Garden	-	-
Rose garden	-	-
Ashes vault - single	-	-
Wall of Remembrance	-	1
Memorial Rose Garden	-	-
Lawn F	1	1
Methodist Section B	2	2
Roman Catholic Section D	1	1
The Grove Niche Walls	-	1
Grove 386 - 616	-	19
Gateway	5	15
	<u>15</u>	<u>46</u>

FERNTREE GULLY CEMETERY TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

Note 4 Assets we manage

4.1 Property, Plant and equipment

Summary of property, plant and equipment

	At cost \$	Accumulated Depreciation \$	Written Down Value \$
2025			
Land at cost	554,721	-	554,721
Infrastructure	354,738	(77,264)	277,474
Works in Progress - Assets	17,295	-	17,295
	926,754	(77,264)	849,490

	At cost \$	Accumulated Depreciation \$	Written Down Value \$
2024			
Land at cost	554,721	-	554,721
Infrastructure	354,738	(66,007)	288,732
	909,459	(66,007)	843,453

Land

At cost 1 July 2024	554,721
Written down value of land at 30 June 2025	554,721

Infrastructure

At cost 1 July 2024	354,738
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2024	(66,007)

Movements in Cost

Acquisition of assets at cost	-
	288,731

Movements in accumulated depreciation

Depreciation	(11,257)
	(11,257)

At cost 30 June 2025	354,738
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2025	(77,264)
Written down value of infrastructure at 30 June 2025	277,474

FERNTREE GULLY CEMETERY TRUST**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025****Works in Progress - Assets**

Opening Working Progress at 1 July 2024	-
Additions	17,295
Transfers	-
Write offs	-
Closing work in progress	<u>17,295</u>

The closing work in progress includes \$17,295 in site preparation costs, for the Ferntree Gully Cemetery Trust Masterplan.

FERNTREE GULLY CEMETERY TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

Note 5 People and relationships

(a) Trustee

The Trustee of Ferntree Gully Cemetery Trust is Knox City Council.

(b) Key Management Personnel

The Councillors of Knox City Council during the year were:

Councillor Lisa Cooper (Mayor)	Mayor from 21 November 2024 to current. Councillor from 1 July 2024 to 26 October 2024 and 11 November 2024 to 21 November 2024
Councillor Glen Atwell (Deputy Mayor)	Deputy Mayor from 21 November 2024 to current. Councillor from 11 November 2024 to 21 November 2024
Councillor Peter Lockwood	Councillor from 11 November 2024 to current
Councillor Paige Kennett	Councillor from 11 November 2024 to current
Councillor Chris Duncan	Councillor from 11 November 2024 to current
Councillor Robert Williams	Councillor from 11 November 2024 to current
Councillor Meagan Baker	Councillor from 1 July 2024 to 26 October 2024 and 11 November 2024 to current
Councillor Parisa Considine	Councillor from 11 November 2024 to current
Councillor Susan Pearce	Councillor from 11 November 2024 to current
Councillor Jude Dwight	Mayor from 1 July 2024 to 26 October 2024
Councillor Sorina Grasso	Deputy Mayor from 1 July 2024 to 26 October 2024
Councillor Yvonne Allred	Councillor from 1 July 2024 to 26 October 2024
Councillor Marcia Timmers-Leitch	Councillor from 1 July 2024 to 26 October 2024
Councillor Susan Laukens	Councillor from 1 July 2024 to 26 October 2024
Councillor Darren Pearce	Councillor from 1 July 2024 to 26 October 2024
Councillor Nicole Seymour	Councillor from 1 July 2024 to 26 October 2024

The Councillors received no remuneration from the Trust in connection with its management.

(c) Other Related Party Disclosures

Knox City Council's Finance department provides ongoing financial advice and accounting services to the Trustees. These services are included in the management fee of \$184,737 payable by the Trust to the Council for the year.

FERNTREE GULLY CEMETERY TRUST**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025**

	June 2025 \$	June 2024 \$
Note 6 Other matters		
6. 1 Reconciliation of cash flows from operating activities to surplus		
Profit/(loss) for the year	59,771	184,093
Non-cash adjustments:		
Add back depreciation expense	11,257	11,197
Change in assets and liabilities		
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	24,704	(7,914)
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	<u>44,887</u>	<u>2,000</u>
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	<u>140,619</u>	<u>189,376</u>

Abstract of accounts 2024-25

Submitted in accordance with s. 52 /s. 57 of the *Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003*. Due 1 September 2025.

OFFICIAL

Cemetery trust name	FERNTREE GULLY CEMETERY
----------------------------	-------------------------

General account

Income	\$	¢	Expenditure	\$	¢
Balance in bank at start of financial year	257,776	00	Secretary and other administrative staff**		
Cash in hand at start of financial year			Grounds staff**		
Investments at start of financial year	1,100 000	00	Gravedigging**		
Interest received*	65,946	00	Contractors**	157,027	00
Fees received for cemetery products/ services (graves, memorials, interments, etc.)*	274,602	00	Memorialisation**	23,671	00
Other income*	15,709	00	Office expenses**	33,761	00
Transfers from perpetual maintenance account/s			Buildings (new construction)**		
Department of Health grants			Insurance**		
Other grants and donations			Works (new areas, repairs, fencing, drainage, etc.):**	17,295	00
Unpresented cheques			Other expenses**	1,179	00
Total	1,714,033	00	Balance in bank at end of financial year		
			Cash in hand at end of financial year	381,100	00
			Investments at end of financial year	1,100,000	00
			Total	1,714,033	00

Abstract of accounts 2024-25

2

- ☐ Confirm the **totals of the income and expenditure columns are equal**. A discrepancy between the two column totals may indicate an error in the recorded data.
- ☐ Confirm **bank statement/s displaying the closing bank and investment balances** are attached.
- ☐ Confirm a **review** or **audit** is attached, **if the trust meets the threshold**. See *Abstract of accounts instructions and checklist 2024-25* for threshold.

Perpetual maintenance account/s

Complete this section if your trust has a separate account/s designated for perpetual maintenance funds. Do not re-enter bank account or investment information already entered in the 'General account' section. The income and expenditure totals must balance.

Income	\$	¢
Balance at start of financial year		
Interest received		
New funds received		
Total		

Expenditure	\$	¢
Expenditure / transfer to general account		
Balance at end of financial year		
Total		

- ☐ Confirm the **totals of the income and expenditure columns are equal**. A discrepancy between the two column totals may indicate an error in the recorded data.
- ☐ Confirm **bank statement/s displaying the closing perpetual maintenance account/s balances** are attached.

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Assets and liabilities

Record the total value of assets in each category. If the trust has no assets or liabilities, enter a zero at both totals.

Assets	\$
Key structures (Examples: office, mausoleum, chapel, toilet facility, niche wall)	
Minor structures (Examples: rotunda, shed, seating)	
Major machinery (Examples: tractor, ride-on mower)	
Small machinery (Examples: computer, grave shoring)	
Miscellaneous equipment (Examples: hand tools, wheelbarrow)	
Total	

Liabilities	\$
Monies owed to a third party	
Monies committed to expenditure	
Other	
Total	

Right of interment (ROI) and interment information

Cemetery name	
---------------	--

Where accurate numbers are not available, please provide estimates.

If your trust manages multiple cemeteries (active or closed), please provide information for each site in a separate table by making copies of this page.

Bodily remains

Question	Response
Number of ROI for bodily remains (at-need) sold in 2024-25	Nil
Number of ROI for bodily remains (pre-need) sold in 2024-25	Nil
Number of interments of bodily remains (first burial in a plot) in 2024-25	8
Number of interments of bodily remains (second or subsequent burial in a plot) in 2024-25	25

Cremated remains

Question	Response
Number of ROI for cremated remains (both at-need and pre-need) sold in 2024-25	41
Number of interments of cremated remains (in graves and memorials such as niche walls) in 2024-25	48

Cemetery Capacity

Question	Response
Total number of bodily remains interred since the establishment of the cemetery	6292
Number of unsold ROI for bodily remains at 30 June 2025 Include the estimated number of plots that could be created in areas of the cemetery that have the potential to be developed. The department collects this information to understand the remaining burial capacity in Victorian cemeteries.	0*
Estimate how many more years there will be ROI for bodily remains (at-need) available for sale in the cemetery (including in areas that are yet to be developed)	0

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Statutory declarations

Three trust members (the chairperson and two other trust members) must execute a statutory declaration.

Statutory declaration – trust member 1 (chairperson)

Name:	
Address:	
Occupation:	

I, (name, address and occupation stated above), make the following statutory declaration under the **Oaths and Affirmations Act 2018**:

The above abstract of accounts for the financial year 2024-25 is true and correct for the trust mentioned below.

Cemetery trust:	
------------------------	--

I declare that the contents of this statutory declaration are true and correct and I make it knowing that making a statutory declaration that I know to be untrue is an offence.

Signature of person making declaration:	
Declared at: (City, town or suburb in the state of Victoria)	
Date:	

Statutory declaration witness

Note: See Checklist for details on how to witness statutory declarations remotely via audio visual link.

Note: Stamp of name, capacity and/or address accepted in table below.

Name:	
Capacity in which authorised to witness statutory declaration:	
Address:	

I, (name, capacity and address stated or stamped above), am an authorised statutory declaration witness* and I sign this document in the presence of the person making the declaration:

Signature of statutory declaration witness:	
Date:	

*A person authorised under s. 30(2) of the **Oaths and Affirmations Act 2018** to witness the signing of a statutory declaration

OFFICIAL

Abstract of accounts 2024-25

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Statutory declaration – trust member 2

Name:	
Address:	
Occupation:	

I, (name, address and occupation stated above), make the following statutory declaration under the **Oaths and Affirmations Act 2018**:

The above abstract of accounts for the financial year 2024-25 is true and correct for the trust mentioned below.

Cemetery trust:	
-----------------	--

I declare that the contents of this statutory declaration are true and correct and I make it knowing that making a statutory declaration that I know to be untrue is an offence.

Signature of person making declaration:	
Declared at: (City, town or suburb in the state of Victoria)	
Date:	

Statutory declaration witness

Note: See Checklist for details on how to witness statutory declarations remotely via audio visual link.

Note: Stamp of name, capacity and/or address accepted in table below.

Name:	
Capacity in which authorised to witness statutory declaration:	
Address:	

I, (name, capacity and address stated or stamped above), am an authorised statutory declaration witness* and I sign this document in the presence of the person making the declaration:

Signature of statutory declaration witness:	
Date:	

*A person authorised under s. 30(2) of the **Oaths and Affirmations Act 2018** to witness the signing of a statutory declaration

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Abstract of accounts 2024-25

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Statutory declaration – trust member 3

Name:	
Address:	
Occupation:	

I, (name, address and occupation stated above), make the following statutory declaration under the **Oaths and Affirmations Act 2018**:

The above abstract of accounts for the financial year 2024-25 is true and correct for the trust mentioned below.

Cemetery trust:	
-----------------	--

I declare that the contents of this statutory declaration are true and correct and I make it knowing that making a statutory declaration that I know to be untrue is an offence.

Signature of person making declaration:	
Declared at: (City, town or suburb in the state of Victoria)	
Date:	

Statutory declaration witness

Note: See Checklist for details on how to witness statutory declarations remotely via audio visual link.

Note: Stamp of name, capacity and/or address accepted in table below.

Name:	
Capacity in which authorised to witness statutory declaration:	
Address:	

I, (name, capacity and address stated or stamped above), am an authorised statutory declaration witness* and I sign this document in the presence of the person making the declaration:

Signature of statutory declaration witness:	
Date:	

*A person authorised under s. 30(2) of the **Oaths and Affirmations Act 2018** to witness the signing of a statutory declaration

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Submission

Under s. 52(3) of the *Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003*, a cemetery trust must submit a report for each financial year to the Secretary of the Department of Health by 1 September in the following financial year.

End of financial year bank, investment and perpetual maintenance account statements must be provided with this form and [emailed to the Divisional Portfolio Entity and Appointments Advisory Unit](mailto:cemeteries@health.vic.gov.au) at <cemeteries@health.vic.gov.au>.

Email is the department's preferred method to receive the abstract and accompanying documents. If you do not have access to email, the documents can be posted to:

The Manager
Divisional Portfolio Entity and Appointments Advisory Unit
Department of Health
GPO Box 4057
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

To receive this document in another format, phone 1800 034 280, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or [Divisional Portfolio Entity and Appointments Advisory Unit](mailto:cemeteries@health.vic.gov.au) <cemeteries@health.vic.gov.au>.

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

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ISBN 978-1-76131-801-6 (pdf/online/MS word)

Available at [Class B cemetery trust financial reporting and financial procedures](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/cemeteries-and-crematoria/class-b-cemetery-trust-financial-reporting-and-procedures)

<<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/cemeteries-and-crematoria/class-b-cemetery-trust-financial-reporting-and-procedures>>

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4.3 2024-25 Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement

Final Report Destination: Mid Month
Paper Type: For Decision
Author: Coordinator Finance Operations, James Morris
Executive: Chief Financial Officer, Navec Lorkin

SUMMARY

The 2024-25 Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement are presented for consideration and adoption in principle. These statements were reviewed by Council's Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on Thursday 28 August 2025 and the Committee has recommended in principle approval by Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to:

1. Receive and note the draft 2024-25 Annual Financial Statements (Attachment 1) and Performance Statement (Attachment 2) for the year ending 30 June 2025.
2. Approves in principle the 2024-25 Annual Financial Statements (Attachment 1) and Performance Statement (Attachment 2) for the year ending 30 June 2025 being provided to the Auditor-General for audit sign off;
3. Authorise the Chief Financial Officer to make changes to the Financial Statements as determined by the Auditor-General; and that the Audit and Risk Committee members be consulted prior to making any material amendments to these Statements as determined by the Victorian Auditor-Generals office; and that any material amendments be communicated to Council as soon as possible.
4. Nominate and authorise Councillor and Councillor to certify (on behalf of Council) the 2024-25 Annual Financial Statements and the 2024-25 Performance Statement, in their final form.

1. DISCUSSION

RSM Australia (agents of the Victorian Auditor-General's Office) has undertaken the external audit of the 2024-25 Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement.

The Annual Financial Statements, consisting of Financial Statements and Notes (refer Attachment 1), have been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations, the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* (the Regulations).

The Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting of 28 August 2025, having reviewed the Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement, recommended that Council adopt the 2024-25 Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement on an in-principle basis.

In accordance with section 99 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, and sections 13 and 15 of the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*, the completed Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement are to be certified by the Principal Accounting Officer

(Chief Financial Officer), Chief Executive Officer and two councillors (on behalf of Council) having regard to the recommendations, if any, from the Victorian Auditor-General.

Annual Financial Statements

The draft Financial Statements indicate the financial performance for the year and the financial position of Council as at 30 June 2025. On 28 August 2025, the Audit and Risk Committee recommended that Council approve in principle the Financial Statements, and accordingly in principle approval is now being sought from Council.

Comprehensive Income Statement

The reported actual operating result for 2024-25 is a surplus of \$12.239 million, which compares unfavorably to a budgeted surplus of \$19.631M. The unfavorable variance is primarily due to timing variances in the receipt of grant income from the Victoria Local Government Grants Commission, together with timing variances relating to the sale of land and buildings. Overall, after taking into account these timing differences the underlying result is favorable to budget. Key timing variances were:

- Operating grants totalling \$0.788 million and capital grants totalling \$4.251 million have been received but treated as unearned income at year-end as they have yet to be expended.
- Capital grants totalling \$2.720 million for two pavilion upgrades were budgeted in 2024-25 but have yet to be received due to the timing of the projects.
- The 2024-25 Victoria Local Government Grants Commission General Purpose Grant and Local Roads Funding was paid in its entirety during the 2024-25 financial year, while 50% of the 2025-26 General Purpose Grant and Local Roads Funding was brought forward and paid prior to 30 June 2025. Therefore, the total General Purpose Grant and Local Roads Funding received during the 2024-25 financial year was \$5.121 million greater than budget.
- Land and building sales were \$8.772 million down on budget, with these sales expected to be finalised during the 2025-26 financial year.

Council has considered the amendments to *AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement* that apply for the 2024-25 financial year. For assets, where Council adopts a current replacement cost approach to determine fair value, Council now considers the inclusion of site preparation costs, disruption costs and costs to restore another entity's assets in the underlying valuation. Council's Comprehensive Income Statement therefore shows a net asset revaluation gain of \$252.994 million.

Buildings were revalued as at 30 June 2025, with the value increasing by \$26.819 million since the last revaluation of Buildings which took place as at 30 June 2024. Formal full revaluations were held for Footpaths and Cycleways as at 30 June 2025 (an increase in value of \$43.621 million). These infrastructure classes were last revalued as at 30 June 2022. Indexed revaluations were held for Roads (an increase in value of \$121.263 million, last revalued as at 30 June 2024), Drainage (an increase in value of \$44.030 million, last revalued as at 30 June 2023), and Car Parks (an increase in value of \$17.261 million, last revalued as at 30 June 2024).

Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet reflects a satisfactory position with a Working Capital ratio (liquidity) of 1.51:1 or 151% (2023-24 1.67:1 or 167%).

Total cash holdings (cash on hand and term deposits) were \$56.823 million at balance date (2023-24 \$46.616 million). The increase in cash holdings is partially offset by an increase of \$7.032 million for trade and other payables (\$19.874 million in 2024-25 compared to \$12.842 million in 2023-24).

Total trade and other receivables were \$24.292 million (2023-24 \$20.778 million). Rates debtors increased to \$19.848 million in 2024-25 from \$16.989 million in 2023-24.

Performance Statement

The Performance Statement includes the indicators, measures and results for the prescribed indicators of sustainable capacity, service performance and financial performance. To provide context to the results, the Statement must also contain a description of the municipal district including its size, location and population.

The Performance Statement reports results of indicators established by the Victoria Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF). The Performance Statement provides four years of comparatives (2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25) to provide trend data.

On 28 August 2025, the Audit and Risk Committee recommended that Council approve in principle the 2024-25 Annual Performance Statement.

2. ENGAGEMENT

This report does not require community consultation. The 2024-25 Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement will be publicly available as part of the 2024-25 Annual Report.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report does not have any social implications for discussion.

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

This report does not have any environmental or amenity issues for discussion.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The 2024-25 Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement report on Council's financial and non-financial performance for the financial year.

7. RISKS

This report does not have any risks for discussion.

8. COUNCIL AND HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN 2025-2029

Leading, listening and governing responsibly

Strategy 4.1 - Council demonstrates its accountability through transparent and responsible decision-making and working together productively.

Strategy 4.5 - Council is financially sustainable through long-term strategic, financial and asset planning, and the responsible prioritisation, allocation and use of resources.

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 -Draft Financial Accounts 2024-25 [**4.3.1** - 71 pages]
2. Attachment 2 - Draft Performance Statement 2024-25 [**4.3.2** - 16 pages]

**KNOX CITY COUNCIL
ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT**

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

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Financial Report
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**Knox City Council
Certification of the Financial Statements**

Statement by Principal Accounting Officer

In my opinion, the accompanying financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*, the Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.

Navec Lorkin CPA
Principal Accounting Officer
8 September 2025
Wantirna South

Statement by Councillors and Chief Executive Officer

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly the financial transactions of Knox City Council for the year ended 30 June 2025 and the financial position of the Council as at that date.

As at the date of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances that would render any particulars in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.

We have been authorised by the Council and by the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* to certify the financial statements in their final form.

Cr
8 September 2025
Wantirna South

Cr
8 September 2025
Wantirna South

Bruce Dobson
Chief Executive Officer
8 September 2025
Wantirna South

**Knox City Council
VAGO Report**

<Insert VAGO report - page 1>

**Knox City Council
VAGO Report**

<Insert VAGO report - page 2>

Knox City Council
Comprehensive Income Statement
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	Note	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Income/revenue			
Rates and charges	3.1	151,015	146,523
Statutory fees and fines	3.2	4,796	3,605
User fees	3.3	13,587	10,731
Grants - operating	3.4	27,325	19,844
Grants - capital	3.4	7,040	6,020
Contributions - monetary	3.5	6,600	9,714
Contributions - non-monetary	3.5	1,899	-
Net gain on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	3.6	-	450
Share of net profits of associates and joint ventures	6.3	239	292
Other income	3.7	4,560	3,664
Total income/revenue		217,061	200,843
Expenses			
Employee costs	4.1	(80,664)	(81,948)
Materials and services	4.2	(76,414)	(74,921)
Depreciation	4.3	(25,659)	(24,784)
Amortisation - intangible assets		(878)	(903)
Depreciation - right-of-use assets	4.4	(1,205)	(822)
Allowance for impairment losses	4.5	(508)	(305)
Borrowing costs	4.6	(3,767)	(3,012)
Finance costs - leases		(288)	(132)
Contributions and donations	4.7	(5,973)	(5,949)
Net loss on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	3.6	(8,820)	-
Other expenses	4.8	(646)	(817)
Total expenses		(204,822)	(193,593)
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		12,239	7,250
Other comprehensive income			
Items that will not be reclassified to surplus or deficit in future periods			
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	9.1	252,994	141,772
Total other comprehensive income		252,994	141,772
Total comprehensive result		265,233	149,022

The above Comprehensive Income Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

**Knox City Council
Balance Sheet
As at 30 June 2025**

	Note	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	5.1	54,323	36,616
Other financial assets	5.1	2,500	10,000
Trade and other receivables	5.1	24,292	20,778
Inventories		12	13
Prepayments	5.2	1,167	1,340
Non-current assets classified as held for sale	6.1	582	4,666
Contract assets	5.1	1,090	2,342
Total current assets		83,966	75,755
Non-current assets			
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	6.2	2,567,045	2,299,158
Right-of-use assets	5.8	5,305	6,223
Intangible assets	5.2	1,879	2,419
Investment in Your Library Limited	6.3	2,986	2,747
Total non-current assets		2,577,215	2,310,547
Total assets		2,661,181	2,386,302
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	5.3	19,874	12,842
Trust funds and deposits	5.3	2,949	2,560
Contract and other liabilities	5.3	5,039	2,048
Provisions	5.5	17,336	18,525
Interest-bearing liabilities	5.4	9,445	8,265
Lease liabilities	5.8	799	1,032
Total current liabilities		55,442	45,272
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	5.5	2,962	2,865
Interest-bearing liabilities	5.4	74,360	74,406
Lease liabilities	5.8	4,640	5,215
Total non-current liabilities		81,962	82,486
Total liabilities		137,404	127,758
Net assets		2,523,777	2,258,544
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		736,556	723,126
Reserves	9.1	1,787,221	1,535,418
Total equity		2,523,777	2,258,544

The above Balance Sheet should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Knox City Council
Statement of Changes in Equity
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

2025	Note	Total	Accumulated	Revaluation	Other
		\$'000	Surplus	Reserve	Reserves
			\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Balance at beginning of the financial year		2,258,544	723,126	1,516,301	19,117
Surplus for the year		12,239	12,239	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	6.2	252,994	-	252,994	-
Transfers to other reserves	9.1	-	(11,485)	-	11,485
Transfers from other reserves	9.1	-	12,676	-	(12,676)
Balance at end of the financial year		2,523,777	736,556	1,769,295	17,926

2024	Note	Total	Accumulated	Revaluation	Other
		\$'000	Surplus	Reserve	Reserves
			\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Balance at beginning of the financial year		2,109,522	698,440	1,374,529	36,553
Surplus for the year		7,250	7,250	-	-
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	6.2	141,772	-	141,772	-
Transfers to other reserves	9.1	-	(6,513)	-	6,513
Transfers from other reserves	9.1	-	23,949	-	(23,949)
Balance at end of the financial year		2,258,544	723,126	1,516,301	19,117

The above Statement of Changes in Equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Knox City Council
Statement of Cash Flows
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	Note	2025 Inflows/ (Outflows) \$'000	2024 Inflows/ (Outflows) \$'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Rates and charges		148,279	143,989
Statutory fees and fines		4,064	2,483
User fees		13,957	14,601
Grants - operating		27,822	18,748
Grants - capital		11,029	5,559
Contributions - monetary		6,735	9,909
Interest received		2,651	1,674
Trust funds and deposits taken		23,046	19,697
Other receipts		2,132	1,898
Net GST refund		11,329	12,109
Employee costs		(82,016)	(82,803)
Materials and services		(85,498)	(86,191)
Contributions and donations		(6,551)	(6,530)
Short-term, low value and variable lease payments		(13)	(149)
Trust funds and deposits repaid		(22,657)	(19,699)
Other payments		(640)	(789)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	9.2	53,669	34,506
Cash flows from investing activities			
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	6.2	(44,651)	(54,780)
Proceeds from sales of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		5,170	5,113
Payments for investments		(2,500)	(10,000)
Proceeds from sale of investments		10,000	12,500
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		(31,981)	(47,167)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Finance costs		(3,738)	(2,913)
Proceeds from borrowings		10,000	15,480
Repayment of borrowings		(8,865)	(6,766)
Interest paid - lease liability		(290)	(114)
Repayment of lease liabilities		(1,088)	(728)
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities		(3,981)	4,959
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		17,707	(7,702)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		36,616	44,318
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year		54,323	36,616
Financing arrangements	5.6		

The above Statement of Cash Flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Knox City Council
Statement of Capital Works
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	Note	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Property			
Buildings		10,613	14,487
Total buildings		10,613	14,487
Total property		10,613	14,487
Plant and equipment			
Artworks		57	245
Plant, machinery and equipment		2,466	2,464
Fixtures, fittings and furniture		36	-
Computers and telecommunications		672	696
Total plant and equipment		3,231	3,405
Infrastructure			
Roads		7,854	7,855
Bridges		833	2,011
Footpaths and cycleways		5,127	5,394
Drainage		6,454	4,808
Recreational, leisure and community facilities		12,714	11,592
Off street car parks		2,967	1,282
Total infrastructure		35,949	32,942
Total capital works expenditure		49,793	50,834
Represented by:			
New asset expenditure		2,378	6,094
Asset renewal expenditure		35,102	29,225
Asset expansion expenditure		258	3,679
Asset upgrade expenditure		12,055	11,836
Total capital works expenditure		49,793	50,834

The above Statement of Capital Works should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Knox City Council Notes to the Financial Report For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

Note 1 Overview

Introduction

Knox City Council was established by an Order of the Governor in Council in 1994 and is a body corporate. The Council's main office is located at 511 Burwood Highway, Wantirna South, Victoria.

Statement of compliance

These financial statements are a general purpose financial report that consists of a Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows, Statement of Capital Works and Notes accompanying these financial statements. The general purpose financial report complies with the Australian Accounting Standards (AAS), other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board, the *Local Government Act 2020*, and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.

The Council is a not-for-profit entity and therefore applies the additional AUS paragraphs applicable to a not-for-profit entity under the Australian Accounting Standards.

Accounting policy information

(a) Basis of accounting

Accounting policies are selected and applied in a manner which ensures that the resulting financial information satisfies the concepts of relevance and reliability, thereby ensuring that the substance of the underlying transactions or other events is reported. Specific accounting policies applied are disclosed in sections where the related balance or financial statement matter is disclosed.

The accrual basis of accounting has been used in the preparation of these financial statements, except for the cash flow information, whereby assets, liabilities, equity, income and expenses are recognised in the reporting period to which they relate, regardless of when cash is received or paid.

The financial statements are based on the historical cost convention unless a different measurement basis is specifically disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The financial statements are in Australian dollars. The amounts presented in the financial statements have been rounded to the nearest thousand dollars unless otherwise specified. Minor discrepancies in tables between totals and the sum of components are due to rounding.

Judgements, estimates and assumptions are required to be made about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated judgements are based on professional judgement derived from historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and also in future periods that are affected by the revision. Judgements and assumptions made by management in the application of AAS's that have significant effects on the financial statements and estimates relate to:

- the fair value of land, buildings, infrastructure, plant and equipment (refer to Note 6.2)
- the determination of depreciation for buildings, infrastructure, plant and equipment (refer to Note 6.2)
- the determination of employee provisions (refer to Note 5.5)
- the determination of landfill provisions (refer to Note 5.5)

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

Note 1 Overview (cont'd)

- the determination of whether performance obligations are sufficiently specific so as to determine whether an arrangement is within the scope of *AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers* or *AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities* (refer to Note 3)
- the determination, in accordance with *AASB 16 Leases*, of the lease term, the estimation of the discount rate when not implicit in the lease and whether an arrangement is in substance short-term or low value (refer to Note 5.8)
- whether or not *AASB 1059 Service Concession Arrangements: Grantors* is applicable
- other areas requiring judgements

Unless otherwise stated, all accounting policies are consistent with those applied in the prior year. Where appropriate, comparative figures have been amended to accord with current presentation, and disclosure has been made of any material changes to comparatives.

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Income and expenses are recognised net of the amount of associated GST. Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is included with other receivables or payables in the balance sheet.

Knox City Council Notes to the Financial Report For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

Note 2 Analysis of our results

2.1 Performance against budget

The performance against budget notes compare Council's financial plan, expressed through its annual budget, with actual performance. The *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* requires explanation of any material variances. Council has adopted a materiality threshold of greater than ten percent and \$1,000,000 where further explanation is warranted. Explanations have not been provided for variations below the materiality threshold unless the variance is considered to be material because of its nature.

The budget figures detailed below are those adopted by Council on 24 June 2024. The budget was based on assumptions that were relevant at the time of adoption of the budget. Council sets guidelines and parameters for income and expense targets in this budget in order to meet Council's planning and financial performance targets for both the short and long-term. The budget did not reflect any changes to equity resulting from asset revaluations, as their impacts were not considered predictable.

These notes are prepared to meet the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.

2.1.1 Income/revenue and expenditure

	Budget 2025 \$'000	Actual 2025 \$'000	Variance \$'000	Variance %	Ref
Income/revenue					
Rates and charges	150,043	151,015	972	1%	
Statutory fees and fines	4,568	4,796	228	5%	
User fees	12,365	13,587	1,222	10%	1
Grants - operating	22,365	27,325	4,960	22%	2
Grants - capital	11,513	7,040	(4,473)	-39%	3
Contributions - monetary	8,596	6,600	(1,996)	-23%	4
Contributions - non-monetary	2,000	1,899	(101)	-5%	
Net gain (or loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	8,842	(8,820)	(17,662)	-200%	5
Share of net profits (or loss) of associates and joint ventures	-	239	239	100%	
Other income	1,767	4,560	2,793	158%	6
Total income/revenue	222,059	208,241	(13,818)	-6%	
Expenses					
Employee costs	84,427	80,664	3,763	4%	7
Materials and services	80,394	76,414	3,980	5%	8
Depreciation	24,620	25,659	(1,039)	-4%	
Amortisation - intangible assets	647	878	(231)	-36%	
Depreciation - right of use assets	1,185	1,205	(20)	-2%	
Allowance for impairment losses	314	508	(194)	-62%	
Borrowing costs	3,907	3,767	140	4%	
Finance costs - leases	343	288	55	16%	
Contributions and donations	5,876	5,973	(97)	-2%	
Other expenses	715	646	69	10%	
Total expenses	202,428	196,002	6,426	3%	
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	19,631	12,239	(7,392)	-38%	

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

2.1 Performance against budget (cont'd)

(i) Explanation of material variations

Variance Ref	Item	Explanation
1	User fees	Contract income totalling \$1.347 has been reclassified from contributions - monetary to more appropriately represent the type of income. Unbudgeted income totalling \$0.478 million was received from the container deposit scheme. This was partially offset by fees related to Building Services being \$0.411 million lower than budget.
2	Grants - operating	The entire 2024-25 General Purpose Grant was received during the 2025 financial year, while 50% of the 2025-26 General Purpose Grant was brought forward and paid prior to 30 June 2025. Therefore the total General Purpose Grant received during the 2024-25 financial year was \$4.303 million greater than budget. Grants received and expended for Early Years services were \$1.360 million greater than budget. This was offset by the cessation of the Regional Assessment Service, with the \$0.806 million reduction in operational grant income being offset by a reduction in employee costs.
3	Grants - capital	The entire 2024-25 Local Road Funding was received during the 2025 financial year, while 50% of the 2025-26 Local Road Funding was brought forward and paid prior to 30 June 2025. Therefore the total Local Road Funding received during the 2024-25 financial year was \$0.818 million greater than budget. Roads to Recovery grant income was \$0.213 million greater than budget. Capital grants totalling \$1.352 million were received prior to the 2024-25 financial year but expended and recognised in the 2024-25 financial year. This is offset by capital grants totalling \$4.229 million that have been received during the 2024-25 financial year but have been treated as unearned income as they are yet to be expended. Capital grants for the Tormore Reserve and Wally Tew Reserve pavilion upgrades totalling \$2.720 million were budgeted this year but have yet to be received.
4	Contributions - monetary	Public open space contributions were \$1.907 million down on budget, with this income directly contingent on developer activities in the municipality. This is partially offset by unbudgeted capital contributions received totalling \$1.307 million. Contract income totalling \$1.347 has been reclassified to user fees to more appropriately represent they type of income.
5	Net loss (gain) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	Land and building sales were \$8.772 million down on budget, with the variance in land sales being a timing difference and are set to proceed during the 2025-26 financial year. Sale of plant was \$0.352 million down on budget. Unbudgeted building disposals during the year totalled \$6.363 million, including the Boronia Basketball Stadium. Unbudgeted infrastructure disposals during the year totalled \$2.682 million, and includes the previous Knox Athletics track.
6	Other income	Interest on investments was \$1.583 million greater than budget due to higher than budgeted cash holdings related to delays in the capital works program. Reimbursements were \$0.942 million greater than budget, while rent received was \$0.145 million greater than budget.

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

2.1 Performance against budget (cont'd)

Variance Ref	Item	Explanation
7	Employee costs	The employee costs variance is below the reporting materiality threshold of ten percent, however the \$3.763 million variance is considered material. The WorkCover premium paid was \$1.479 million less than budget, while employment separation costs paid were \$2.375 million lower than budget. The grant-funded Regional Assessment Service was ceased leading to a reduction of \$0.819 million in employee costs, while there were further savings totalling \$1.349 million throughout the organisation due to vacancies throughout the year. Employee costs carried out on capital projects totalling \$2.331 million were considered operational in nature and not capitalised; an offsetting reduction is shown in materials and services where these costs were budgeted.
8	Materials and services	The materials and services variance is below the reporting materiality threshold of ten percent, however the \$3.980 million variance is considered material. Contributing to the reduction in materials and services was a \$2.702 million reduction in capital projects expenditure considered capital in nature and not capitalised, which is largely offset through increased employee costs related to this. Other contributors include a \$0.965 million decrease in administration costs (particularly telephones and communications), a \$0.673 million decrease in consultants costs, and a \$0.631 million reduction in the Chief Information Office renewal programs. This is partially offset by the write-off of prior year work in progress totalling \$0.965 million.

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

2.1 Performance against budget (cont'd)

2.1.2 Capital works

	Budget 2025 \$'000	Actual 2025 \$'000	Variance \$'000	Variance Ref %	
Property					
Buildings	22,574	10,613	(11,961)	-53%	1
Total buildings	22,574	10,613	(11,961)	-53%	
Total property	22,574	10,613	(11,961)	-53%	
Plant and equipment					
Artworks	150	57	(93)	-62%	2
Plant, machinery and equipment	2,805	2,466	(339)	-12%	
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	-	36	36	0%	
Computers and telecommunications	7,230	672	(6,558)	-91%	
Total plant and equipment	10,185	3,231	(6,954)	-68%	
Infrastructure					
Roads	7,417	7,854	437	6%	3
Bridges	993	833	(160)	-16%	
Footpaths and cycleways	6,239	5,127	(1,112)	-18%	
Drainage	6,741	6,454	(287)	-4%	4
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	15,361	12,714	(2,647)	-17%	
Off street car parks	2,427	2,967	540	22%	5
Other infrastructure	4,626	-	(4,626)	-100%	
Total infrastructure	43,804	35,949	(7,855)	-18%	
Total capital works expenditure	76,563	49,793	(26,770)	-35%	
Represented by:					
New asset expenditure	5,982	2,378	(3,604)	-60%	
Asset renewal expenditure	37,437	35,102	(2,335)	-6%	
Asset expansion expenditure	300	258	(42)	-14%	
Asset upgrade expenditure	32,844	12,055	(20,789)	-63%	
Total capital works expenditure	76,563	49,793	(26,770)	-35%	

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

2.1 Performance against budget (cont'd)

(i) Explanation of material variations

Variance Ref	Item	Explanation
1	Buildings	Building related capital expenditure is lower than budget by \$11.961 million. Expenditure on pavilion upgrades were lower than budget for Wally Tew Reserve (\$1.347 million), Carrington Park Reserve (\$3.520 million), Park Ridge Reserve (\$1.770 million), and Tormore Reserve (\$5.142 million). This underspend will be carried forward to the 2025-26 financial year. Capital expenditure deemed operational in nature was not capitalised (\$0.708 million), and there were projects capitalised under different classes (\$0.399 million). This is partially offset by the Fairpark Reserve pavilion upgrade (\$0.343 million), the Carrington Park squash facility (\$0.306 million), and the Building Renewal Program (\$0.291 million) which were greater than budget due to carry forward expenditure from the previous year.
2	Computers and telecommunications	Capital expenditure is lower than budget partially due to \$2.881 million in expenditure being deemed to be operational in nature and therefore was not capitalised. The underspend in a number of projects will be carried forward to 2025-26.
3	Footpaths and cycleways	Capital expenditure underspend totalling \$0.961 million will be carried forward for the Green Spine Corridor shared path, the Macauley Place, Bayswater shard safety zone, and the Mountain Highway, The Basin footpath.
5	Recreational, leisure and community facilities	Capital expenditure is lower than budget partially due to landscaping and planting works being unable to be capitalised (\$0.769 million), and projects being capitalised under different classes (\$2.339 million). This is partially offset by projects from different classes being capitalised under recreational, leisure and community facilities (\$0.307 million).
6	Other infrastructure	Capital expenditure is lower than budget partially due to \$2.490 million in expenditure being deemed to be operational in nature and therefore was not capitalised, and projects being capitalised under different classes (\$1.081 million).

Knox City Council Notes to the Financial Report For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

2.2 Analysis of Council results by program

Knox City Council delivers its functions and activities through the following programs.

2.2.1 CEO

The office of the CEO incorporates the Chief Executive Office and the Chief Financial Office.

The Chief Executive Office responsibilities include establishing and maintaining an appropriate organisational structure for the council, managing interactions between council staff and councillors, ensuring that Council decisions are implemented promptly, providing timely advice to Council, providing timely and reliable advice to the Council about its legal obligations, and overseeing the daily management of council operations following the Council and Health and Wellbeing Plan.

The Chief Financial Office provides financial direction and support across Council. It partners with staff on budgets, purchasing, tenders and contracts. It also provides support for the day-to-day operations of council-owned property and buildings, and manages property rates and valuation services.

City Liveability

The City Liveability Directorate incorporates City Futures, City Planning and Building, City Projects, and City Safety and Health. The Directorate deliver important services for the health, safety and future development of Knox.

The City Futures department uses research and mapping to understand growth and change in Knox, and to inform planning. It works with community members, business owners and internal departments to respond to changing needs.

The City Planning and Building department works with the community to assess land use and development in Knox.

The City Projects department helps shape key projects for Knox's growth into the future. It makes informed decisions based on regular customer feedback and input.

The City Safety and Health department helps protect the safety and health of the Knox community. It does this through dedicated programs, education and local laws.

Connected Communities

The Connected Communities Directorate incorporates Active and Creative Communities, Community Access and Support, Community Strengthening, and Early Years. The Directorate deliver services to support health, wellbeing and culture for an inclusive and safe community.

The Active and Creative Communities department contributes to health and culture in the Knox community through leisure, events, arts and sports.

The Community Access and Support department makes a difference in the social and emotional wellbeing of people in the Knox community.

The Community Strengthening department develops strategies and delivers programs and education to support vulnerable community. It works to create a more inclusive, connected and safe community.

The Early Years department delivers key health and education programs for the youngest members of the Knox community and their families.

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

2.2 Analysis of Council results by program (cont'd)

Customer and Performance

The Customer and Performance Directorate incorporates the Chief Information Office, Customer and Communications, Governance and Risk, People, Culture and Development, and Strategy and Transformation. The directorate works with all Council staff to improve the lives of internal and external stakeholders and the broader Knox community.

The Chief Information Office delivers organisation-wide technical solutions that enable customers to interact with Council services.

The Customer and Communications department bridges the gap between internal and external operations. It communicates Council's services, facilities and programs to meet and support the evolving needs of the community, helping internal and external stakeholders to thrive through customer trust and confidence.

The Governance and Risk department provides advice and support on compliance, governance, policy and risk.

The People, Culture and Development department works with staff to create a safe, fair and enjoyable workplace where everyone thrives.

The Strategy and Transformation department uses data and analytics to plan, manage change and move our organisation forward. It helps Council create and achieve our vision for the future, ensuring our services meet customer needs and remain relevant over time.

Infrastructure

The Infrastructure Directorate incorporates Engineering Services and Operations, Green Spaces and Environment, Major Projects and Facilities, and Strategic Infrastructure. The directorate manages and maintains Council infrastructure such as roads, footpaths, buildings, playgrounds, open space and other assets that our customers use.

The Engineering Services and Operations department maintains and ensures safety of assets that our customers and staff use. This includes fleet cars, footpaths and drains. It also provides expert advice in engineering.

The Green Spaces and Environment department manages waste collection, open spaces, sportsfields, reserves, parks, gardens and trees. It also delivers biodiversity programs and waste education.

The Major Projects and Facilities department delivers major projects that supplement the capital projects Council delivers. It is also responsible for maintaining and upgrading Council-owned buildings.

The Strategic Infrastructure department delivers buildings and open spaces for customers to enjoy. It manages stormwater and provides expert advice on building construction, design and public transport.

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

2. 2 Analysis of Council results by program (cont'd)

2. 2. 2 Summary of income/revenue, expenses, assets and capital expenses by program

	Income / revenue	Expenses	Surplus / (Deficit)	Grants included in income / revenue	Total assets
2025	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
CEO	138,001	9,953	128,048	11,605	79,591
City Liveability	14,313	19,681	(5,368)	974	51,946
Connected Communities	22,867	51,497	(28,630)	16,406	662,046
Customer and Performance	259	28,749	(28,490)	-	59,749
Infrastructure	41,621	94,942	(53,321)	5,380	1,807,849
	217,061	204,822	12,239	34,365	2,661,181

	Income / revenue	Expenses	Surplus / (Deficit)	Grants included in income / revenue	Total assets
2024	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
CEO	120,909	8,664	112,245	324	66,099
City Liveability	14,296	19,809	(5,513)	1,522	49,709
Connected Communities	28,263	54,823	(26,560)	20,342	647,485
Customer and Performance	168	26,317	(26,149)	60	57,712
Infrastructure	37,207	83,980	(46,773)	3,616	1,565,297
	200,843	193,593	7,250	25,864	2,386,302

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
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Note 3 Funding for the delivery of our services

3.1 Rates and charges

Council uses Capital Improved Value (CIV) as the basis of valuation of all properties within the municipal district. The CIV takes into account the total value of a property including all land, buildings and other improvements but excluding fixtures and fittings.

The valuation base used to calculate general rates for 2024-25 was \$66,753 million (2023-24: \$62,033 million). The 2024-25 rate in the CIV dollar was \$0.0014650 (2023-24: \$0.0015229) for the residential rate.

General rates	120,868	116,463
Residential garbage charge	26,090	26,272
Service rates and charges	2,008	2,314
Supplementary rates and rate adjustments	709	722
Cultural and recreational	54	56
Interest on rates and charges	1,286	696
Total rates and charges	151,015	146,523

The date of the latest general revaluation of land for rating purposes within the municipal district was 1 January 2024 and the valuation was first applied in the rating year commencing 1 July 2024.

Annual rates and charges are recognised as income when Council issues annual rates notices. Supplementary rates are recognised when a valuation and reassessment is completed and a supplementary rates notice issued.

3.2 Statutory fees and fines

Permits	1,629	1,680
Infringements and costs	1,183	768
Court recoveries	1,031	673
Town planning fees	809	347
Land information certificates	143	136
Other statutory fees and fines	1	1
Total statutory fees and fines	4,796	3,605

Statutory fees and fines (including parking fees and fines) are recognised as income when the service has been provided, the payment is received, or when the penalty has been applied, whichever first occurs.

3.3 User fees

Waste management services	3,417	2,952
Registration and other permits	2,641	2,475
Leisure centre and recreation	2,532	1,459
Child care/children's programs	2,239	1,854
Infrastructure services	793	441
Building services	586	581
Aged and health services	512	517
Other fees and charges	867	452
Total user fees	13,587	10,731

User fees are recognised as revenue at a point in time, or over time, when (or as) the performance obligation is satisfied. Recognition is based on the underlying contractual terms. All of Knox City Council's user fees are recognised at a point in time.

**Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025**

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
3. 4 Funding from other levels of government		
Grants were received in respect of the following:		
Summary of grants		
Commonwealth funded grants	22,102	10,041
State funded grants	12,263	15,823
Total grants received	34,365	25,864
(a) Operating grants		
<i>Recurrent - Commonwealth Government</i>		
Financial Assistance Grants	11,605	325
Family and children - child care	4,293	3,662
General home care	1,213	1,155
<i>Recurrent - State Government</i>		
Family and children - kindergarten	6,287	6,001
Family and children - maternal and child health	1,732	1,810
School crossing supervisors	815	841
Family and children - child care	760	741
Family and children - youth services	263	245
Community health	174	120
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	23	6
Community safety	20	352
Other	50	49
General home care	-	798
Total recurrent operating grants	27,235	16,105
<i>Non-recurrent - Commonwealth Government</i>		
Community health	-	4
<i>Non-recurrent - State Government</i>		
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	54	569
Community health	20	21
Family and children - kindergarten	1	2,732
Other	15	278
Environmental planning	-	79
Family and children - child care	-	56
Total non-recurrent operating grants	90	3,739
Total operating grants	27,325	19,844

**Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025**

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
3. 4 Funding from other levels of government (cont'd)		
(b) Capital grants		
<i>Recurrent - Commonwealth Government</i>		
Financial Assistance Grants - local roads	2,274	65
Roads to recovery	953	733
Total recurrent capital grants	3,227	798
<i>Non-recurrent - Commonwealth Government</i>		
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	1,764	3,540
Drainage	-	322
Roads to recovery	-	183
Bridges	-	100
Footpaths and cycleways	-	(48)
<i>Non-recurrent - State Government</i>		
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	1,317	834
Drainage	417	5
Footpaths and cycleways	315	32
Roads	-	236
Buildings	-	18
Total non-recurrent capital grants	3,813	5,222
Total capital grants	7,040	6,020

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
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3.4 Funding from other levels of government (cont'd)

(c) Recognition of grant income

Before recognising funding from government grants as revenue the Council assesses whether there is a contract that is enforceable and has sufficiently specific performance obligations in accordance with *AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers*. When both these conditions are satisfied, the Council:

- identifies each performance obligation relating to revenue under the contract/agreement
- determines the transaction price
- recognises a contract liability for its obligations under the agreement
- recognises revenue as it satisfies its performance obligations, at the point in time or over time when services are rendered.

Where the contract is not enforceable and/or does not have sufficiently specific performance obligations, the Council applies *AASB 1058 Income for Not-for-Profit Entities*.

Grant revenue with sufficiently specific performance obligations is recognised over time as the performance obligations specified in the underlying agreement are met. Where performance obligations are not sufficiently specific, grants are recognised on the earlier of receipt or when an unconditional right to receipt has been established. Grants relating to capital projects are generally recognised progressively as the capital project is completed. The following table provides a summary of the accounting framework under which grants are recognised.

Income recognised under AASB 1058 Income for Not-for-Profit Entities

General purpose	11,605	325
Specific purpose grants to acquire non-financial assets	3,226	798
Other specific purpose grants	5,108	4,503

Revenue recognised under AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers

Specific purpose grants	14,426	20,238
	34,365	25,864

(d) Unspent grants received on condition that they be spent in a specific manner

Operating

Balance at start of year	674	1,500
Received during the financial year and remained unspent at balance date	656	521
Received in prior years and spent during the financial year	(542)	(1,347)

Balance at year end

Capital

Balance at start of year	1,374	1,194
Received during the financial year and remained unspent at balance date	4,229	1,333
Received in prior years and spent during the financial year	(1,352)	(1,153)

Balance at year end

	4,251	1,374
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Unspent grants are determined and disclosed on a cash basis.

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
	\$'000	\$'000
3.5 Contributions		
Monetary	6,600	9,714
Non-monetary	1,899	-
Total contributions	8,499	9,714

Contributions of non-monetary assets were received in relation to the following asset classes:

Land	1,555	-
Drainage	237	-
Roads	78	-
Footpaths and cycleways	21	-
Off street car parks	8	-
Total non-monetary contributions	1,899	-

Monetary and non-monetary contributions are recognised as income at their fair value when Council obtains control over the contributed asset.

3.6 Net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment

Proceeds of sale	5,102	5,188
Written down value of assets disposed	(13,922)	(4,738)
Total net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	(8,820)	450

The profit or loss on sale of an asset is determined when control of the asset has passed to the buyer.

3.7 Other income

Interest	2,533	1,851
Reimbursements	1,064	866
Rent	748	593
Rebates	1	144
Other	214	210
Total other income	4,560	3,664

Interest is recognised as it is earned.

Other income is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable and is recognised when Council gains control over the right to receive the income.

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
	\$'000	\$'000
Note 4 The cost of delivering services		
4.1 (a) Employee costs		
Wages and salaries	59,558	58,583
Annual leave and long service leave	7,518	7,784
Superannuation	7,831	7,644
Agency staff	2,920	4,130
WorkCover	2,509	3,531
Fringe benefits tax	328	276
Total employee costs	80,664	81,948
(b) Superannuation		
Council made contributions to the following funds:		
Defined benefit fund		
Employer contributions to Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (Vision Super)	235	254
	235	254
Employer contributions payable at reporting date	-	-
Accumulation funds		
Employer contributions to Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (Vision Super)	3,340	3,305
Employer contributions - other funds	3,650	3,460
	6,990	6,765
Employer contributions payable at reporting date	559	578
Contributions made exclude amounts accrued at balance date. Refer to Note 9.3 for further information relating to Council's superannuation obligations.		

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
	\$'000	\$'000
4.2 Materials and services		
Contract payments		
Waste Management	26,405	25,103
Operations - Maintenance	9,075	9,041
Operating Projects Expenditure	8,389	8,987
Active Ageing & Disability	1,307	1,319
Corporate Services	1,301	597
Arts & Cultural Services	589	744
Community Laws	483	456
Planning & Development	478	674
People & Culture	372	494
Other	1,386	686
Total Contract Payments	49,785	48,101
Administration costs	7,004	6,809
Utilities	4,332	3,567
Consumable materials and equipment	3,422	4,085
Information technology	3,362	3,214
Building maintenance	2,591	3,058
Insurance	2,476	2,230
Consultants	1,708	1,901
General maintenance	900	848
Finance and legal costs	834	1,108
Total materials and services	76,414	74,921

Expenses are recognised as they are incurred and reported in the financial year to which they relate.

4.3 Depreciation

Infrastructure	18,441	17,158
Property	5,746	6,119
Plant and equipment	1,472	1,507
Total depreciation	25,659	24,784

Refer to note 5.2(b), 5.8 and 6.2 for a more detailed breakdown of depreciation and amortisation charges and accounting policy.

4.4 Depreciation - right of use assets

Property	617	316
Computers and telecommunications	555	473
Plant and equipment	33	33
Total depreciation - right of use assets	1,205	822

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
	\$'000	\$'000
4.5 Allowance for impairment losses		
Parking and animal infringement debtors	485	303
Other debtors	23	2
Total Allowance for impairment losses	508	305
Movement in allowance for impairment losses in respect of debtors		
Balance at the beginning of the year	15	37
New allowances recognised during the year	22	5
Amounts already allowed for and written off as uncollectible	(16)	(21)
Amounts allowed for but recovered during the year	-	(6)
Balance at the end of the year	21	15
An allowance for impairment losses in respect of debtors is recognised based on an expected credit loss model. This model considers both historic and forward looking information in determining the level of impairment.		
4.6 Borrowing costs		
Interest - borrowings	3,767	3,012
Total borrowing costs	3,767	3,012
Borrowing costs are recognised as an expense in the period in which they are incurred.		
4.7 Contributions and donations		
Contribution to Your Library Limited	4,510	4,312
Community support payments	1,463	1,637
Total contributions and donations	5,973	5,949
4.8 Other expenses		
Councillors allowances	470	469
Operating lease rentals	11	135
Auditor's remuneration - internal audit	69	121
Auditor's remuneration - VAGO - audit of the financial statements, performance statement and grant acquittals	96	92
Total other expenses	646	817

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Note 5 Investing in and financing our operations		

5.1 Financial assets

(a) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash on hand	4	4
Cash at bank	34,319	16,612
Term deposits	20,000	20,000
Total cash and cash equivalents	54,323	36,616

(b) Other financial assets

Current

Term deposits	2,500	10,000
Total current other financial assets	2,500	10,000

Total other financial assets

	2,500	10,000
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Total cash and cash equivalents and other financial assets

	56,823	46,616
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Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits at call, and other highly liquid investments with original maturities of 90 days or less, net of outstanding bank overdrafts.

Term deposits are held to maturity and measured at original cost.

Other financial assets include term deposits. Those with original maturity dates of three to 12 months are classified as current, whilst term deposits with maturity dates greater than 12 months are classified as non-current.

(c) Trade and other receivables

Current

Statutory receivables

Rates debtors	19,848	16,989
Special rate assessment	52	52
Parking and animal infringement debtors	4,010	3,253
Allowance for expected credit loss - infringements	(2,960)	(2,475)
Net GST receivable	1,858	1,260

Non statutory receivables

Other debtors	1,505	1,714
Allowance for expected credit loss - other debtors	(21)	(15)
Total current trade and other receivables	24,292	20,778

Short term receivables are carried at invoice amount. An allowance for expected credit losses is recognised based on past experience and other objective evidence of expected losses. Long term receivables are carried at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method.

**Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025**

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
5. 1 Financial assets (cont'd)		
(d) Ageing of receivables		
The ageing of the Council's trade and other receivables (excluding statutory receivables) that are not impaired was:		
Current (not yet due)	566	797
Past due by up to 30 days	278	402
Past due between 31 and 180 days	179	103
Past due between 181 and 365 days	170	68
Past due by more than 1 year	312	344
Total trade and other receivables	1,505	1,714

(e) Ageing of individually impaired receivables

At balance date, other debtors representing financial assets with a nominal value of \$nil (2024: \$nil) were impaired. The amount of the allowance raised against these debtors was \$nil (2024: \$nil). They individually have been impaired as a result of their doubtful collection. Many of the long outstanding past due amounts have been lodged with the Council's debt collectors or are on payment arrangements.

(f) Contract assets

Accrued income	1,090	2,342
Total contract assets	1,090	2,342

Contract assets are recognised when Council has transferred goods or services to the customer but where Council is yet to establish an unconditional right to consideration.

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
5.2 Non-financial assets		
(a) Other assets		
Prepayments	1,167	1,340
Total other assets	1,167	1,340
(b) Intangible assets		
Software	1,879	2,419
Total intangible assets	1,879	2,419
Gross carrying amount		
Balance at 1 July 2024	8,357	7,777
Additions	404	580
Disposals	(366)	-
Balance at 30 June 2025	8,395	8,357
Accumulated amortisation and impairment		
Balance at 1 July 2024	5,938	5,035
Amortisation expense	878	903
Amortisation expense for disposals	(300)	-
Balance at 30 June 2025	6,516	5,938
Net book value at 30 June 2024	2,419	2,742
Net book value at 30 June 2025	1,879	2,419

Intangible assets with finite lives are amortised as an expense on a systematic basis over the asset's useful life. Amortisation is generally calculated on a straight line basis, at a rate that allocates the asset value, less any estimated residual value over its estimated useful life. Estimates of the remaining useful lives and amortisation method are reviewed at least annually, and adjustments made where appropriate.

**Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025**

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
5.3 Payables, trust funds and deposits and contract liabilities		
(a) Trade and other payables		
Current		
Non-statutory payables		
Trade payables	13,068	6,003
Accrued expenses	4,846	5,025
Prepaid income	1,960	1,814
Total current trade and other payables	19,874	12,842
Prepaid income includes \$1.884 million for rates income that has been paid in advance.		
(b) Trust funds and deposits		
Current		
Refundable deposits	1,831	1,722
Fire services levy	971	702
Retention amounts	105	100
Other refundable deposits	42	36
Total current trust funds and deposits	2,949	2,560
(c) Contract liabilities		
Contract liabilities		
Current		
Grants received in advance - operating	788	674
Grants received in advance - capital	4,251	1,374
Total contract liabilities	5,039	2,048

Trust funds and deposits

Amounts received as deposits and retention amounts controlled by Council are recognised as trust funds until they are returned, transferred in accordance with the purpose of the receipt, or forfeited. Trust funds that are forfeited, resulting in Council gaining control of the funds, are to be recognised as revenue at the time of forfeit.

Contract liabilities

Contract liabilities reflect consideration received in advance from customers in respect of operating and capital grants. Contract liabilities are derecognised and recorded as revenue when promised goods and services are transferred to the customer. Refer to Note 3.

Purpose and nature of items

Refundable deposits - Deposits are taken by Council as a form of surety in a number of circumstances, including in relation to building works, tender deposits, contract deposits and the use of civic facilities.

Fire service levy - Council is the collection agent for fire services levy on behalf of the State Government. Council remits amounts received on a four instalment basis. Amounts disclosed here will be remitted to the State Government in line with that process.

Retention amounts - Council has a contractual right to retain certain amounts until a contractor has met certain requirements or a related warrant or defect period has elapsed. Subject to the satisfactory completion of the contractual obligations, or the lapsing of time, these amounts will be paid to the relevant contractor in line with Council's contractual obligations.

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
5.4 Interest-bearing liabilities		
Current		
Treasury Corporation of Victoria borrowings - secured	7,022	5,907
Other borrowings - secured	2,423	2,358
Total current interest-bearing liabilities	9,445	8,265
Non-current		
Treasury Corporation of Victoria borrowings - secured	59,752	57,374
Other borrowings - secured	14,608	17,032
Total non-current interest-bearing liabilities	74,360	74,406
Total	83,805	82,671

Borrowings are secured by the general rates revenue of Council.

(a) The maturity profile for Council's borrowings is:

Not later than one year	9,445	8,265
Later than one year and not later than five years	41,996	34,045
Later than five years	32,364	40,361
	83,805	82,671

Borrowings are initially measured at fair value, being the cost of the interest bearing liabilities, net of transaction costs. The measurement basis subsequent to initial recognition depends on whether the Council has categorised its interest-bearing liabilities as either financial liabilities designated at fair value through the profit and loss, or financial liabilities at amortised cost. Any difference between the initial recognised amount and the redemption value is recognised in net result over the period of the borrowing using the effective interest method.

The classification depends on the nature and purpose of the interest bearing liabilities. The Council determines the classification of its interest bearing liabilities based on contractual repayment terms at every balance date.

In classifying borrowings as current or non-current Council considers whether at balance date it has the right to defer settlement of the liability for at least twelve months after the reporting period. Council's loan arrangements include covenants based on Council's financial performance and position at the end of the reporting period. These covenants are assessed for compliance after the reporting period based on specified financial ratios.

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

5.5 Provisions

	Employee	Landfill	Total
	\$'000s	rehabilitation	
	\$'000s	\$'000s	\$'000s
2025			
Balance at beginning of the financial year	19,174	2,216	21,390
Additional provisions	6,559	355	6,914
Amounts used	(7,996)	(340)	(8,336)
Change in the discounted amount arising because of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate	280	50	330
Balance at the end of the financial year	18,017	2,281	20,298
<i>Provisions - current</i>	16,971	365	17,336
<i>Provisions - non-current</i>	1,046	1,916	2,962
2024			
Balance at beginning of the financial year	18,979	2,629	21,608
Additional provisions	7,087	(218)	6,869
Amounts used	(7,040)	(214)	(7,254)
Change in the discounted amount arising because of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate	148	19	167
Balance at the end of the financial year	19,174	2,216	21,390
<i>Provisions - current</i>	18,109	416	18,525
<i>Provisions - non-current</i>	1,065	1,800	2,865

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
5.5 Provisions (cont'd)		
(a) Employee provisions		
Current provisions expected to be wholly settled within 12 months		
Annual leave	2,921	2,840
Long service leave	1,099	951
Gratuities	58	63
	4,078	3,854
Current provisions expected to be wholly settled after 12 months		
Annual leave	3,665	3,787
Long service leave	8,858	9,999
Gratuities	370	469
	12,893	14,255
Total current employee provisions	16,971	18,109
Non-current		
Long service leave	1,046	1,065
Total non-current employee provisions	1,046	1,065
Aggregate carrying amount of employee provisions:		
Current	16,971	18,109
Non-current	1,046	1,065
Total aggregate carrying amount of employee provisions	18,017	19,174

The calculation of employee costs and benefits includes all relevant on-costs and are calculated as follows at reporting date.

Annual leave

A liability for annual leave is recognised in the provision for employee benefits as a current liability because the Council does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability. Liabilities for annual leave are measured at:

- nominal value if the Council expects to wholly settle the liability within 12 months
- present value if the Council does not expect to wholly settle within 12 months.

Liabilities that are not expected to be wholly settled within 12 months of the reporting date are recognised in the provision for employee benefits as current liabilities, measured at the present value of the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled using the remuneration rate expected to apply at the time of settlement.

Long service leave

Liability for long service leave (LSL) is recognised in the provision for employee benefits. Unconditional LSL is disclosed as a current liability as the Council does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement. Unconditional LSL is measured at nominal value if expected to be settled within 12 months or at present value if not expected to be settled within 12 months. Conditional LSL that has been accrued, where an employee is yet to reach a qualifying term of employment, is disclosed as a non-current liability and measured at present value.

Knox City Council Notes to the Financial Report For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

5.5 Provisions (cont'd)

Gratuity retirement allowance

A gratuity retirement allowance exists for employees who commenced prior to 3 May 1996, with new employees who commenced after that date not being eligible, and is recognised in the provision for employee benefits as a current liability. Liabilities expected to be wholly settled within 12 months of the reporting date are measured at their nominal values. Liabilities that are not expected to be wholly settled within 12 months of the reporting date are measured at the present value of the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled using the remuneration rate expected to apply at the time of settlement.

	2025	2024
Key Assumptions - AL:		
• Weighted average discount rate	1.82%	2.43%
• Weighted average index rate	2.50%	2.50%
• Average settlement period (years)	2	2
Key Assumptions - LSL:		
• Weighted average discount rate - current	3.43%	3.85%
• Weighted average discount rate - non-current	3.33%	4.11%
• Weighted average index rate - current	2.50%	2.50%
• Weighted average index rate - non-current	2.50%	2.50%
• Average settlement period (years)	16	18
Key Assumptions - Gratuity:		
• Weighted average discount rate	2.83%	3.62%
• Weighted average index rate	2.50%	2.50%
• Average settlement period (years)	29	27
	2025	2024
	\$'000	\$'000
(b) Landfill rehabilitation		
Current		
Cathies Lane landfill site	225	281
Llewellyn Reserve landfill site	140	135
	365	416
Non-current		
Cathies Lane landfill site	1,344	1,309
Llewellyn Reserve landfill site	572	491
Total non-current provisions	1,916	1,800
Total aggregate carrying amount of landfill rehabilitation provisions	2,281	2,216

Council owns two former landfill sites - Cathies Lane and Llewellyn Reserve. Under the terms of Post Closure Pollution Abatement Notices issued by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA), Council is required to monitor, progressively rehabilitate and conduct rectification works. The provision for landfill rehabilitation has been calculated based on the present value of the expected cost of works to be undertaken including site aftercare and monitoring costs. The expected cost of works has been estimated based on the current understanding of the work required to progressively rehabilitate the sites to a suitable standard. Accordingly, the estimation of the provision required is dependent on the accuracy of the forecast timing of the work, work required and related costs.

Council reviews the landfill restoration provision on an annual basis, including the key assumptions listed below.

Knox City Council Notes to the Financial Report For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

5.5 Provisions (cont'd)

	2025	2024
Key assumptions - Cathies Lane landfill site:		
• Weighted average discount rate	4.55%	5.20%
• Inflation rate	2.56%	2.61%
• Settlement period (years)	9	10
• Estimated cost to rehabilitate	\$1.736m	\$1.814m
Key assumptions - Llewellyn Reserve landfill site:		
• Weighted average discount rate	4.54%	5.21%
• Inflation rate	2.56%	2.61%
• Settlement period (years)	9	10
• Estimated cost to rehabilitate	\$0.722m	\$0.711m

Cathies Lane landfill site

Council operated the Cathies Lane landfill site, Wantirna South from 1986 to 2004, under a licence issued by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA). The site is closed as a landfill but a portion of the site is still being used as a resource recovery centre (transfer station) to receive, process and transport waste to other sites for refuse and/or disposal. In 2015-16 the EPA issued a Post Closure Pollution Abatement notice and Council has surrendered the landfill licence.

In the financial report for June 2025, Council has an amount of \$1.568 million as a provision for the restoration of the Cathies Lane landfill site and includes an ongoing commitment of approximately \$0.188 million per annum for site aftercare to meet EPA obligations where restoration works have been completed. This is based on the assessment undertaken in 2015 and a reassessment of the provision at balance date in which the provision was measured at the net present value of the future rehabilitation costs including aftercare and site monitoring costs. Included in the aftercare is the cost to provide a bank guarantee to meet the Financial Assurance requirements imposed by the EPA on Council for thirty years post closure of this site.

Llewellyn Reserve landfill site

Council's landfill site at Llewellyn Reserve was closed in 1985. In 2015-16 the EPA issued a Post Closure Pollution Abatement notice.

In the financial report for June 2025, Council has an amount of \$0.712 million as a provision for the restoration of the Llewellyn Reserve landfill site and includes an ongoing commitment of approximately \$0.080 million per annum to cover sampling, testing and reporting requirements as required by the EPA. This is based on an assessment undertaken in 2015 and a reassessment of the provision at balance date in which the provision was measured at the net present value of the future rehabilitation costs including aftercare and site monitoring costs.

5.6 Financing arrangements

The Council has the following funding arrangements in place as at 30 June 2025.

	2025	2024
	\$'000	\$'000
Bank overdraft	1,500	1,500
Credit card facilities	200	200
Treasury Corporation of Victoria facilities	66,774	63,281
Other facilities	17,031	19,390
Total facilities	85,505	84,371
Used facilities	83,840	82,698
Unused facilities	1,665	1,673

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

5.7 Commitments

The Council has entered into the following commitments. Commitments are not recognised in the Balance Sheet. Commitments are disclosed at their nominal value and presented inclusive of the GST payable.

(a) Commitments for expenditure

2025	Not later than 1 year	Later than 1 year and not later than 2 years	Later than 2 years and not later than 5 years	Later than 5 years	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Operating					
Garbage collection and recycling	1,219	-	-	-	1,219
Library services	4,564	4,678	9,708	-	18,950
Infrastructure management	5,715	2,502	1,260	-	9,477
Consultancies	1,165	438	154	-	1,757
Cleaning contracts for council building	-	-	-	-	-
Total	12,663	7,618	11,122	-	31,403
Capital					
Buildings	7,384	54	-	-	7,438
Plant and equipment	959	-	-	-	959
Other infrastructure	2,105	-	-	-	2,105
Total	10,448	54	-	-	10,502
2024	Not later than 1 year	Later than 1 year and not later than 2 years	Later than 2 years and not later than 5 years	Later than 5 years	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Operating					
Garbage collection and recycling	1,208	1,213	-	-	2,421
Library services	4,431	4,541	9,426	-	18,398
Infrastructure management	4,244	2,637	1,519	-	8,400
Consultancies	1,118	615	524	-	2,257
Cleaning contracts for council building	130	-	-	-	130
Total	11,131	9,006	11,469	-	31,606
Capital					
Buildings	348	14	3	-	365
Plant and equipment	-	-	-	-	-
Other infrastructure	4,964	174	220	-	5,358
Total	5,312	188	223	-	5,723

**Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025**

5.7 Commitments (cont'd)**(b) Operating lease receivables**

Council has a number of leases with external entities where they pay for the use of Council land and buildings. These properties held under operating leases have remaining non-cancellable lease terms of between 1 and 31 years. A number of these leases include a CPI based revision of the rental charge annually.

Future undiscounted minimum rentals receivable under non-cancellable operating leases are as follows:

	2025	2024
	\$'000	\$'000
Not later than one year	632	658
Later than one year and not later than five years	1,627	1,902
Later than five years	6,422	9,069
	<u>8,681</u>	<u>11,629</u>

5.8 Leases

At inception of a contract, Council assesses whether a contract is, or contains, a lease. A contract is, or contains, a lease if the contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset for a period of time in exchange for consideration. To identify whether a contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset, it is necessary to assess whether:

- The contract involves the use of an identified asset;
- Council has the right to obtain substantially all of the economic benefits from use of the asset throughout the period of use; and
- Council has the right to direct the use of the asset.

This policy is applied to contracts entered into, or changed, on or after 1 July 2019.

As a lessee, Council recognises a right-of-use asset and a lease liability at the lease commencement date. The right-of-use asset is initially measured at cost which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability adjusted for:

- any lease payments made at or before the commencement date less any lease incentives received; plus
- any initial direct costs incurred; and
- an estimate of costs to dismantle and remove the underlying asset or to restore the underlying asset or the site on which it is located.

The right-of-use asset is subsequently depreciated using the straight-line method from the commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right-of-use asset or the end of the lease term. The estimated useful lives of right-of-use assets are determined on the same basis as those of property, plant and equipment. In addition, the right-of-use asset is periodically reduced by impairment losses, if any, and adjusted for certain measurements of the lease liability.

The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments that are not paid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease or, if that rate cannot be readily determined, an appropriate incremental borrowing rate. Generally, Council uses an appropriate incremental borrowing rate as the discount rate.

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

5.8 Leases (cont'd)

Lease payments included in the measurement of the lease liability comprise the following:

- Fixed payments
- Variable lease payments that depend on an index or a rate, initially measured using the index or rate as at the commencement date;
- Amounts expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee; and
- The exercise price under a purchase option that Council is reasonably certain to exercise, lease payments in an optional renewal period if Council is reasonably certain to exercise an extension option, and penalties for early termination of a lease unless Council is reasonably certain not to terminate early.

When the lease liability is remeasured in this way, a corresponding adjustment is made to the carrying amount of the right-of-use asset, or is recorded in profit or loss if the carrying amount of the right-of-use asset has been reduced to zero.

Under AASB 16 Leases, Council as a not-for-profit entity has elected not to measure right-of-use assets at initial recognition at fair value in respect of leases that have significantly below-market terms.

Right-of-use assets	Property	Computers and Telecommuni- cations	Plant and Equipment	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Balance at 1 July 2024	5,173	1,017	33	6,223
Additions	95	192	-	287
Depreciation charge	(617)	(555)	(33)	(1,205)
Balance at 30 June 2025	4,651	654	-	5,305
Balance at 1 July 2023	342	729	33	1,104
Additions	5,147	761	33	5,941
Depreciation charge	(316)	(473)	(33)	(822)
Balance at 30 June 2024	5,173	1,017	33	6,223
Lease liabilities			2025	2024
Maturity analysis - contractual undiscounted cash flows			\$'000	\$'000
Less than one year			1,053	1,316
One to five years			2,520	2,800
More than five years			3,317	3,801
Total undiscounted lease liabilities as at 30 June			6,890	7,917
Lease liabilities included in Balance Sheet at 30 June:				
Current			799	1,032
Non-current			4,640	5,215
Total lease liabilities			5,439	6,247

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

5.8 Leases (cont'd)**Short-term and low value leases**

Council has elected not to recognise right-of-use assets and lease liabilities for short-term leases of machinery that have a lease term of 12 months or less and leases of low-value assets (individual assets worth less than existing capitalisation thresholds for a like asset up to a maximum of AUD\$10,000), including IT equipment. Council recognises the lease payments associated with these leases as an expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

	2025	2024
	\$'000	\$'000
Expenses relating to:		
Leases of low value assets	11	21
Short-term leases	-	114
Total	11	135

Non-cancellable lease commitments - short-term and low-value leases

Commitments for minimum lease payments for short-term and low-value leases are payable as follows:

Payable:

Within one year	3	11
Later than one year but not later than five years	-	3
Total lease commitments	3	14

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Note 6 Assets we manage		
6.1 Non-current assets classified as held for sale		
Buildings	-	959
Land at fair value	582	3,707
Total non-current assets classified as held for sale	582	4,666

Non-current assets classified as held for sale (including disposal groups) are measured at the lower of their carrying amount and fair value less costs of disposal, and are not subject to depreciation. Non-current assets are treated as current and classified as held for sale if their carrying amount will be recovered through a sale transaction rather than through continuing use. This condition is regarded as met only when the sale is highly probable and the asset's sale (or disposal group sale) is expected to be completed within 12 months from the date of classification.

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

6.2 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment

Summary of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment

	Carrying amount at fair value 30 June 2024	Carrying amount at cost 30 June 2024	Additions	Contributions	Revaluation	Depreciation	Disposal	Impairment	Transfers	Write offs	Carrying amount at fair value 30 June 2025	Carrying amount at cost 30 June 2025	Total carrying amount 30 June 2025
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000		\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Land	1,105,940	7,216	-	1,555	-	-	(47)	-	-	-	1,105,893	8,771	1,114,664
Buildings	209,573	5,266	2,738	-	26,819	(5,746)	(6,363)	-	2,303	-	229,680	4,910	234,590
Plant and equipment	-	9,019	2,261	-	-	(1,472)	(680)	-	-	-	-	9,128	9,128
Infrastructure	841,060	97,780	16,606	344	226,175	(18,441)	(2,682)	-	15,550	-	1,065,086	111,306	1,176,392
Work in progress	-	23,304	27,877	-	-	-	-	-	(17,853)	(1,057)	-	32,271	32,271
	2,156,573	142,585	49,482	1,899	252,994	(25,659)	(9,772)	-	-	(1,057)	2,400,659	166,386	2,567,045

Summary of work in progress

	Opening work in progress	Additions	Transfers	Write offs	Closing work in progress
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Property	2,897	7,874	(2,164)	(234)	8,373
Plant and equipment	755	660	(357)	(398)	660
Infrastructure	19,652	19,343	(15,332)	(425)	23,238
	23,304	27,877	(17,853)	(1,057)	32,271

The transfer from plant and equipment work in progress includes \$0.357 million that is included in the opening work in progress for plant and equipment, but was capitalised as infrastructure.

The transfer from infrastructure work in progress includes \$0.139 million that is included in the opening work in progress for property, but was capitalised as property.

The write offs from plant and equipment work in progress includes \$0.093 million that is included in the opening work in progress for infrastructure, but has been capitalised as an intangible asset.

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

6.2 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment (cont'd)

(a) Property

	Land - specialised	Land - non specialised	Land improvements	Total land	Buildings - specialised	Total buildings	Work in progress	Total property
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
At fair value 1 July 2024	928,840	177,100	-	1,105,940	380,484	380,484	-	1,486,424
At cost 1 July 2024	4,062	-	3,154	7,216	5,370	5,370	2,897	15,483
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2024	-	-	-	-	(171,015)	(171,015)	-	(171,015)
	932,902	177,100	3,154	1,113,156	214,839	214,839	2,897	1,330,892
Movements								
Additions at cost	-	-	-	-	2,738	2,738	7,874	10,612
Contributions	40	1,515	-	1,555	-	-	-	1,555
Revaluation	-	-	-	-	51,776	51,776	-	51,776
Disposal at fair value	(47)	-	-	(47)	(17,442)	(17,442)	-	(17,489)
Disposal at cost	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers	-	-	-	-	2,303	2,303	(2,164)	139
Write offs	-	-	-	-	-	-	(234)	(234)
	(7)	1,515	-	1,508	39,375	39,375	5,476	46,359
Movements in accumulated depreciation								
Depreciation and amortisation	-	-	-	-	(5,746)	(5,746)	-	(5,746)
Accumulated depreciation of disposals	-	-	-	-	11,079	11,079	-	11,079
Revaluation	-	-	-	-	(24,957)	(24,957)	-	(24,957)
	-	-	-	-	(19,624)	(19,624)	-	(19,624)
At fair value 30 June 2025	928,793	177,100	-	1,105,893	420,188	420,188	-	1,526,081
At cost 30 June 2025	4,102	1,515	3,154	8,771	5,042	5,042	8,373	22,186
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2025	-	-	-	-	(190,640)	(190,640)	-	(190,640)
Carrying amount	932,895	178,615	3,154	1,114,664	234,590	234,590	8,373	1,357,627

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

6.2 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment (cont'd)

(b) Plant and equipment

	Plant, machinery and equipment	Fixtures, fittings and furniture	Computers and tele- communications	Artworks	Work in progress	Total plant and equipment
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
At cost 1 July 2024	14,535	2,332	4,735	1,369	755	23,726
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2024	(7,512)	(2,236)	(4,204)	-	-	(13,952)
	7,023	96	531	1,369	755	9,774
Movements						
Additions	2,225	36	-	-	660	2,921
Disposal	(1,606)	(333)	(2,918)	-	-	(4,857)
Transfers	-	-	-	-	(357)	(357)
Write offs	-	-	-	-	(398)	(398)
	619	(297)	(2,918)	-	(95)	(2,691)
Movements in accumulated depreciation						
Depreciation and amortisation	(1,302)	(34)	(136)	-	-	(1,472)
Accumulated depreciation of disposals	1,022	333	2,822	-	-	4,177
	(280)	299	2,686	-	-	2,705
At cost 30 June 2025	15,155	2,035	1,817	1,369	660	21,036
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2025	(7,793)	(1,937)	(1,518)	-	-	(11,248)
Carrying amount	7,362	98	299	1,369	660	9,788

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

6.2 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment (cont'd)

(c) Infrastructure

	Roads	Bridges	Footpaths and cycleways	Drainage	Recreational, leisure and community facilities	Off street car parks	Other infrastructure	Work in progress	Total infrastructure
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
At fair value 1 July 2024	874,905	18,040	163,229	288,196	-	28,486	-	-	1,372,856
At cost 1 July 2024	-	2,591	10,387	4,017	103,406	-	6	19,652	140,059
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2024	(277,363)	(4,720)	(87,952)	(155,606)	(22,455)	(6,321)	(6)	-	(554,423)
	597,542	15,911	85,664	136,607	80,951	22,165	-	19,652	958,492
Movements									
Additions at cost	3,399	47	3,094	2,685	5,406	1,975	-	19,343	35,949
Contributions	78	-	21	237	-	8	-	-	344
Revaluation	241,609	-	102,273	98,560	-	23,237	-	-	465,679
Disposal at fair value	(1,810)	-	(1,272)	-	(4,159)	(131)	-	-	(7,372)
Disposal at cost	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers	4,227	-	756	1,920	8,082	565	-	(15,332)	218
Write offs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(425)	(425)
	247,503	47	104,872	103,402	9,329	25,654	-	3,586	494,393
Movements in accumulated depreciation									
Depreciation and amortisation	(8,392)	(213)	(2,979)	(3,672)	(2,619)	(566)	-	-	(18,441)
Accumulated depreciation of disposals	1,412	-	1,004	-	2,198	76	-	-	4,690
Revaluation	(120,346)	-	(58,651)	(54,530)	-	(5,977)	-	-	(239,504)
	(127,326)	(213)	(60,626)	(58,202)	(421)	(6,467)	-	-	(253,255)
At fair value 30 June 2025	1,114,704	18,040	278,489	386,756	-	51,593	-	-	1,849,582
At cost 30 June 2025	7,704	2,639	-	8,859	112,735	2,547	6	23,238	157,728
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2025	(404,689)	(4,934)	(148,579)	(213,808)	(22,876)	(12,788)	(6)	-	(807,680)
Carrying amount	717,719	15,745	129,910	181,807	89,859	41,352	-	23,238	1,199,630

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

6.2 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment (cont'd)

Acquisition

The purchase method of accounting is used for all acquisitions of assets, being the fair value of assets provided as consideration at the date of acquisition plus any incidental costs attributable to the acquisition. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset (or paid to transfer a liability) in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. Refer also to Note 8.4 for further disclosure regarding fair value measurement.

Where assets are constructed by Council, cost includes all materials used in construction, direct labour, borrowing costs incurred during construction, and an appropriate share of directly attributable variable and fixed overheads.

In accordance with Council's policy, the threshold limits have applied when recognising assets within an applicable asset class and unless otherwise stated are consistent with the prior year.

Asset recognition thresholds and depreciation periods	Depreciation Period Years	Threshold Limit \$'000
Land and land improvements		
Land	n/a	10
Land improvements	n/a	10
Land under roads	n/a	10
Buildings		
Buildings	20-200	10
Plant and equipment		
Plant, machinery and equipment	3-10	10
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	3-10	10
Computers and telecommunications	3-10	10
Artworks	n/a	10
Infrastructure		
Roads – surfacing	5-50	5
Roads – kerb and channel	70	5
Roads – substructure	30-185	20
Roads – earthworks	n/a	20
Bridges	30-100	5
Footpaths and cycleways	5-50	5
Drainage	80	5
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	15-60	10
Off street car parks	2-185	10
Other infrastructure	7-30	2
Intangible assets		
Software	5	10

Land under roads

Land under roads acquired after 30 June 2008 is brought to account at cost. Council does not recognise land under roads that it controlled prior to that date.

**Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025**

6.2 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment (cont'd)

Depreciation and amortisation

Buildings, plant and equipment, infrastructure and intangible assets having limited useful lives are systematically depreciated over their useful lives to the Council in a manner which reflects consumption of the service potential embodied in those assets. Estimates of remaining useful lives and residual values are made on a regular basis with major asset classes reassessed annually. Depreciation rates and methods are reviewed annually.

Where assets have separate identifiable components that are subject to regular replacement, these components are assigned distinct useful lives and residual values and a separate depreciation rate is determined for each component.

Land, land improvements, land under roads, roads - earthworks and artworks are not depreciated on the basis that they are assessed as not having a limited useful life.

Straight line depreciation is charged based on the residual useful life as determined each year.

Depreciation periods used are consistent with the prior year unless otherwise stated.

Repairs and maintenance

Where the repair relates to the replacement of a component of an asset and the cost exceeds the capitalisation threshold, the cost is capitalised and depreciated. The carrying value of the replaced asset is expensed.

**Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025**

6.2 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment (cont'd)

Valuation of land and buildings

Valuation of land and buildings were undertaken by Helen Crews AAPI 108813 from Westlink Consulting, a qualified independent valuer. The valuation of land and buildings is at fair value, being market value based on highest and best use permitted by relevant land planning provisions. Where land use is restricted through existing planning provisions the valuation is reduced to reflect this limitation. This adjustment is an unobservable input in the valuation. The adjustment has no impact on the Comprehensive Income Statement.

Specialised land is valued at fair value using site values adjusted for englobo (undeveloped and/or unserviced) characteristics, access rights and private interests of other parties and entitlements of infrastructure assets and services. This adjustment is an unobservable input in the valuation. The adjustment has no impact on the Comprehensive Income Statement.

Any significant movements in the unobservable inputs for land will have a significant impact on the fair value of these assets.

The date and type of the current valuation is detailed in the following table.

Details of the Council's land and buildings and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 30 June 2025 are as follows:

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Date of	Type of
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	valuation	valuation
Land	-	177,100	-	June 2024	Full
Specialised land	-	-	928,793	June 2024	Full
Specialised buildings	-	-	229,680	June 2025	Full
Total	-	177,100	1,158,473		

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

6.2 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment (cont'd)

Valuation of infrastructure

The valuation of footpaths and cycleways has been determined in accordance with a valuation undertaken by Mr Suthan Srimanoharan, B.Sc (Civil Eng), Asset Engineer, Knox City Council.

The date and type of the current valuation is detailed in the following table. An index based valuation was conducted in the current year for roads, drainage, and off street car parks. These index based valuations were based on unit costs calculated after considering both Rawlinsons unit rates and supplier contract rates, together with the requirements of *AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement* which now considers the inclusion of site preparation costs, disruption costs and costs to restore another entity's assets in the underlying valuation.

A full revaluation of bridges and drainage will be conducted in 2025-26 (last full revaluation in 2022-23), and a full revaluation of roads and off street car parks will be conducted in 2026-27 (last full revaluation in 2023-24).

The valuation is at fair value based on current replacement cost less accumulated depreciation as at the date of valuation.

Details of the Council's infrastructure and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 30 June 2025 are as follows:

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Date of	Type of
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	valuation	valuation
Roads	-	-	710,188	June 2025	Index
Bridges	-	-	13,140	June 2023	Full
Footpaths and cycleways	-	-	129,910	June 2025	Full
Drainage	-	-	173,028	June 2025	Index
Off street car parks	-	-	38,821	June 2025	Index
Total	-	-	1,065,087		

**Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025**

6.2 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment (cont'd)

Description of significant unobservable inputs into level 3 valuations

Specialised land is valued using a market based direct comparison technique. Significant unobservable inputs include the extent and impact of restriction of use and the market cost of land per square metre. The extent and impact of restrictions on use varies and results in a reduction to surrounding land values between 0% and 50%. The market value of land varies significantly depending on the location of the land and the current market conditions. Currently land values range between \$8 and \$1,547 per square metre.

Specialised buildings are valued using a current replacement cost technique. Significant unobservable inputs include the current replacement cost and remaining useful lives of buildings. Current replacement costs are calculated on a square metre basis and ranges from \$287 to \$3,793 per square metre. The remaining useful lives of buildings are determined on the basis of the current condition of buildings and vary up to 90 years. Replacement cost is sensitive to changes in market conditions, with any increase or decrease in cost flowing through to the valuation. Useful lives of buildings are sensitive to changes in expectations or requirements that could either shorten or extend the useful lives of buildings.

Infrastructure assets are valued based on the current replacement cost. Significant unobservable inputs include the current replacement cost and remaining useful lives of infrastructure. The remaining useful lives of infrastructure assets are determined on the basis of the current condition of the asset and vary up to 185 years. Replacement cost is sensitive to changes in market conditions, with any increase or decrease in cost flowing through to the valuation. Useful lives of infrastructure are sensitive to changes in use, expectations or requirements that could either shorten or extend the useful lives of infrastructure assets.

	2025	2024
	\$'000	\$'000
Reconciliation of specialised land at fair value		
Parks and reserves	837,228	798,754
Community facilities	34,476	34,476
Civic precinct	45,043	45,043
Transfer station	12,046	12,046
Total specialised land at fair value	928,793	890,319

**Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025**

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
6.3 Investments in associates, joint arrangements and subsidiaries		
(a) Investment in associates		
Investment in associate accounted for by the equity method is:		
Your Library Limited (formerly Eastern Regional Libraries Corporation)	2,986	2,747
Your Library Limited		
Background		
The principal activity of Your Library Limited is the operation of libraries. Council's ownership interest of Your Library Limited as at 30 June 2025 was 36.39% (2024: 36.39%) based on Council's contribution of the net assets to the entity on its commencement on 1 July 2023. Council's proportion of voting power as at 30 June 2025 was 33.33% (2024: 33.33%).		
On 27 June 2022, Knox City Council, Maroondah City Council and Yarra Ranges Council resolved, pursuant to Section 110(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> , to participate in the formation of, and become a founding member of, Your Library Limited (a public company limited by guarantee). The Your Library Agreement reflects the Regional Library Agreement previously in place.		
On 30 June 2023, in accordance with Section 330 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> , Eastern Regional Libraries Corporation was wound up following the transfer of operations, staff, assets and liabilities from the Corporation to Your Library Limited. Your Library Limited commenced operations on 1 July 2023.		
The three member Councils contributed in accordance with the libraries outlined in the Your Library Agreement and have continued as before with the objective of servicing the local community with library services.		
Fair value of Council's investment in Your Library Limited	2,986	2,747
Council's share of accumulated surplus		
Council's share of accumulated surplus at start of year	2,747	2,455
Reported surplus/(deficit) for year	239	292
Council's share of accumulated surplus at end of year	2,986	2,747
Movement in carrying value of specific investment		
Carrying value of investment at start of year	2,747	2,455
Share of surplus/(deficit) for year	239	292
Carrying value of investment at end of year	2,986	2,747
Council's share of expenditure commitments		
Operating commitments	257	314
Council's share of expenditure commitments	257	314

Council directly provides a number of additional resources free of charge to Your Library Limited in relation to the library branches in the Knox municipality. The annual operating cost to Council for providing these facilities are as follows:

Knox City, Rowville, Ferntree Gully, Boronia and Bayswater Library Branches	1,354	854
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An associate is an entity over which Council has significant influence but not control or joint control. Investment in an associate is accounted for using the equity method of accounting, after initially being recognised at cost.

Changes in the net assets of Your Library Limited are brought to account as an adjustment to the carrying value of the investment.

Knox City Council Notes to the Financial Report For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

Note 7 People and relationships

7.1 Council and key management remuneration

(a) Related parties

Parent Entity

Knox City Council is the parent entity.

Associates

Your Library Limited. Interests in associates are detailed in Note 6.3.

(b) Key management personnel

Key management personnel (KMP) are those people with the authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of Knox City Council. The Councillors, Chief Executive Officer, Directors and Executive Managers are deemed KMP.

Details of KMP at any time during the year are:

Councillors

Councillor Jude Dwight (Mayor)	Mayor from 1 July 2024 to 26 October 2024
Councillor Lisa Cooper (Mayor)	Councillor from 1 July 2024 to 26 October 2024 and 11 November 2024 to 21 November 2024
	Mayor from 21 November 2024 to current
Councillor Sorina Grasso (Deputy Mayor)	Deputy Mayor from 1 July 2024 to 26 October 2024
Councillor Glen Atwell (Deputy Mayor)	Councillor from 11 November 2024 to 21 November 2024
	Deputy Mayor from 21 November 2024 to current
Councillor Yvonne Allred	Councillor from 1 July 2024 to 26 October 2024
Councillor Meagan Baker	Councillor from 1 July 2024 to 26 October 2024 and 11 November 2024 to current
Councillor Susan Laukens	Councillor from 1 July 2024 to 26 October 2024
Councillor Darren Pearce	Councillor from 1 July 2024 to 26 October 2024
Councillor Nicole Seymour	Councillor from 1 July 2024 to 26 October 2024
Councillor Marcia Timmers-Leitch	Councillor from 1 July 2024 to 26 October 2024
Councillor Parisa Considine	Councillor from 11 November 2024 to current
Councillor Chris Duncan	Councillor from 11 November 2024 to current
Councillor Paige Kennett	Councillor from 11 November 2024 to current
Councillor Peter Lockwood	Councillor from 11 November 2024 to current
Councillor Susan Pearce	Councillor from 11 November 2024 to current
Councillor Robert Williams	Councillor from 11 November 2024 to current

Chief Executive Officer and other key management personnel

Bruce Dobson – Chief Executive Officer
Judy Chalkley - Director Connected Communities
Greg Curcio - Director Customer and Performance
Matt Kelleher – Director City Liveability
Navec Lorkin - Chief Financial Officer
Grant Thorne - Director Infrastructure

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

7.1 Council and key management remuneration (cont'd)

	2025	2024
	No.	No.
Total number of Councillors	16	9
Chief Executive Officer and other key management personnel	6	7
Total key management personnel	22	16

(c) Remuneration of Key Management Personnel

Remuneration comprises employee benefits including all forms of consideration paid, payable or provided by Council, or on behalf of the Council, in exchange for services rendered. Remuneration of Key Management Personnel and Other senior staff is disclosed in the following categories.

Short-term employee benefits include amounts such as wages, salaries, annual leave or sick leave that are usually paid or payable on a regular basis, as well as non-monetary benefits such as allowances and free or subsidised goods or services.

Other long-term employee benefits include long service leave, other long service benefits or deferred compensation.

Post-employment benefits include pensions, and other retirement benefits paid or payable on a discrete basis when employment has ceased.

Termination benefits include termination of employment payments, such as severance packages.

All calculations of remuneration are on an accrual basis and include movements in employee leave provisions.

	2025	2024
	\$'000	\$'000
Total remuneration of Key Management Personnel was as follows:		
Short-term employee benefits	2,275	2,385
Other long-term employee benefits	73	56
Post-employment benefits	187	194
Total	2,535	2,635

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

7.1 Council and key management remuneration (cont'd)

The numbers of Key Management Personnel whose total remuneration from Council and any related entities fall within the following bands:

	2025 No.	2024 No.
\$1 - \$9,999	5	-
\$10,000 - \$19,999	1	-
\$20,000 - \$29,999	6	-
\$30,000 - \$39,999	2	6
\$40,000 - \$49,999	1	-
\$50,000 - \$59,999	-	1
\$60,000 - \$69,999	-	1
\$100,000 - \$109,999	1	-
\$110,000 - \$119,999	-	1
\$170,000 - \$179,999	-	1
\$240,000 - \$249,999	-	1
\$250,000 - \$259,999	1	-
\$300,000 - \$309,999	-	1
\$310,000 - \$319,999	-	1
\$320,000 - \$329,999	1	-
\$330,000 - \$339,999	2	2
\$340,000 - \$349,999	1	-
\$440,000 - \$449,999	-	1
\$480,000 - \$489,999	1	-
	22	16

(d) Remuneration of other senior staff

Other senior staff are officers of Council, other than Key Management Personnel, whose total remuneration exceeds \$170,000 (2023-24: \$170,000) and who report directly to a member of the KMP.

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Total remuneration of other senior staff was as follows:		
Short-term employee benefits	3,142	2,639
Other long-term employee benefits	114	77
Post-employment benefits	379	310
Total	3,635	3,026

The number of other senior staff are shown below in their relevant income bands:

Income range	2025 No.	2024 No.
\$170,000 - \$179,999	1	1
\$180,000 - \$189,999	-	1
\$190,000 - \$199,999	3	7
\$200,000 - \$209,999	3	-
\$210,000 - \$219,999	3	5
\$220,000 - \$229,999	4	-
\$230,000 - \$239,999	3	1
	17	15

**Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025**

	2025	2024
	\$'000	\$'000

7.2 Related party disclosure

(a) Transactions with related parties

During the period Council entered into the following transactions with related parties.

Contributions to Your Library Limited	4,510	4,312
Total transactions with related parties	4,510	4,312

Council directly provides a number of additional resources free of charge to Your Library Limited in relation to library branches in the Knox municipality. The annual operating cost to Council for providing these facilities is as follows:

Knox City, Rowville, Ferntree Gully, Boronia and Bayswater Library Branches	1,354	854
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(b) Outstanding balances with related parties

There were no balances outstanding at the end of the reporting period in relation to transactions with related parties.

(c) Loans to / from related parties

There were no loans in existence at balance date that have been made, guaranteed or secured by the Council to a related party.

(d) Commitments to/from related parties

There were no commitments in existence at balance date that have been made, guaranteed or secured by the Council to a related party.

**Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025**

Note 8 Managing uncertainties**8.1 Contingent assets and liabilities**

Contingent assets and contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Balance Sheet, but are disclosed and if quantifiable, are measured at nominal value. Contingent assets and liabilities are presented inclusive of GST receivable or payable respectively.

(a) Contingent assets

Contingent assets are possible assets that arise from past events, whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council.

Developer contributions

As a result of development activity within the Knox municipality, Council has identified as a contingent asset the developer contributions of infrastructure assets and open space contributions to be received in respect of subdivisions that are currently under development totalling \$44.967 million (2023-24: \$27.400 million).

(b) Contingent liabilities

Contingent liabilities are:

- possible obligations that arise from past events, whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council; or
- present obligations that arise from past events but are not recognised because:
 - it is not probable that an outflow of resources embodying economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation; or
 - the amount of the obligation cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

Superannuation

Council has obligations under a defined benefit superannuation scheme that may result in the need to make additional contributions to the scheme. Matters relating to this potential obligation are outlined below. As a result of the volatility in financial markets the likelihood of making such contributions in future periods exists.

Future superannuation contributions

In addition to the disclosed contributions, Knox City Council has paid unfunded liability payments to Vision Super totalling \$Nil during 2024-25 (2023-24: \$Nil). There were no contributions outstanding and no loans issued from or to the above schemes as at 30 June 2025. The expected contributions to be paid to the Defined Benefit category of Vision Super for the year ending 30 June 2026 are \$0.220 million.

Landfill

Council has identified a previously unknown former landfill at Wantirna Reserve. An Environment Protection Authority (EPA) appointed auditor has verified an Aftercare Management Plan for the site, with no further investigation works required at the site.

Council continues to manage its two former landfill sites at Cathies Lane and Llewellyn Reserve as required by the Duty to Manage letter issued by the EPA. Council has been advised that financial assurances are no longer required for these sites, but will continue to put aside appropriate funds for ongoing management at the sites. Council has calculated its ongoing management costs for a period up to 30 June 2034.

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

8.1 Contingent assets and liabilities (cont'd)**Insurance Claims**

As a large local authority with ownership of numerous parks, reserves, roads and other land holdings, the Council is regularly met with claims and demands allegedly arising from an incident that occurs on land belonging to the Council, or allegedly arising from incidents relating to Council business, services or activities. There are twelve outstanding insurance claims against the Council in this regard. The Council carries \$600 million of public liability and professional indemnity insurance and has an excess of \$0.050 million per claim on this policy. Therefore, the maximum liability of the Council in any single claim is the extent of its excess. The primary insurer is Liability Mutual Insurance (MAV Insurance). There are no claims that Council is aware of which would fall outside the terms of the Council's policy.

Liability Mutual Insurance

Council is a participant of the MAV Liability Mutual Insurance (LMI) Scheme. The LMI scheme provides public liability and professional indemnity insurance cover. The LMI scheme states that each participant will remain liable to make further contributions to the scheme in respect of any insurance year in which it was a participant to the extent of its participant's share of any shortfall in the provision set aside in respect of that insurance year, and such liability will continue whether or not the participant remains a participant in future insurance years.

8.2 Change in accounting standards

Certain new Australian Accounting Standards and interpretations have been published that are not mandatory for the 30 June 2025 reporting period. Council assesses the impact of these new standards. As at 30 June 2025 there were no new accounting standards or interpretations issued by the AASB which are applicable for the year ending 30 June 2025 that are expected to impact Council.

In September 2024 the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) issued two Australian Sustainability Reporting Standards (ASRS). This followed Commonwealth legislation establishing Australia's sustainability reporting framework. Relevant entities will be required to undertake mandatory reporting of climate-related disclosures in future financial years. Public sector application issues remain under consideration and Council will continue to monitor developments and potential implications for future financial years.

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

8.3 Financial instruments**(a) Objectives and policies**

The Council's principal financial instruments comprise cash assets, term deposits, receivables (excluding statutory receivables), payables (excluding statutory payables) and bank and TCV borrowings. Details of the material accounting policy information and methods adopted, including the criteria for recognition, the basis of measurement and the basis on which income and expenses are recognised, in respect of each class of financial asset, financial liability and equity instrument is disclosed in the notes of the financial statements. Risk management is carried out by senior management under policies approved by the Council. These policies include identification and analysis of the risk exposure to Council and appropriate procedures, controls and risk minimisation.

(b) Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of council financial instruments will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. The Council's exposure to market risk is primarily through interest rate risk with only insignificant exposure to other price risks and no exposure to foreign currency risk.

Interest rate risk

Interest rate risk refers to the risk that the value of a financial instrument or cash flows associated with the instrument will fluctuate due to changes in market interest rates. Council's interest rate liability risk arises primarily from long term loans and borrowings at fixed rates which exposes council to fair value interest rate risk. Cash flow interest rate risk is the risk that the future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. Council has minimal exposure to cash flow interest rate risk through its cash and deposits that are at floating rates.

Investment of surplus funds is made with approved financial institutions under the *Local Government Act 2020*. Council manages interest rate risk by adopting an investment policy that ensures:

- diversification of investment product;
- monitoring of return on investment; and
- benchmarking of returns and comparison with budget.

Other than the borrowings taken out by Council in August 2024, there has been no significant change in the Council's exposure, or its objectives, policies and processes for managing interest rate risk or the methods used to measure this risk from the previous reporting period.

Interest rate movements have not been sufficiently significant during the year to have an impact on the Council's year end result.

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

8.3 Financial instruments (cont'd)**(c) Credit risk**

Credit risk is the risk that a contracting entity will not complete its obligations under a financial instrument and cause Council to make a financial loss. Council have exposure to credit risk on some financial assets included in the balance sheet. Particularly significant areas of credit risk exist in relation to outstanding fees and fines as well as loans and receivables from sporting clubs and associations. To help manage this risk:

- council have a policy for establishing credit limits for the entities council deal with;
- council may require collateral where appropriate; and
- council only invest surplus funds with financial institutions which have a recognised credit rating specified in council's investment policy.

Receivables consist of a large number of customers, spread across the ratepayer, business and government sectors. Credit risk associated with the council's financial assets is minimal because the main debtor is secured by a charge over the rateable property.

There are no material financial assets which are individually determined to be impaired.

Council may also be subject to credit risk for transactions which are not included in the balance sheet, such as when council provide a guarantee for another party. Details of our contingent liabilities are disclosed in Note 8.1(b).

The maximum exposure to credit risk at the reporting date to recognised financial assets is the carrying amount, net of any allowance for impairment of those assets, as disclosed in the balance sheet and notes to the financial statements. Council does not hold any collateral.

(d) Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk includes the risk that, as a result of Council's operational liquidity requirements, it will not have sufficient funds to settle a transaction when required, or will be forced to sell a financial asset at below value or may be unable to settle or recover a financial asset.

To help reduce these risks Council:

- has an investment policy which specifies the need to meet Council's cash flow requirements;
- has readily accessible standby facilities and other funding arrangements in place;
- has a liquidity portfolio structure that requires surplus funds to be invested within various bands of liquid instruments;
- monitors budget to actual performance on a regular basis; and
- set limits on borrowings relating to the percentage of loans to rate revenue and percentage of loan principal repayments to rate revenue.

The Council's maximum exposure to liquidity risk is the carrying amounts of financial liabilities as disclosed on the face of the Balance Sheet and is deemed insignificant based on prior periods' data and current assessment of risk.

There has been no significant change in Council's exposure, or its objectives, policies and processes for managing liquidity risk or the methods used to measure this risk from the previous reporting period.

With the exception of borrowings, all financial liabilities are expected to be settled within normal terms of trade. Details of the maturity profile for borrowings are disclosed at Note 5.4.

Unless otherwise stated, the carrying amounts of financial instruments reflect their fair value.

Knox City Council Notes to the Financial Report For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

8.3 Financial instruments (cont'd)

(e) Sensitivity disclosure analysis

Taking into account past performance, future expectations, economic forecasts and management's knowledge and experience of the financial markets, Council believes the following movements are 'reasonably possible' over the next twelve months:

- A parallel shift of +1% and -1% in market interest rates (AUD) from year-end rates of 4.127%.

These movements will not have a material impact on the valuation of Council's financial assets and liabilities, nor will they have a material impact on the results of Council's operations, primarily due to all loans taken out by Council to date being on a fixed interest rate.

8.4 Fair value measurement

Fair value hierarchy

Council's financial assets and liabilities are not valued in accordance with the fair value hierarchy, Council's financial assets and liabilities are measured at amortised cost.

Council measures certain assets and liabilities at fair value where required or permitted by Australian Accounting Standards. *AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement*, aims to improve consistency and reduce complexity by providing a definition of fair value and a single source of fair value measurement and disclosure requirements for use across Australian Accounting Standards.

Council has considered the amendments to *AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement* that apply for the 2024-25 financial year as a result of *AASB 2022-10 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Fair Value Measurement of Non-Financial Assets of Not-for-Profit Public Sector Entities*. For assets, where the Council adopts a current replacement cost approach to determine fair value, the Council now considers the inclusion of site preparation costs, disruption costs and costs to restore another entity's assets in the underlying valuation. The AASB 13 amendments apply prospectively, comparative figures have not been restated.

The AASB 13 amendments have impacted Council's financial statements as follows:

- The current replacement cost of Council assets, such as infrastructure assets, has increased by \$252.994 million, with \$143.139 million of this increase being due to the inclusion of site preparation costs, disruption costs and costs to restore another entity's assets.

All assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the financial statements are categorised within a fair value hierarchy, described as follows, based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole:

Level 1 — Quoted (unadjusted) market prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities;

Level 2 — Valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is directly or indirectly observable; and

Level 3 — Valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is unobservable.

For the purpose of fair value disclosures, Council has determined classes of assets and liabilities on the basis of the nature, characteristics and risks of the asset or liability and the level of the fair value hierarchy as explained above.

In addition, Council determines whether transfers have occurred between levels in the hierarchy by re-assessing categorisation (based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole) at the end of each reporting period.

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

8.4 Fair value measurement (cont'd)

Revaluation

Subsequent to the initial recognition of assets, non-current physical assets, other than land under roads, recreational, leisure and community facilities, plant and equipment, bus shelters, artworks and intangibles are measured at their fair value, being the price that would be received to sell an asset (or paid to transfer a liability) in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. For plant and equipment carrying amount is considered to approximate fair value given short useful lives. At balance date, the Council reviewed the carrying value of the individual classes of assets measured at fair value to ensure that each asset materially approximated its fair value. Where the carrying value materially differed from the fair value at balance date the class of asset was revalued.

Fair value valuations are determined in accordance with a valuation hierarchy. Changes to the valuation hierarchy will only occur if an external change in the restrictions or limitations of use on an asset result in changes to the permissible or practical highest and best use of the asset. In addition, Council undertakes a formal revaluation of land, buildings, and infrastructure assets on a regular basis ranging from 2 to 3 years. The valuations are performed either by experienced Council officers or independent experts. The following table sets out the frequency of revaluations by asset class.

Asset Class	Revaluation frequency
Land	2 years
Buildings	2 years
Roads	3 years
Bridges	3 years
Footpaths and cycleways	3 years
Drainage	3 years
Off street car parks	3 years
Other infrastructure	3 years

Where the assets are revalued, the revaluation increments are credited directly to the relevant asset revaluation reserve except to the extent that an increment reverses a prior year decrement for that class of asset that had been recognised as an expense in which case the increment is recognised as revenue up to the amount of the expense. Revaluation decreases are recognised as an expense except where prior increases are included in the asset revaluation reserve for that class of asset in which case the decrease is taken to the reserve to the extent of the remaining increases. Within the same class of asset, revaluation increments and decrements within the year are offset. Refer to Note 9.1(a) for further information.

Impairment of assets

At each reporting date, Council reviews the carrying value of its assets to determine whether there is any indication that these assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs of disposal and value in use, is compared to the asset's carrying value. Any excess of the asset's carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the Comprehensive Income Statement, unless the asset is carried at the revalued amount in which case, the impairment loss is recognised directly against the revaluation surplus in respect of the same class of asset to the extent that the impairment loss does not exceed the amount in the revaluation surplus for that same class of asset.

8.5 Events occurring after balance date

No matters have occurred after balance date that require disclosure in the financial report.

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

Note 9 Other Matters**9.1 Reserves****(a) Asset revaluation reserve**

	Balance at beginning of reporting period \$'000	Increase (decrease) \$'000	Balance at end of reporting period \$'000
2025			
Property			
Land	919,802	-	919,802
Buildings	83,979	26,819	110,798
	1,003,781	26,819	1,030,600
Plant and equipment			
Artworks	31	-	31
	31	-	31
Infrastructure			
Roads	396,146	121,263	517,409
Bridges	2,662	-	2,662
Footpaths and cycleways	31,418	43,621	75,039
Drainage	78,863	44,030	122,893
Off street car parks	3,400	17,261	20,661
Other infrastructure	-	-	-
	512,489	226,175	738,664
Total asset revaluation reserve	1,516,301	252,994	1,769,295
2024			
Property			
Land	850,082	69,720	919,802
Buildings	83,838	141	83,979
	933,920	69,861	1,003,781
Plant and equipment			
Artworks	31	-	31
	31	-	31
Infrastructure			
Roads	324,628	71,518	396,146
Bridges	2,662	-	2,662
Footpaths and cycleways	31,418	-	31,418
Drainage	78,863	-	78,863
Off street car parks	3,007	393	3,400
Other infrastructure	-	-	-
	440,578	71,911	512,489
Total asset revaluation reserve	1,374,529	141,772	1,516,301

Nature and purpose of asset revaluation reserve

The asset revaluation reserve is used to record the increased (net) value of Council's assets over time.

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

9.1 Reserves (cont'd)**(b) Other reserves**

	Balance at beginning of reporting period	Transfer from accumulated surplus	Transfer to accumulated surplus	Balance at end of reporting period
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
2025				
Restricted reserves				
Basketball stadium infrastructure reserve	72	-	(72)	-
Defined benefits reserve	500	250	-	750
Open space reserve	10,792	5,093	(12,376)	3,509
Total restricted reserves	11,364	5,343	(12,448)	4,259
Unrestricted reserves				
Aged care reserve	2,790	-	(228)	2,562
City futures fund	-	-	-	-
HACC capital reserve	512	-	-	512
Library reserve	1,505	-	-	1,505
Revegetation net gain	153	65	-	218
Scoresby Recreation Reserve	234	33	-	267
Social housing reserve	2,559	1,344	-	3,903
Stamford Park	-	-	-	-
Unexpended grant reserve (Financial Assistance Grants)	-	4,700	-	4,700
Total unrestricted reserves	7,753	6,142	(228)	13,667
Total other reserves	19,117	11,485	(12,676)	17,926

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

9.1 Reserves (cont'd)

	Balance at beginning of reporting period \$'000	Transfer from accumulated surplus \$'000	Transfer to accumulated surplus \$'000	Balance at end of reporting period \$'000
2024				
Restricted reserves				
Basketball stadium infrastructure reserve	100	-	(28)	72
Defined benefits reserve	-	500	-	500
Open space reserve	17,248	5,917	(12,373)	10,792
Total restricted reserves	17,348	6,417	(12,401)	11,364
Unrestricted reserves				
Aged care reserve	2,960	-	(170)	2,790
City futures fund	246	-	(246)	-
HACC capital reserve	512	-	-	512
Library reserve	2,642	-	(1,137)	1,505
Revegetation net gain	88	65	-	153
Scoresby Recreation Reserve	203	31	-	234
Social housing reserve	2,559	-	-	2,559
Stamford Park	1,386	-	(1,386)	-
Unexpended grant reserve (Financial Assistance Grants)	8,609	-	(8,609)	-
Total unrestricted reserves	19,205	96	(11,548)	7,753
Total other reserves	36,553	6,513	(23,949)	19,117

**Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025**

9.1 Reserves (cont'd)**Nature and purpose of other reserves****Basketball stadium infrastructure reserve**

The purpose of this reserve is to improve basketball stadium facilities within the Knox municipality.

Defined benefits reserve

The purpose of this reserve is to fund a defined benefits call should it be made.

Open space reserve

The Open Space Reserve is used to provide funding for future purchases and improvements of open space. Funding is provided from developer's contributions for open space which is initially recognised in the Comprehensive Income Statement and then transferred to the reserve from accumulated surplus to facilitate separate tracking of the total funds received but not yet spent.

Aged care reserve

The purpose of this reserve is to set aside the proceeds from the divestment of the Amaroo Gardens Aged Care Facility by Council on 2 November 2011 for aged services and infrastructure within the Knox municipality.

City futures fund

The purpose of this reserve is to enhance community facilities within Knox municipality.

HACC capital reserve

The purpose of this reserve is to refurbish, upgrade and maintain minor capital within the Home and Community Care funded programs.

Library reserve

The purpose of this reserve is for major capital expenditure for acquiring, refurbishing or redeveloping library premises as standalone premises or as part of community hubs for Knox Library branches.

Revegetation net gain

The purpose of this reserve is to ensure any loss of vegetation through development is re-established in a sustainable location.

Scoresby Recreation reserve

The purpose of this reserve is to invest the income derived from the lease of this site into the Scoresby Recreation Reserve.

Social housing reserve

The purpose of this reserve is to provide funding for the planning, development, construction and/or purchase of social housing for the Knox Community.

Stamford Park

The purpose of this reserve is to develop the Stamford Park site for the benefit of the Knox Community.

Unexpended grant reserve (Financial Assistance Grants)

The purpose of this reserve is to quarantine early payment of Victoria Grants Commission General Purpose and Local Roads Federal Grant funding for use in the following year.

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
	\$'000	\$'000
9.2 Reconciliation of cash flows from operating activities to surplus/(deficit)		
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	12,239	7,250
Non-cash adjustments		
Depreciation	25,659	24,784
Amortisation - intangible assets	878	903
Depreciation - right of use assets	1,205	822
Allowance for impairment losses	508	305
Borrowing costs	3,767	3,012
Finance costs - leases	288	132
Net (gain)/loss on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	8,820	(450)
Contributions - non-monetary assets	(1,899)	-
Increment in investment in associate	(239)	(292)
Change in operating assets and liabilities		
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	(3,006)	1,036
(Increase)/decrease in prepayments	104	(125)
(Increase)/decrease in contract assets	1,252	(1,334)
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	1,804	(679)
Increase/(decrease) in contract and other liabilities	2,991	(646)
Increase/(decrease) in provisions	(1,092)	(218)
Increase/(decrease) in other liabilities	389	(2)
(Increase)/decrease in inventories	1	8
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	53,669	34,506

9.3 Superannuation

Knox City Council makes the majority of its employer superannuation contributions in respect of its employees to the Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (the Fund). This Fund has two categories of membership, accumulation and defined benefit, each of which is funded differently. Obligations for contributions to the Fund are recognised as an expense in the Comprehensive Income Statement when they are made or due.

Accumulation

The Fund's accumulation categories receive both employer and employee contributions on a progressive basis. Employer contributions are normally based on a fixed percentage of employee earnings (for the year ended 30 June 2025, this was 11.5% as required under Superannuation Guarantee (SG) legislation (2024: 11.0%)).

Defined Benefit

Knox City Council does not use defined benefit accounting for its defined benefit obligations under the Fund's Defined Benefit category. This is because the Fund's Defined Benefit category is a pooled multi-employer sponsored plan.

There is no proportional split of the defined benefit liabilities, assets or costs between the participating employers as the defined benefit obligation is a floating obligation between the participating employers and the only time that the aggregate obligation is allocated to specific employers is when a call is made. As a result, the level of participation of Knox City Council in the Fund cannot be measured as a percentage compared with other participating employers. Therefore, the Fund Actuary is unable to allocate benefit liabilities, assets and costs between employers for the purposes of AASB 119.

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

9.3 Superannuation (cont'd)

Funding arrangements

Knox City Council makes employer contributions to the Defined Benefit category of the Fund at rates determined by the Trustee on the advice of the Fund Actuary.

As at 30 June 2024, an interim actuarial investigation was held as the Fund provides lifetime pensions in the Defined Benefit category.

The vested benefit index (VBI) of the Defined Benefit category as at 30 June 2024 (of which Knox City Council is a contributing employer) was 105.4%. The financial assumptions used to calculate the VBI were:

Net investment returns	5.6% pa
Salary information	3.5% pa
Price inflation (CPI)	2.7% pa

As at 30 June 2025, an interim actuarial investigation is underway as the Fund provides lifetime pensions in the Defined Benefit category. It is expected to be completed by 31 October 2025.

Vision Super has advised that the VBI at 30 June 2025 was 110.5%. Knox City Council was notified of the 30 June 2025 VBI during August 2025 (2024: August 2024). The financial assumptions used to calculate this VBI were:

Net investment returns	5.7% pa
Salary information	3.5% pa
Price inflation (CPI)	2.6% pa

The VBI is used as the primary funding indicator. Because the VBI was above 100%, the 30 June 2024 actuarial investigation determined the Defined Benefit category was in a satisfactory financial position and that no change was necessary to the Defined Benefit category's funding arrangements from prior years.

Employer contributions

Regular contributions

On the basis of the results of the 2024 interim actuarial investigation conducted by the Fund Actuary, Knox City Council makes employer contributions to the Fund's Defined Benefit category at rates determined by the Fund's Trustee. For the year ended 30 June 2025, this rate was 11.5% of members' salaries (11.0% in 2023-24). This rate is expected to increase in line with any increases in the SG contribution rate and was reviewed as part of the 30 June 2023 triennial valuation.

In addition, Knox City Council reimburses the Fund to cover the excess of the benefits paid as a consequence of retrenchment above the funded resignation or retirement benefit.

Funding calls

If the Defined Benefit category is in an unsatisfactory financial position at an actuarial investigation or the Defined Benefit category's VBI is below its shortfall limit at any time other than the date of the actuarial investigation, the Defined Benefit category has a shortfall for the purposes of SPS 160 and the Fund is required to put a plan in place so that the shortfall is fully funded within three years of the shortfall occurring. The Fund monitors its VBI on a quarterly basis and the Fund has set its shortfall limit at 98% from 26 July 2024 (previously 97%).

In the event that the Fund Actuary determines that there is a shortfall based on the above requirement, the Fund's participating employers (including Knox City Council) are required to make an employer contribution to cover the shortfall.

Using the agreed methodology, the shortfall amount is apportioned between the participating employers based on the pre-1 July 1993 and post-30 June 1993 service liabilities of the Fund's Defined Benefit category, together with the employer's payroll at 30 June 1993 and at the date the shortfall has been calculated.

Due to the nature of the contractual obligations between the participating employers and the Fund, and that the Fund includes lifetime pensioners and their reversionary beneficiaries, it is unlikely that the Fund will be wound up.

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

9.3 Superannuation (cont'd)

If there is a surplus in the Fund, the surplus cannot be returned to the participating employers.

In the event that a participating employer is wound-up, the defined benefit obligations of that employer will be transferred to that employer’s successor.

The 2024 interim actuarial investigation surplus amounts

An actuarial investigation is conducted annually for the Defined Benefit category of which Knox City Council is a contributing employer. Generally, a full actuarial investigation is conducted every three years and interim actuarial investigations are conducted for each intervening year. An interim investigation was conducted as at 30 June 2024 while a full investigation was conducted as at 30 June 2023.

The Fund’s actuarial investigation identified the following for the Defined Benefit category of which Knox City Council is a contributing employer:

	2024	2023
	Interim investigation	Triennial investigation
A VBI surplus	\$108.4 million	\$85.7 million
A total service liability surplus	\$141.4 million	\$123.6 million
A discounted accrued benefits surplus	\$156.7 million	\$141.9 million

The VBI surplus means that the market value of the fund’s assets supporting the defined benefit obligations exceed the vested benefits that the defined benefit members would have been entitled to if they had all exited on 30 June 2024.

The total service liability surplus means that the current value of the assets in the Fund’s Defined Benefit category plus expected future contributions exceeds the value of expected future benefits and expenses as at 30 June 2024.

The discounted accrued benefit surplus means that the current value of the assets in the Fund’s Defined Benefit category exceeds the value of benefits payable in the future but accrued in respect of service to 30 June 2024.

The 2025 interim actuarial investigation

An interim actuarial investigation is being conducted for the Fund’s position as at 30 June 2025 as the Fund provides lifetime pensions in the Defined Benefit category.

Vision Super has advised that the VBI at 30 June 2025 was 110.5%. Knox City Council was notified of the 30 June 2025 VBI during August 2025 (2024: August 2024). The financial assumptions used to calculate this VBI were:

Net investment returns	5.7% pa
Salary information	3.5% pa
Price inflation (CPI)	2.6% pa

It is anticipated that this actuarial investigation will be completed by October 2025.

Knox City Council
Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

9.3 Superannuation (cont'd)

The 2023 triennial actuarial investigation

The last triennial actuarial investigation conducted prior to 30 June 2023 was at 30 June 2020. This actuarial investigation was completed by 31 December 2020. The financial assumptions for the purposes of that investigation were:

	2023	2020
	Triennial investigation	Triennial investigation
Net investment returns	5.7% pa	5.6% pa
Salary information	3.5% pa	2.5% pa for the first two years, and 2.75% pa thereafter
Price inflation (CPI)	2.8% pa	2.0% pa

Superannuation contributions

Contributions by Knox City Council (excluding any unfunded liability payments) to the above superannuation plans for the financial year ended 30 June 2025 are detailed below:

Scheme	Type of scheme	Rate	2025	2024
			\$'000	\$'000
Vision super	Defined Benefit	11.5% (2024: 11.0%)	235	254
Other funds	Defined Benefit	11.5% (2024: 11.0%)	-	-
Vision super	Accumulation Fund	11.5% (2024: 11.0%)	3,340	3,305
Other funds	Accumulation Fund	11.5% (2024: 11.0%)	3,650	3,460

There were no contributions outstanding and no loans issued from or to the above schemes as at 30 June 2025.

The expected contributions to be paid to the Defined Benefit category of Vision Super for the year ending 30 June 2026 is \$0.220 million.

Note 10 Change in accounting policy

There have been no changes to accounting policies in the 2024-25 year.

Knox City Council

Performance Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2025

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Certification of the Performance Statement

In my opinion, the accompanying performance statement has been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.

Navec Lorkin CPA
Principal Accounting Officer
Dated:

In our opinion, the accompanying performance statement of Knox City Council for the year ended 30 June 2025 presents fairly the results of council's performance in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.

The performance statement contains the relevant indicators, measures and results in relation to service performance, financial performance and sustainable capacity.

At the date of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances that would render any particulars in the performance statement to be misleading or inaccurate.

We have been authorised by the council and by the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020 to certify this performance statement in its final form.

Dated:

Dated:

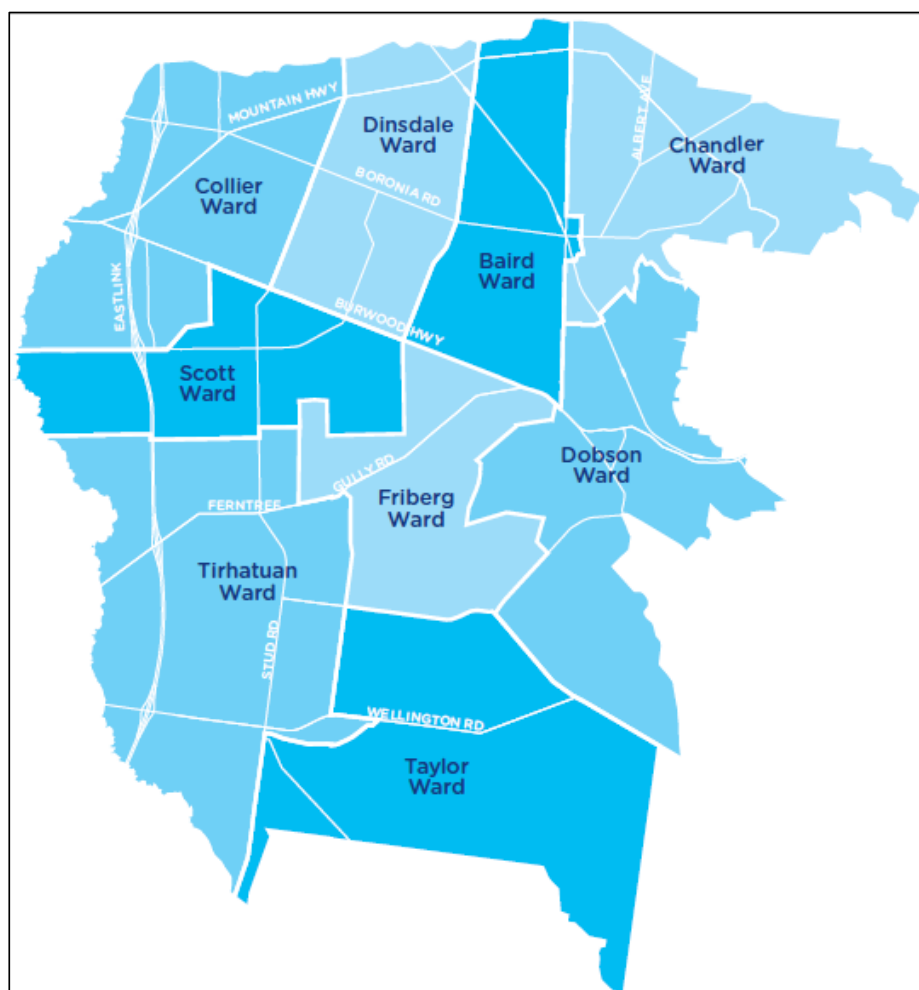
Bruce Dobson
Chief Executive Officer
Dated:

Victorian Auditor-General's Office audit report

1. Description of municipality

Located approximately 25 kilometres from Melbourne's central business district, the Knox municipality is a major hub of cultural, commercial, business and innovative activity in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. It is a diverse municipality, with residents from over 140 different countries who speak over 130 languages.

The City of Knox has an estimated resident population of 163,302 (as at 30 June 2025) and covers an area of 113.84 square kilometres. The area boasts a green, leafy image extending to the foothills of the picturesque Dandenong Ranges. Knox consists of the following suburbs: Bayswater, Boronia, Ferntree Gully, Knoxfield, Lysterfield, Rowville, Scoresby, The Basin, Upper Ferntree Gully, Wantirna and Wantirna South.



2. Service performance indicators

For the year ended 30 June 2025

Service/indicator/measure	2022	2023	Results 2024	2025	Comment
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target as per budget	
Aquatic Facilities					
Utilisation	1.11	2.03	2.09	N/A	2.22
Utilisation of aquatic facilities					
[Number of visits to aquatic facilities/Municipal population]					
Animal Management					
Health and safety	95%	92%	100%	N/A	100%
Animal management prosecutions					
[Number of successful animal management prosecutions/Number of animal management prosecutions] x 100					
Food Safety					
Health and safety	96.71%	99.40%	100%	N/A	100%
Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications					
[Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance outcome notifications about a food premises followed up/ Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance outcome notifications about a food premises] x 100					

Service/indicator/measure	Results				Comment
	2022	2023	2024	2025	
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target as per budget	
Governance					
Satisfaction	58	53	69	69	69
Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with the consultation and engagement efforts of Council]					Satisfaction with consultation and engagement remains stable and measurably and significantly above the long-term average since 2014 of 59.
Libraries					
Participation	N/A	N/A	28.92%	N/A	36.99%
Library membership [Percentage of the population that are registered library members/Population] x 100					The number of registered library members rose significantly in 2024-2025, attesting to the popularity of the new Knox Library opened in March 2024.
Maternal and Child Health (MCH)					
Participation	73.72%	75.84%	77.21%	N/A	75.36%
Participation in the MCH service [Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year)/Number of children enrolled in the MCH service] x 100					Participation in the MCH service over the first half of 2024-2025 was affected by workforce challenges. Successful recruitment in the second half of the year facilitated an uplift in participation.
Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children [Number of Aboriginal children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year)/Number of Aboriginal children enrolled in the MCH service] x 100	75.81%	85.71%	81.63%	N/A	78.08%
					Proactive engagement has supported First Nations participation in the MCH service.
Roads					
Condition	93.89%	95.28%	91.18%	94.00%	90.92%
Sealed local roads below the intervention level [Number of kilometres of sealed local roads below the renewal intervention level set by Council/Kilometres of sealed local roads] x 100					The condition of Council's road network has remained steady, as confirmed by the 2023-2024 full road condition audit. These audits are conducted every four years, with the next scheduled for 2026-2027. Council maintains high road service standards and is progressively addressing renewal backlogs. The latest audit has informed a targeted works program, and the 'Target as per budget' will be reviewed through the upcoming Transport Asset Management Plan.

Service/indicator/measure	2022	2023	Results 2024	2025	Comment
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target as per budget	
Statutory Planning					
Service standard	70.73%	71.12%	77.55%	60.00%	76.73%
Planning applications decided within the relevant required time [(Number of regular planning application decisions made within 60 days) + (Number of VicSmart planning application decisions made within 10 days)/Number of planning application decisions made] x 100					The percentage of planning applications decided within the legislated timeframe was 76.73%. This is consistent with previous periods.
Waste Management					
Waste Diversion	51.60%	53.12%	72.87%	70.00%	71.21%
Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill [Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins/Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins] x 100					The slight decrease in Knox's waste diversion rate is largely attributed to the successful uptake of the Container Deposit Scheme (CDS), which has shifted recyclable materials away from Council's collection system, and to lower green waste tonnages due to reduced rainfall. As a result, these materials are no longer included in our reported recycling figures, impacting the calculated diversion percentage. Despite this, Knox achieved a 71% diversion rate—well above the state average—placing the Council as a leader in reducing waste to landfill and positioning us strongly to meet the state targets of 72% by 2025 and 80% by 2030.

Note: Measures where no target was required for 2025 are noted as 'N/A'.

3. Financial performance indicators

For the year ended 30 June 2025

Dimension/indicator/measure	Results					Forecasts				Comment
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029		
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target as per budget	Actual	Forecasts	Forecasts	Forecasts	Forecasts	
Efficiency										
Expenditure level										
Expenses per property assessment [Total expenses/Number of property assessments]	\$2,833.93	\$3,034.26	\$2,781.51	\$2,909.00	\$2,918.69	\$2,729.09	\$2,817.73	\$2,776.93	\$2,804.77	The 2024-2025 expenditure includes a net loss on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment totalling \$8.8 million, leading to an increase in the 2024-2025 expenses per property assessment.
Revenue level										
Average rate per property assessment [Sum of all general rates and municipal charges/Number of property assessments]	\$1,573.01	\$1,623.38	\$1,683.69	N/A	\$1,732.46	\$1,779.97	\$1,821.00	\$1,863.08	\$1,906.13	General rate income was increased by the approved rate cap percentage.
Liquidity										
Working capital										
Current assets compared to current liabilities [Current assets/Current liabilities] x 100	148.44%	163.35%	167.33%	100.00%	151.45%	134.10%	122.46%	117.63%	126.80%	Cash and cash equivalents, together with other financial assets, are \$10.2 million greater than last year, while trade and other receivables are up \$3.5 million (including an increase in rates debtors of \$2.9 million). This has been offset by decreases in assets classified as held for sale (\$4.1 million), and prepayments and contract assets (\$1.4 million), together with increases in trade and other payables (\$7.0 million), contract liabilities (\$3.0 million), and current interest-bearing liabilities \$1.2 million).

Dimension/indicator/measure	Results				Forecasts				Comment
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target as per budget	Actual	Forecasts	Forecasts	Forecasts	Forecasts
Liquidity									
<i>Unrestricted cash</i>									
Unrestricted cash compared to current liabilities	35.38%	41.95%	45.73%	N/A	76.32%	70.29%	58.41%	56.30%	66.66%
[Unrestricted cash/Current liabilities] x 100									
Obligations									
<i>Loans and borrowings</i>									
Loans and borrowings compared to rates	38.83%	54.95%	56.42%	N/A	55.49%	52.09%	48.95%	50.13%	46.68%
[Interest bearing loans and borrowings/Rate revenue] x 100									
<i>Loans and borrowings</i>									
Loans and borrowings repayments compared to rates	1.14%	4.45%	6.61%	N/A	8.35%	8.65%	8.73%	9.79%	10.44%
[Interest and principal repayments on interest bearing loans and borrowings/Rate revenue] x 100									
Indebtedness									
Non-current liabilities compared to own-source revenue	33.09%	45.56%	49.91%	N/A	47.05%	42.14%	40.99%	40.48%	36.67%
[Non-current liabilities/Own-source revenue] x 100									

Dimension/indicator/measure	2022		Results		2026		Forecasts		Comment
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target as per budget	Actual	Forecasts	Forecasts	Forecasts	Forecasts
Obligations									
Asset renewal and upgrade									
Asset renewal and upgrade compared to depreciation	170.53%	186.26%	165.68%	100.00%	183.78%	223.41%	184.83%	185.49%	144.38%
[Asset renewal and asset upgrade expense/Asset depreciation] x 100									Asset renewal and upgrade works increased by \$6.1 million on the 2024 financial year, while depreciation increased by \$0.9 million. The 2026 capital works budget shows an increase in renewal and upgrade works, largely due to the carry forward of projects from 2025. The renewal and upgrade works return to 2025 levels in the following two years.
Operating Position									
Adjusted underlying result									
Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit)	-4.56%	-9.13%	0.28%	N/A	2.39%	9.15%	7.27%	7.87%	8.59%
[Adjusted underlying surplus (deficit)/Adjusted underlying revenue] x 100									Recurrent grant income (operating and capital) increased by \$13.6 million, largely due to the entire 2024-2025 Victoria Local Government Grants Commission General Purpose Grant and Local Road Funding being received during the 2025 financial year, while 50% of the 2025-26 funding was brought forward and paid prior to 30 June 2025. The improved 2026 adjusted underlying result is largely due to the forecast gain on disposal of land carried forward from 2025, as opposed to the loss on disposal of property and infrastructure included in the 2025 figure.

Dimension/indicator/measure	2022		Results		Forecasts				Comment
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target as per budget	Actual	Forecasts	Forecasts	Forecasts	Forecasts
Stability									
Rates concentration									
Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue	67.63%	70.15%	75.47%	71.27%	71.97%	72.35%	76.16%	75.40%	75.32%
[Rate revenue/Adjusted underlying revenue] x 100									Recurrent grant income (operating and capital) increased by \$13.6 million, largely due to the entire 2024-2025 Victoria Local Government Grants Commission General Purpose Grant and Local Road Funding being received during the 2025 financial year, while 50% of the 2025-26 funding was brought forward and paid prior to 30 June 2025. This was partially offset by the \$4.5 million increase in rates and charges revenue.
Stability									
Rates effort									
Rates compared to property values	0.24%	0.22%	0.23%	N/A	0.22%	0.23%	0.23%	0.21%	0.20%
[Rate revenue/Capital improved value of rateable properties in the municipality] x 100									Rates and charges revenue increased by \$4.5 million. However, property values have increased \$4,800 million compared to the 2024 financial year.

4. Sustainable capacity indicators

Indicator/measure	Results				Comment
	2022	2023	2024	2025	
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	
Population					
Expenses per head of municipal population [Total expenses/Municipal population]	\$1,196.12	\$1,313.42	\$1,196.75	\$1,254.25	The 2024-2025 expenditure includes a net loss on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment totalling \$8.8 million, leading to an increase in the 2024-2025 expenses per head of municipal population.
Infrastructure per head of municipal population [Value of infrastructure/Municipal population]	\$6,854.05	\$6,872.31	\$7,331.59	\$8,893.83	The infrastructure value has increased by \$266.4 million on the prior year, with additions of \$49.5 million and a revaluation increase of \$253.0 million being offset by a decrease related to depreciation and disposals. The municipal population has increased by 1,536.
Population density per length of road [Municipal population/Kilometres of local roads]	224.51	219.87	221.84	223.82	The municipal population has increased by 1,536.
Own-source revenue					
Own-source revenue per head of municipal population [Own-source revenue/Municipal population]	\$894.33	\$975.96	\$1,021.63	\$1,066.72	Own-source revenue has increased by \$8.9 million, including a \$4.5 million increase in rates and charges revenue. The municipal population has increased by 1,536.
Recurrent grants					
Recurrent grants per head of municipal population [Recurrent grants/Municipal population]	\$194.91	\$162.75	\$104.49	\$186.54	Recurrent grant income (operating and capital) increased by \$13.6 million, largely due to the entire 2024-2025 Victoria Local Government Grants Commission General Purpose Grant and Local Road Funding being received during the 2025 financial year, while 50% of the 2025-26 funding was brought forward and paid prior to 30 June 2025.
Disadvantage					
Relative socio-economic disadvantage [Index of relative socio-economic disadvantage by decile]	9.00	9.00	9.00	9.00	
Workforce turnover					
Percentage of staff turnover [Number of permanent staff resignations and terminations/Average number of permanent staff for the financial year] x 100	13.5%	17.7%	15.5%	21.7%	Council ceased direct delivery of kindergarten services in 2024-25, with external providers now assuming this responsibility. This change involved a business transfer and several redundancies. Excluding the impacts of the business transfer and redundancies, staff turnover was 11.9%.

5. Notes to the accounts

5.1 Basis of preparation

Council is required to prepare and include a Performance Statement within its annual report. The Performance Statement includes the results of the prescribed service performance, financial performance and sustainable capacity indicators and measures together with a description of the municipal district, an explanation of material variations in the results and notes to the accounts. This statement has been prepared to meet the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* (Vic).

Where applicable, the results in the Performance Statement have been prepared on accounting bases consistent with those reported in the financial statements. The other results are based on information drawn from Council information systems or from third parties such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics or Council’s community satisfaction survey provider.

The Performance Statement presents the actual results for the current year and the previous three years, along with the current year’s target, if mandated by the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* (Vic). Additionally, for the prescribed financial performance indicators and measures, the Performance Statement includes the target budget for the current year and the results forecast for the period 2025-2026 to 2028-2029 by Council’s financial plan.

The *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* (Vic) require explanation of any material variations in the results contained in the Performance Statement. Council has adopted materiality thresholds relevant to each indicator and measure and explanations have not been provided for variations below the materiality thresholds unless the variance is considered to be material because of its nature.

The forecast figures included in the Performance Statement are those adopted by Council in its Financial Plan on 23 June 2025. The Financial Plan includes estimates based on key assumptions about the future that were relevant at the time of adoption and are aimed at achieving sustainability over the long term. Detailed information on the actual financial results is contained in the general-purpose financial statements. The Financial Plan is available on Council’s website: [Financial Plan 2025 to 2035 | Knox](#).

5.2 Definitions

Key term	Definition
Aboriginal children	a child who is an Aboriginal person
Aboriginal person	has the same meaning as in the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i> (Vic)
adjusted underlying revenue	total income other than: non-recurrent grants used to fund capital expenditure; and non-monetary asset contributions; and contributions to fund capital expenditure from sources other than those referred to above
adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit)	adjusted underlying revenue less total expenditure

Key term	Definition
annual report	an annual report prepared by a council under section 98 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> (Vic)
asset renewal expenditure	expenditure on an existing asset or on replacing an existing asset that returns the service capability of the asset to its original capability
asset upgrade expenditure	expenditure that (a) enhances an existing asset to provide a higher level of service; or (b) extends the life of the asset beyond its original life
critical non-compliance outcome notification	a notification received by Council under section 19N(3) or (4) of the <i>Food Act 1984</i> (Vic), or advice given to Council by an authorised officer under that Act, of a deficiency that poses an immediate serious threat to public health
current assets	has the same meaning as in the Australian Accounting Standards
current liabilities	has the same meaning as in the Australian Accounting Standards
food premises	has the same meaning as in the <i>Food Act 1984</i> (Vic)
intervention level	the level set for the condition of a road beyond which Council will not allow the road to deteriorate and will need to intervene
local road	a sealed or unsealed road for which Council is the responsible road authority under the <i>Road Management Act 2004</i> (Vic)
major non-compliance outcome notification	a notification received by a council under section 19N(3) or (4) of the <i>Food Act 1984</i> (Vic), or advice given to council by an authorised officer under that Act, of a deficiency that does not pose an immediate serious threat to public health but may do so if no remedial action is taken
MCH	stands for the Maternal and Child Health Service provided by Council to support the health and development of children within the municipality from birth until school age
non-current liabilities	all liabilities other than current liabilities
own-source revenue	adjusted underlying revenue other than revenue that is not under the control of Council (including government grants)
population	the resident population estimated by Council
rate revenue	revenue from general rates, municipal charges, service rates and service charges
relative socio-economic disadvantage	in relation to a municipal district, the relative socio-economic disadvantage, expressed as a decile for the relevant financial year, of the area in which the municipal district is located according to the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage in Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), Australian Bureau of Statistics
restricted cash	cash, cash equivalents and financial assets, within the meaning of the Australian Accounting Standards, not available for use other than for a purpose for which it is restricted, and includes cash to be used to fund capital works expenditure from the previous financial year

Key term	Definition
SEIFA	Stands for the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas published from time to time by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on its website
unrestricted cash	means all cash and cash equivalents other than restricted cash

4.4 Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Decision
Author:	Coordinator Community Laws & Emergency Management, Paul Anastasi; Team Leader Community Laws, Jaimee Corcoran
Manager:	Manager City Safety & Health, Jonathan McNally
Executive:	Director City Liveability, Matt Kelleher

SUMMARY

Council is currently reviewing and preparing a new Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) that will operate over the next four years.

The DAMP focuses specifically on the management of cats and dogs and serves as the strategic framework, advocacy, and action plan guiding Council's animal management services. All Victorian councils are required to review and update their DAMP by 4 December 2025 in accordance with the requirements set out under Part 5A of the *Domestic Animals Act* 1994.

This report presents the draft DAMP 2026–2029 to Council for endorsement, prior to proceeding to the final stage of community consultation. The draft DAMP has been developed following an extensive community consultation campaign, prior to finalising the document for public exhibition.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council:

1. Endorses the draft 2026-2029 DAMP (Attachment 1) for the purposes of community consultation;
2. Notes the Community Engagement Report (Attachment 2) and a summary of responses and Officer feedback (Attachment 3).
3. Notes that Phase 2 community consultation on the draft DAMP will occur from 15 September for a four week period, and that feedback will be considered prior to finalising the Plan.

1. DISCUSSION

Section 68A (1) of the *Domestic Animals Act* 1994 (the Act) requires that every council must prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) every 4 years. The 2026-2029 DAMP, as per previous Plans, must address specific legislated issues with regards to the ownership of cats and dogs, and must be presented in line with the template issued by the Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA).

Each council's DAMP must outline its programs, services, and strategies that:

- Promote and encourage responsible ownership of dogs and cats;
- Encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats;
- Minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals;
- Minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance;
- Address over-population and high euthanasia rates of cats and dogs;

- Effectively identify all dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs in the municipality, and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with the Act and regulations;
- Outline programs for the training of Council's authorised officers to ensure they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of the Act; and
- Ensure that the community comply with the Act, the regulations, and any related legislation.

In addition, the DAMP speaks to Council's Orders under the Act and provides opportunity for the review of existing Council Orders made under this Act and local laws that relate to the management of dogs and cats in the Knox municipality.

Current Council Orders under the Act regulating the management of dogs and cats:

- Dogs in Public Places (S26) - determines where dogs and cats can be off leash within the Council, adopted by Council in 2005;
- Compulsory Desexing of Cats (S10A (1)) - adopted by Council in 2011; and
- Cat Containment (S25(2)) adopted by Council in 2021.

Knox Council's Amenity Local Law 2020 regulating the management of dogs and cats includes:

- Clause 4.1 - Permit required for more than two dogs or cats on properties less than or equal to 4,000 square metres;
- Clause 4.6 - The requirement to carry a suitable means to effectively remove animal waste;
- Clause 4.7 - The requirement to pick up and appropriately dispose of animal waste; and
- Clause 4.8 – The requirement for owners to manage potential nuisance noise and odour.

A review of the 2021-2025 DAMP indicates that 74% of the ninety-seven action items have been fully or mostly completed. The remaining 26% of incomplete actions include several items relating to communication plans and the proactive review of national microchip databases to identify unregistered animals. Some of these items are ongoing, and the intention is for them to be completed prior to the sunset of the plan. For the new plan, we aim to consolidate the number of actions to ensure the plan is both practical and achievable and that actions reflect new initiatives rather than business as usual activities. The Community Laws Service Plan now plays the role of documenting business as usual activities as part of the ongoing service provision.

Key accomplishments under the current DAMP include the implementation of the 24-hour cat containment requirement, provision of personal dog waste bag holders for the community, completion of media releases for significant animal-related prosecution cases, and the introduction of a reduced-cost desexing program, supported by a State Government grant.

The draft DAMP 2026-2029 has been developed to reflect current animal management services, incorporate benchmarking against neighbouring councils, and includes insights gathered through consultation with the community, local business, and relevant stakeholders. This process has provided valuable feedback to develop the plan as well as help identify emerging issues.

Through the development of the draft, several noteworthy action items emerged that may be future initiatives or be of particular interest, however, they would require more extensive follow up work or investigation, including community consultation and possible additional costs.

Such action items contained in the draft DAMP include:

1.1 Dog waste

Initial stakeholder engagement has shown that a significant issue the community is experiencing relates to dog waste and owners not picking up after their dogs or putting bags of dog waste in bins. Seventy-two percent of respondents have stated they see dog poo left on the ground daily or weekly and 66% of respondents stated they believe it is particularly important or important that the Council conduct patrols in parks and reserves.

A number of respondents stated they would like to see the Council install waste bag dispensers and additional bins in reserves to combat this issue; however, dog owners are required under Council's Amenity Local Law 2020 to:

1. Carry bags to collect their animal's waste; and
2. Pick up after their pet.

An on-the-spot infringement of \$100 applies for both of these offences. Council's Community Laws Officers often respond to complaints relating to dog waste and conduct proactive patrols in Council's parks and open spaces to check that dog owners are carrying bags and are picking up after their dogs. Feedback from the Community Laws team indicates that responsible dog owners typically carry waste bags when walking their pets. However, this issue remains an ongoing challenge, as not all dog owners comply, despite increased awareness and enforcement efforts.

In 2009 Knox trialled eight dog poo bag dispensers in two reserves - Kings Park, Upper Ferntree Gully and Knox Park Reserve, Knoxfield. In 2013 it was decided that most of the dispensers would be removed due to on-going vandalism, leaving only two at Knox Park Reserve. The two remaining dispensers were also taken out of service a number of years later due to ongoing damage and the bag dispensers being regularly emptied of bags, limiting availability for all users.

Providing dog waste bags can lead to a reliance on these facilities by dog owners. Some dog owners may stop carrying their own bags, assuming they will always be available at the park. When dispensers are empty, dog owners will often blame Council for the lack of available bags, and as a result will not pick up after their dog. Additionally, if a dog defecates before reaching a park and the owner has not brought a bag with them, they are likely to leave the waste behind on footpaths or nature strips, or somewhere within the reserve.

Simply installing bags and bins will not ensure compliance and guaranteed use; some owners may still not pick up after their dogs regardless of bag availability. Providing bags should not be seen as the solution to this problem, but more part of a broader strategy that includes education, signage, community engagement, and enforcement to effectively change behaviour.

Actions have been included within the draft DAMP to further investigate options to address dog waste nuisance including a review of provisions and infringements amounts under the Amenity Local Law, a review of dog waste bag dispensers and bin locations and linking dog owners into existing programs to facilitate the disposal of dog waste.

1.2 Dogs off leash

Council's permitted on/off leash areas were established under Section 26 of the Act. The current Order was made in 2005 and was effective from 10 April 2006. In Knox City Council, dogs are

permitted to be off leash, but under effective control in all open spaces and reserves within Knox, aside from nine conservation bushland reserves. Dogs are required to be on leash in public places, which includes footpaths, shopping centres, car parks, bike tracks, walking tracks, anywhere within an active reserve where an organised sporting event is being conducted, all children's play equipment areas, an organised public meeting and permanent barbecue or picnic areas.

Initial stakeholder engagement has indicated that there is an opportunity to review the outdated Section 26 Order relating to dogs off lead across the municipality. This is of particular interest to sporting clubs and the relevant Council teams that manage sporting grounds and active recreation reserves as dogs pose a number of issues such as digging holes and causing damage, dog owners not picking up after their animals, and conflict between dog owners and sporting club members and players. Initial feedback shows that 47% of respondents have seen dogs not under effective control by their owner in an off-leash area at least once per month in the last 12 months.

Benchmarking of surrounding municipalities suggests that the Knox Section 26 Order is somewhat unique in that Knox currently allows dogs to be run off leash in the majority of reserves, including all sporting fields, throughout the municipality, rather than limiting off leash areas to selected reserves that are best suited to this activity. It should also be noted that Council also has not updated leash controls in line with improvements being carried out to areas of open space such as the creation of wetlands, revegetation, and improvements to playing fields and facilities. Further to the various open space improvement projects completed, Council has also established two dedicated fenced dog parks (at Knox Park, Knoxfield and Emerson Reserve, Rowville) during this period, with a further two currently under construction at Wantirna Reserve, Wantirna and Kings Park, Upper Ferntree Gully.

Surrounding councils, including Whitehorse, Maroondah, Dandenong and Yarra Ranges, generally restrict dogs off leash to a select number of suitable reserves. Most recently, Monash City Council has completed a review of leash controls throughout its reserves and has put in place a policy to objectively assess leash controls for each reserve.

A proposed action item of the 2026–2029 DAMP is to complete a review of Council's Section 26 Order to ensure it remains relevant and up to date, aligns with Council's approach to managing sporting grounds (including those with synthetic turf) and reserves, minimises impacts on areas of biological significance, and helps reduce dog-related nuisance complaints. It is envisaged that a community consultation process would be undertaken in 2026 to gauge public sentiment and communicate the reason for the review.

1.3 Increasing desexing rates of Dogs

The draft DAMP has identified an opportunity to increase the rates of desexing of dogs in the community as a means of addressing ongoing nuisance caused by undesexed or entire animals. Specifically, increased rates of desexing supports responsible pet ownership by reducing unwanted litters, lowering euthanasia rates at the pound, and addressing behavioural issues such as aggression, roaming animals and nuisance behaviour. It also ensures that animals are desexed prior to being registered with Council. The draft DAMP has included an action indicating a review of programs to increase the rate of desexed dogs within the community.

Knox currently has 16,685 registered dogs, of which 2,092 (12.5%) are not desexed.

One potential tool to increase rates of desexing may be to implement mandatory desexing of dogs under Section 10A of the *Domestic Animals Act* 1994. Council currently has a compulsory desexing requirement in place for cats, however there is currently no similar requirement for dogs. Should Council wished to do so, it can establish an Order that required dogs to also be desexed as a condition of registration or renewal, except in specified exemptions.

Exemptions to compulsory dog desexing requirements would typically be:

- A dog used for breeding purposes by a registered breeding establishment (Knox does not currently have any registered breeding establishments);
- A dog that has a medical exemption provided by a vet (full registration fee would be required);
- A dog registered with a State Government applicable organisation, i.e. Dogs Victoria, Grey Hound Racing Victoria;
- A dangerous dog that is kept for guarding non-residential premises; and
- A dangerous dog and has undergone protection training.

There are currently three Victorian councils that require the compulsory desexing of dogs (unless an exemption applies) prior to registration. These are Kingston, Frankston and Brimbank and were introduced circa 2008. The compulsory desexing of dogs offers several important benefits for both pets and the community, however there can also be challenges when implementing such a policy.

Programs targeted at increasing the rate of desexed dogs need to be weighed against other priorities including increasing the number of registered pets within the community, in particular to recover the pet registrations lost since the pandemic.

There may also be opportunities to collaborate with organisations that provide low cost desexing, investigate a further increase in the registration fees for entire dogs to further disincentive owning an undesexed dog, and expand Council's desexing program for vulnerable and disadvantaged community members. The program currently has a limited budget and therefore it is essential to apply for any government desexing grants that become available.

To gain a better understanding of the Knox community's position on programs aimed at increasing the rate of desexing, including potentially compulsory desexing, a community consultation process would be necessary, supported by public education.

1.4 Other action items

Some of the other action items that feature in the draft that have been identified as part of the consultation process or targeted to align with existing projects such as the Local Law review.

These include:

- Addressing the decline in registered animals observed in recent years through ongoing and expanded initiatives to increase animal registration, including pet registration drives and amnesty programs offering limited reduced or free registration incentives, alongside follow-up actions such as property visits, sending microchip reminder letters, and renewal SMS/email notifications to pet owners who have not renewed their pet's registration;
- Providing basic group dog training sessions - Engaging a qualified animal trainer and behaviorist to run dog training sessions in Knox would support dog socialisation, promote

responsible pet ownership, and enhance animal welfare within the community. These sessions would also teach owners how to understand their dogs' reactions to others, helping to prevent antisocial or aggressive behaviour. Similar programs have been successfully delivered by organisations like Animal Aid and the Lost Dogs' Home in partnership with local councils. Offering free, accessible training sessions would provide general dog training skills and safe group management. An initial group session would familiarise owners with their dogs and aim to reduce dog attack incidents, ultimately helping to prevent shelter admissions due to behavioural issues. Additionally, these events foster collaboration and strengthen relationships between animal care teams and the community;

- Review Council's barking dog process to improve the management of complaints. This review aims to streamline complaint handling, enhance officer investigations, and support better interactions and education for effected customers and dog owners. The process will also explore tools to assist Council with investigations, such as the utilisation of noise recording and analysis devices such as Noisenet to accurately monitor noise levels, providing objective data to resolve complaints more efficiently and fairly; and
- Explore enhancements to the animal-related provisions of the Council's Amenity Local Law 2020. This initiative will align with the proposed review of the local law and may include increasing penalties for failing to carry a waste bag or not picking up dog waste. Additionally, it will consider introducing a new containment clause that mandates dog owners to fix any inadequate fencing to help reduce dog attack and dog rush incidents.

1.5 Cat Containment

In 2021 Council made an order under Section 25(2) of the Act requiring all cats to be contained within their owner's premises at all times.

24-hour cat containment provides numerous advantages for both cats and the community. For cats, it ensures their safety by protecting them from hazards such as traffic, injury, or getting lost. For the community, 24-hour containment helps minimise nuisance problems such as defecating, digging and spraying on private property, excessive cat noise, territorial disputes, and negative effects on local wildlife. Additionally, it eases the burden on residents dealing with nuisance cat issues, as they no longer need to provide statements to the Council for cats caught in traps regarding the time of seizure, appear as a witness in Court, or have their addresses listed on 'cat objection letters' which are sent to owners of the nuisance cat which identify the complainant.

The State Government has also recently developed the Victorian Cat Management Strategy 2025–2035. This document highlights the importance of effective cat management and addresses key challenges related to cats and their environmental impact. Expanding cat containment is identified as a central theme of the strategy. Knox is already in line with this state government initiative.

Through the community consultation process, Council received feedback both in support and opposition to the existing 24-hour cat containment requirements. While some concerns were raised, the overall sentiment has been one of general support for the policy. Many residents recognise the benefits of containment in protecting local wildlife, reducing nuisance issues, promoting animal welfare, and responsible pet ownership. At this time, officers do not recommend any changes to the current requirements, as they reflect best practice animal

management and demonstrate our commitment to both community and environmental wellbeing.

2. ENGAGEMENT

A community engagement and communications plan has been prepared for this stage of the Plan's development, in consultation with Council's Communications and Community Engagement specialists. Consultation is an essential component of the review and creation of the new plan, to obtain input and feedback on the effectiveness of the current animal management services, and to identify emerging community issues.

The stakeholders who have and will be engaged for consultation on the plan include:

- Cat and Dog owners in Knox (approximately 23,000 registered animals);
- Non-pet owners, including people interested in animal welfare and/or concerned about animal nuisance matters and people who use open spaces within the municipality;
- Domestic Animal businesses (including animal boarding, veterinary clinics);
- Council's Pound provider;
- Advisory Committees;
- Councillors; and
- Internal staff/ departments within Council that may be impacted by the plan.

Phase 1 of external stakeholder pre-draft consultation has been completed. A key consultation tool was a survey and gathering of feedback and ideas for the new plan. In addition, internal stakeholder engagement sessions have been held, pop up face to face sessions held at the Knox Festival and Pets in the Park events along with engaging with Council's Domestic Animal Businesses and Sporting Clubs in writing. The project team also engaged with Council's Advisory Committees throughout May and June.

Engagement Activity	Responses
Have Your Say Survey	351
Email Submissions	17
Internal Team Consultation	8

Attachment two contains the Engagement Report and Attachment 3 provides a summary of the feedback and Officer responses.

Phase 2 of external stakeholder consultation is proposed to take place via public exhibition of the draft 2026–2029 DAMP (subject to Council endorsement). This consultation is scheduled for a four-week period from 15 September and will be through Council's Have Your Say webpage, signage in open spaces, and drop-in sessions at Knox and Boronia Libraries. Alongside the exhibition of the draft plan, there will also be an online survey on the Have Your Say webpage to seek feedback on key topics to gauge community sentiment on these issues.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Many studies have been undertaken, providing a wealth of knowledge supporting the benefits of pet ownership and their use in therapy. A number of different studies have found a direct link between better health, both physical and mental, and pet ownership.

Together with the Domestic Animal Management Plan it is considered that the Knox community embraces the importance of pet ownership in providing a healthier and fitter community.

The effective management of domestic animals in the community is imperative to ensure:

- Lost pets can be reunited with owners through the animal registration program;
- A reduction in animal related incidents and attacks;
- Containing and keeping dogs under effective control;
- Dogs on leash/off lead in Knox; and
- Desexing of cats and dogs to prevent overpopulation.

The potential implementation of a Section 10A order requiring the compulsory desexing of dogs, along with reviewing Council's off-lead requirements, would carry both positive and negative social implications. These actions would require further investigation and development, including comprehensive community engagement, before any report is presented to Council.

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 issue of dog litter and decaying pet waste can potentially pose both health and environmental risks to the community. It is a requirement under the Knox City Council Amenity Local Law 2020 to carry a plastic bag or similar to pick up after dogs and this is enforced during officer patrols.

The current Section 26 order requires dogs to be retained on leash in nine bushland reserves in order to preserve the environment in these locations. Community feedback has identified an opportunity to look at where leash controls are applied, and if leash controls are broadened this may result in environmental benefits for newly created wetlands and revegetation areas. Additionally, it has been identified that dogs that run off leash regularly can cause damage to Council's formal sporting grounds and reserves. Such damage could be reduced through a review of leash controls.

Cat containment helps minimise nuisance problems such as defecating, digging and spraying on private property, excessive cat noise, territorial disputes, and negative effects on local wildlife. The implementation of cat containment at Knox has seen a reduction in cats wandering at large which has benefited the environment.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The development of the DAMP 2026-2029 has been allowed for in the 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 City Safety and Health operating budget, noting most of the proposed communication deliverables will be provided from internal resources within existing operational budgets.

Activities included in the current DAMP, in addition to Council's legislated animal management responsibilities have been delivered through the City Safety and Health budget, including:

- \$1.4M (approx.) Animal registration income;
- FY2024/2025 \$128,000 in animal infringement income; and

- Provision of animal service through the Community Laws team costs approximately \$1.41M including:
 - \$1.4M (approx.) for staff and associated costs;
 - \$55,000 (net) for the annual Pets in the Park event; and
 - \$12,000 for annual responsible pet ownership publicity and events.

Under Section 69 of the Act, Council is required to make payment to the Victorian Treasurer for all registered Domestic Animal Businesses and all cat and dog registrations. The amount for each Domestic Animal Business is \$20 and all animal registrations are \$4.39. For the 2024/2025 financial year Council will pay close to \$104,000 to the Victorian Government for these purposes.

Community feedback has identified a number of opportunities to implement additional animal programs, for instance the installation of waste bag dispensers and additional bins in reserves, an increase in the desexing program, registration drives (to provide a reduced first year registration to increase numbers), free training sessions, sound recording and analysis devices to assist with barking dog investigations, however, these programs would currently be unfunded and additional budget considerations need to be taken into account when a more detailed analysis is completed for each of the actions within the draft DAMP.

7. RISKS

All councils are required to develop a DAMP in accordance with section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act* 1994. An effective domestic animal management program aims to reduce the risk of dogs and cats in the community. Additionally, Council is legislated under the *Domestic Animals Act* to provide an animal management service (statutory service). These aims are achieved through various measures including:

- Implementation of a responsible pet ownership education program to ensure pet owners effectively manage their pets within the community;
- Registration of cats and dogs to ensure timely reuniting of animals found at large and reduce likelihood of animals being injured when at large;
- Implementation of leash controls (and potential review of leash controls) to reduce the likelihood of dog attacks and dog rushes;
- Proactive patrols of reserves and open space areas to ensure dogs are managed effectively by their owners;
- Ongoing implementation of the cat containment program, in line with state government expectations, to reduce cat nuisance and risk to wildlife; and
- Provision of a cat trapping program to ensure nuisance cats are effectively management.

A detailed risk analysis will be considered when developing options to complete each of the actions within the draft DAMP.

8. COUNCIL AND HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN 2025-2029

Being a strong voice for safety

Strategy 5.2 - Safety and liveability are prioritised through the planning, delivery and enforcement of local laws and regulatory services.

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 - Draft 2026-29 DAMP [**4.4.1** - 32 pages]
2. Attachment 2 - Engagement Report [**4.4.2** - 32 pages]
3. Attachment 3 - Response to feedback [**4.4.3** - 18 pages]
4. Attachment 4 - Summary Proposed Actions [**4.4.4** - 6 pages]

Knox City Council

**DRAFT Domestic Animal Management Plan
4 Year Plan
2026-2029**

1 INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

1.1 PURPOSE OF DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Knox Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) has been developed in line with the legislative requirement that all councils develop a DAMP every four years. Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (the Act) states that “each Council must, in consultation with the Secretary, prepare a domestic animal management plan on 4 December 2021 and at the end of each period of 4 years after that day.” The DAMP details Council’s strategies and actions for the management of dogs and cats, including providing education to the community, promoting responsible pet ownership, and minimising problems generated by irresponsible pet owners.

Knox City Council has used a consultative approach to the development of this Plan to consider opinions and feedback from residents, local domestic animal businesses and other relevant stakeholders. Through the consultation process many Knox residents emphasised that dogs and cats are important members of their family.

Animal management is now a specialised industry that has evolved from simply collecting stray dogs and addressing compliance issues. Council plays a key role in promoting responsible animal ownership in the community, essential to maintaining sustainable communities and a healthy environment. The Plan broadly outlines the following nine areas of focus:

1. Training of authorised officers;
2. Responsible Pet ownership;
3. Overpopulation and high euthanasia
4. Registration and identification;
5. Nuisances;
6. Dog attacks;
7. Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs;
8. Domestic animal businesses; and
9. Other matters (e.g. Council Orders).

Following a review of the 2021-2025 DAMP, it was identified that many of the 96 listed action items of that plan reflected business-as-usual activities already embedded in Knox’s day-to-day animal management operations. All of these actions have been highlighted in the current/ongoing activities section for each focus area. For this updated Plan, the focus has been on identifying clear, deliverable, and actionable items that will drive meaningful outcomes in addition to Council’s business as usual animal management practices over the next four years. Actions identified in the DAMP include initiatives to:

- Investigate initiatives to increase the number of desexed dogs
- Review animal management provisions in the Knox Amenity Local Law to ensure animal management clauses adequately address the needs of the community

- Address dog waste through investigating opportunities to provide dog waste bags to pet owners and review the provision of bins within our parkland and reserves
- Investigate the renewal of section 26 order, including a review of Councils off leash areas
- Implement programs to increase the number of pet registrations
- Review and update barking dog process and material provided to support the community
- Partner with Council's Biodiversity team to run targeted education campaigns where the impact of semi-owned cats on biologically significant areas is known
- Produce information or signage in multi-lingual formats including desexing and registration requirements.

1.2 PROCESS APPLIED IN DEVELOPING THE PLAN

The development of this Plan was informed by community and stakeholder consultation, feedback from elected Councillors, Council staff, research and benchmarking. This Plan builds on the previous Plans, with the aim to deliver better animal management services for the Knox community for the next 4 years.

The community engagement for the development of this plan included two rounds of consultation:

- Phase 1 – consultation to gather feedback from a broad range of stakeholders on their feedback and ideas for the next Plan (March/April 2025); and
- Phase 2 – consultation to gather feedback on the draft 2026-2029 Plan (*TBC*).

The Phase 1 engagement undertook consultation with the local community and domestic animal businesses, to hear and understand our community's views on how cats and dogs are managed in the Knox municipality, including feedback on Council's animal management services and suggestions on what could be improved. A total of 376 responses were received from the community, businesses, and internal engagement through the following channels:

Engagement Activity	Responses
Have Your Say Survey	351
Email responses	17
Internal consultations	8
Council Advisory Committees	6

The engagement was promoted through a range of Council's communication channels including: a flyer distributed to over all registered cats and dogs; pop up engagement sessions held at Council's Knox Festival and Pets in the Park events; signs installed in key parks across the municipality; news articles in Council's newsletters and website; Facebook advertising; and direct emails to a range of stakeholders, inviting them to provide feedback.

Key findings of the Phase 1 engagement included:

- Dogs off Leash improvements – including the opportunity to review Council’s Section 26 order.
- Dog Waste management – including investigating the installation of additional waste bins and dog waste bag dispensers.
- Cat Containment – including support and opposition to the restrictions initiated by the previous 2021-2025 DAMP and implemented in 2022.
- Desexing and responsible pet ownership – including reduced cost desexing.
- Animal registration fees – including reducing or removing fees for cat owners that keep their cats inside and a fee structure for people who have not had any complaints regarding their pets.
- Responsible pet ownership – including increased education for dog and cat owners.
- Dog socialisation and training – including Council providing spaces for dog training, educating owners on the benefits of training and running regular free dog training sessions for the community.
- Dog nuisances – including the onerous process to report barking dogs to Council and dogs approaching people and their dogs in open spaces.
- Signage review – including installing additional signage for open spaces relating to dogs on/off leash and reminders for owners to pick up after their pets.
- Increased enforcement – including higher penalties for people doing the wrong thing and Officers increasing park patrols.

The Phase 2 engagement period in XXX offered the community an opportunity to provide their feedback on the draft Plan. A total of XX responses were provided....

The 2025 Annual Community Satisfaction Survey showed that Knox’s Animal Management service received a score of 7.7 out of 10 for satisfaction. This has remained relatively stable from 2024 which saw a result of 7.9 out of 10 for satisfaction. Some of highest reported reasons for dissatisfaction were often seeing unleashed dogs, cats wandering, dogs barking and owners not picking up their animal waste.

1.3 DEMOGRAPHIC AND PROFILE OF COUNCIL

Knox is a municipality located approximately 25kms east of the Melbourne GPO, with over 163,000 residents living across eleven localities.

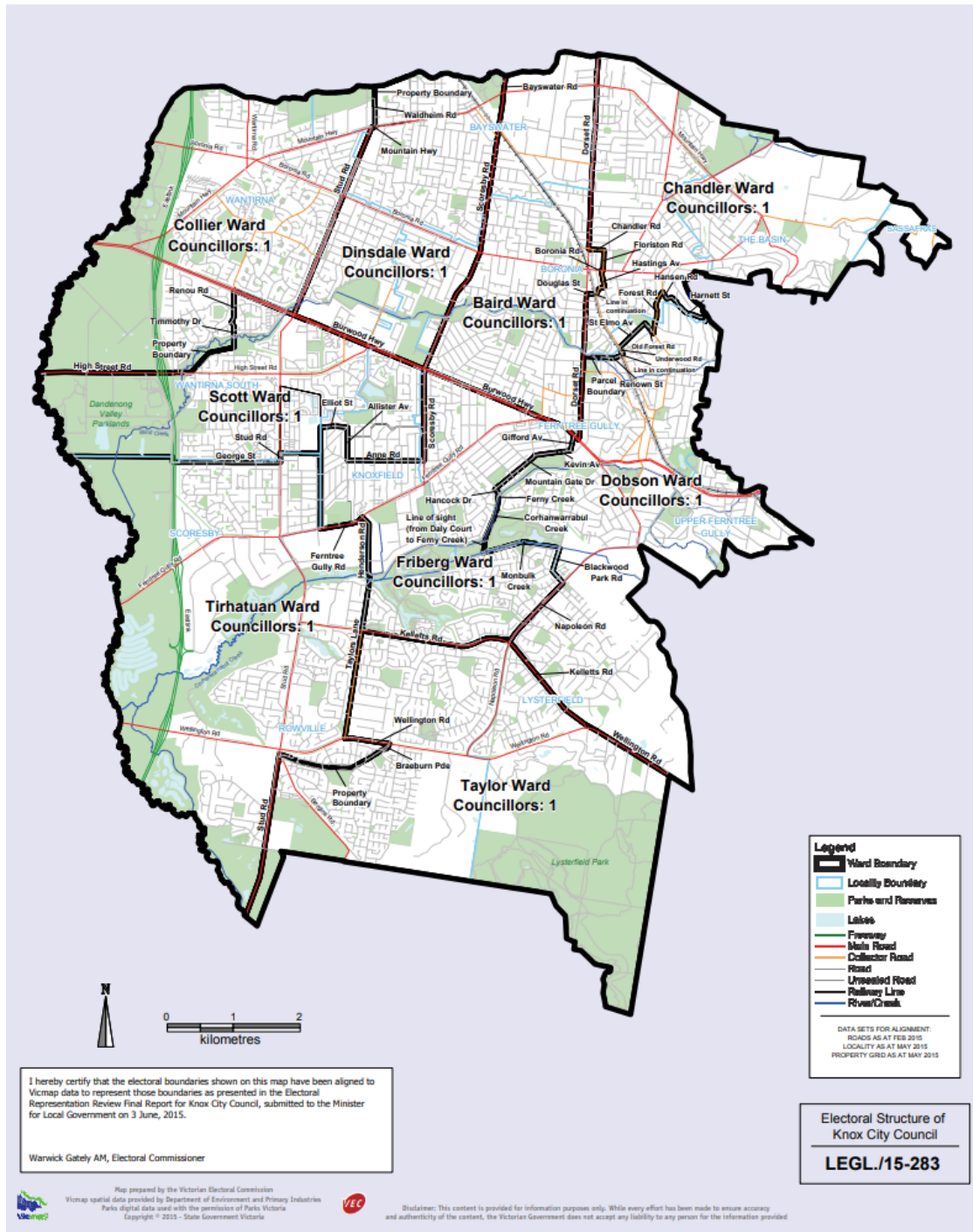
Knox covers an area spanning 114 square kilometres and includes the suburbs of Ferntree Gully, Upper Ferntree Gully, Boronia, The Basin, Rowville, Wantirna, Wantirna South, Lysterfield, Knoxfield, Scoresby and Bayswater. The last census data from 2021 shows that, approximately 31% of households used a language other than English at home, with the top languages being Mandarin 7.3%, Cantonese 3.5%, Sinhalese 1.7%, Greek 1.1% and Hindi 0.9%. In 2021, the median age of all people in Knox was 40, with 23% of people under the age of 19 and 31% of people over the age of 55. It is forecast that the total population for the municipality will reach almost 185,000 by 2046.

As at June 2025, Knox had 16,640 dogs registered and 6,482 cats registered. For the 2056/2026 registration period, Knox had a total of 19 domestic animal businesses registered.

They included:

- 6 pet shops
- 4 dog training businesses
- 8 boarding facilities
- 1 animal rearing facility

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1.4 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

knox



Knox City Council delivers over 100 services to support our community at all stages of life and they are aligned to six Council and Health and Wellbeing themes. The 2026-2029 DAMP aligns with 'Being a strong voice for safety', the Plan intends to keep the community feeling safe, respected and supported in public spaces and at home. We are committed to continuously improving our services to best meet the needs of our diverse community now and into the future.

Council's Community Laws team forms part of the City Safety and Health Department which sits in the broader City Liveability Directorate. Community Laws team aims to promote and protect the safety, health and amenity of the community so the objectives of the Knox Vision can be realised. This will be achieved through integrated planning, community education and engagement, service provision, community capacity building, regulation and enforcement.

Council's Community Laws business unit delivers a range of services and programs, which includes the education and enforcement of state and local legislation. The business unit's services include animal management, parking enforcement, local laws and emergency management.

The business unit consists of the following authorised Animal Management Officers:

- 1 Coordinator, Community Laws & Emergency Management
- 2 Team Leader Community Laws and Animal Management
- 1 Team Leader, Parking Management
- 1 Emergency Management Lead
- 6 Senior Community Laws/ Animal Management Officers
- 3 Community Laws/ Animal Management Officers
- 3 Parking Officers.

The department is further supported by dedicated Business Support and Prosecutions teams.

1.5 DOMESTIC ANIMAL STATISTICS

	2012-2013	2016-2017	2020-2021	2024-25
Population	>154,000	> 157,000	>165,000	>163,000
No. of authorised animal management officers	10	9	9	12
Number of Domestic Animal Businesses	22	22	28	19
Dogs in Knox				
No. of registered dogs (total)	18,805	18,839	18,233 at Sept 2021	16,640 At Feb 2025
No. of registered restricted breed dogs	6	3	1	0
No. of registered declared menacing dogs	3	1	1	0
No. of registered declared dangerous dogs	6	6	11	8
Dogs impounded at the pound	784	630	326	259
Dogs reclaimed from pound	579	501	275	186
Dogs adopted	130	71	29	40
Dogs reclaimed by owner or adopted %	90.4%	90.8%	93.3%	87.3%
Dogs euthanised	98	39	18	26

Dogs euthanised %	12.5%	6.2%	5.5%	10%
Customer requests responded to:				
. Dogs – Barking	597	394	51	36
. Dogs – Pick up	799	601	384	206
. Dogs – Wandering at large	453	266	169	184
. Dog – Attacks	122	95	140	106
. Dog - Rush	75	47	39	46
Cats in Knox				
No. of registered cats (total)	5,878	6,266	7,294 at Sept 2021	6482 At Feb 2025
Cats impounded at the pound	436	402	296	302
Cats reclaimed from pound	59	65	61	61
Cats adopted	236	215	147	154
Cats reclaimed by owner or adopted %	67.7%	69.7%	70.3%	71.2%
Cats euthanised	142	88	76	52
Cats euthanised %	32.6%	21.9%	26.7%	17.2%
Customer requests responded to:				
. Cat cage requests	196	150	100	244
. Cats picked up	244	199	182	224

During the life of the 2021–2025 Plan, Council observed a decrease in the number of registered cats and dogs. This decline is largely attributed to a number of registration initiatives including proactive door knocks, property inspections, and analysis of microchip registries being suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the years immediately following this period. Increasing animal registration compliance is a key focus of this Plan, as outlined in Section 5 below.

1.6 OUR ORDERS & LOCAL LAWS

CURRENT ORDERS MADE UNDER THE DOMESTIC ANIMALS ACT 1994:

Under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, Councils have the authority to make orders that regulate the keeping and management of dogs and cats within their municipality. These orders typically address matters such as cat confinement, designated off-leash areas for dogs, and mandatory desexing. Knox City Council currently have three such orders in place, as outlined below:

Dogs in public places (*Domestic Animals Act 1994* section 26) adopted by Council in November 2005

This order provides that dogs are permitted to be off lead, but under effective control in a public park or recreation reserve, subject to conditions. The order took effect from 10 April 2006.

Mandatory desexing of cats (*Domestic Animals Act 1994* section 10A(1)) adopted by Council in August 2010

The order provides that Knox City Council will not, after 10 April 2011, accept the registration of a cat unless the cat is desexed or exempted under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* from any requirements to be desexed. Any cat that is not desexed cannot be registered.

Cat containment (*Domestic Animals Act 1994* section 25(2)) adopted by Council in August 2021

This order requires all cats to be contained to property at all times and took effect from 10 April 2022.

CURRENT LOCAL LAWS UNDER KNOX AMENITY LOCAL LAW 2020:

Local Laws are rules made by Councils to support community safety, public health, and the effective management of local spaces within their municipality. These laws cover a range of issues that help to protect community well-being and local assets. Knox City Council currently have three Local Laws in place that specifically assist in managing cats and dogs, as outlined below:

Limits on number of animals kept (Amenity Local Law 2020 section 4.1)

- An owner or occupier of private land, the area of which is less than or equal to 4,000 square metres must not, without a permit, keep or allow to be kept on that private land more than 2 dogs or 2 cats.

Removal of animal waste (Amenity Local Law 2020 section 4.6 & 4.7)

- 4.6 A person in charge of an animal on Council land or on a road must carry a facility for the effective removal of any waste that may be deposited by that animal.
 - 4.7 A person in charge of an animal on Council land or on a road must collect from the Council land or road and appropriately dispose of any waste deposited by that animal.
- Removal of animal waste (Amenity Local Law 2020 section 4.6 & 4.7)

Animal noise and odour (Amenity Local Law 2020 section 4.8 & 4.9)

- 4.8 The owner of an animal and the owner or occupier of the private land on which the animal is kept must not allow noise or odour to emanate from the animal as to interfere with the amenity of the immediate area.
- 4.9 Clause 4.8 does not apply to any class of animal where another Act or legislation applies.

2. TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS

Section 68(A)(2)(b) of the Act requires Council to outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district.

The animal management staff within the Community Laws team are multi-skilled, and in addition to animal management matters, administer and enforce a range of other legislative and regulatory requirements. Knox Community Laws officers undertake regular training relevant to their role, including:

- Animal handling
- Customer service
- Conflict resolution
- Investigations
- Prosecutions.

2.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Knox City Council requires all authorised officers to possess adequate qualifications and skills, and ensure officers undergo appropriate training/ re-training relevant to their role. The table below highlights authorised officer training requirements for Knox Authorised Officers.

Core capabilities (required training or equivalent experience essential) are shown below.

Approved Officer Training	Current Status (2025)	Planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate IV Animal Regulation & Management • Government (Statutory Compliance) • Government (Investigations) • Government (Court Compliance) 	6 officers either have a minimum certificate IV qualification or in excess of five years' relevant experience	Training assigned as required and determined through Performance Development Review Process
Animal Management training and information days	All officers have the opportunity to attend this training	Offered regularly by the relevant State Government agency
Municipal Association of Victoria and Local Government Professionals training and Information days	All officers have the opportunity to attend this training	Offered regularly by the relevant State Government agency
Baton training	All officers have completed this training	Refresher training completed annually
Situational awareness	All officers have completed this training	Refresher training completed annually
Nationally accredited first aid and CPR training	All officers have the opportunity to attend this training	Training assigned as required and determined through Performance Development Review Process

Induction program for new staff, including familiarisation with work instructions and animal management tasks	All officers have completed this training	All new staff inducted upon commencement
Australian Institute of Animal Management – Annual Conference	All officers have the opportunity to attend this training	Participation when available
Industry training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal handling • Animal assessment • Statement taking • Prosecution • Restricted breed dog identification • DNA collection 	Ongoing	Training assigned as required and determined through Performance Development Review Process
OH&S – dealing with aggressive customers, dealing with aggressive animals	As required	Training assigned as required and determined through Performance Development Review Process
Customer Service – including Conflict Resolution	As required	Training assigned as required and determined through Performance Development Review Process
Family violence awareness training	All officers have completed this training	Participation when available

2.2 OUR PLANNED TRAINING FOR AUTHORISED OFFICERS

To ensure that all staff involved in animal management have the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their work, and to deliver services in a manner which ensures officer and animal safety and welfare, current/ ongoing activities include:

- Seek qualifications (or equivalent) relevant to the role when recruiting new staff.
- Attendance of relevant animal management training and information days offered by the relevant State Government agency.
- Attendance of Animal Management Officers at Municipal Association of Victoria and Local Government Professionals training and information days.
- Attendance of Animal Management Officers at the Australian Institute of Animal Management annual conference.
- Provide all staff with access to Council's Corporate Learning calendar.
- All staff to complete Council's Corporate Compliance training.
- Attendance of Municipal Association of Victoria, Local Government Professionals, RSPCA and other relevant training sessions, workshops and seminars attended by officers.
- Enhance Animal Management Officers skills in animal behaviour – including, identifying risk behaviours and managing nuisance animals.
- Enhance Animal Management Officers mediation skills and customer service training
- Attendance by staff and involvement in relevant industry committees or forums.

2.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 2.0: Ensure all Officers involved in animal management are appropriately qualified and skilled

Action Number	Activity	When	Evaluation
2.0.1	Develop training plans for each individual officer	Annually	Review annually to determine training goals and identification of skill gaps, as part of the work and development plan for each individual officer
2.0.2	Develop an induction program for all new officers	2026	Induction program implemented

3. PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP AND COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION

Section 68A(2)(c)(i) of the Act requires Council to outline the programs, services and strategies to promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats.

3.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

The responsible ownership of dogs and cats encompasses a broad range of issues and stakeholders, to ensure the welfare needs of the animals are met, whilst ensuring that the animals do not pose any safety or nuisance concerns within the community.

A portion of every animal registration is paid to the State Government each year as a state levy, with the registered pet owners and animal businesses of Knox contributing in excess of \$103,000 in the 2024/2025 financial year. This funding is used by Animal Welfare Victoria to provide a range of community and education programs, including responsible pet ownership programs and We Are Family Program for children in our municipality.

The Responsible Pet Ownership (RPO) and 'We Are Family Program' programs are targeted at children from ages 0 to 12 and include:

- The RPO program teaches children aged 4 to 12 years old about living safely with dogs and responsible pet ownership. The pet educators and their dogs visit over 2,000 kindergartens and 800 primary schools in Victoria each year to promote the vital safety messages through animated presentations, song and role play.
- 'We Are Family Program' educates expectant parents and parents of children 0 to 4 years old on pet safety around young children. The program is delivered through antenatal centres in 70 hospitals and 680 maternal and child health centres each year.

Knox City Council has a number of ongoing education and promotional activities in place, which include:

- Responsible pet ownership is promoted through Pets in the Park; an event held annually.
- Promotion of information sessions about responsible animal ownership for both children and the community.
- Promotion of registration and responsible pet ownership in Council's Knox News publication.
- Website: Council's website contains a wide variety of information in relation to responsible pet ownership and annual registration.
- Patrols: Proactive and complaint-based park patrols are undertaken throughout the year.
- Social media: Council promotes a number of responsible pet ownership topics via social media channels including Facebook.

3.2 OUR ORDERS & LOCAL LAWS

CURRENT ORDERS & LOCAL LAWS APPLICABLE TO THIS SECTION:

- **Dogs in public places** (*Domestic Animals Act 1994*, section 26) adopted in 2005
- **Mandatory desexing of cats** (*Domestic Animals Act 1994*, section 10A(1)) adopted in 2011
- **Cat containment** (*Domestic Animals Act 1994*, section 25(2)) adopted in 2021
- **Limits on number of animals kept** (*Amenity Local Law 2020* section 4.1)
- **Removal of animal waste** (*Amenity Local Law 2020* section 4.6 & 4.7)

3.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 3.0: Educate and promote responsible pet ownership messaging to pet owners

Action Number	Activity	When	Evaluation
3.0.1	Develop an annual communication plan to support animal management objectives, incorporating messaging on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The benefits of pet registration (i.e.. reuniting lost pets) • Containing and keeping dogs under effective control • Dogs on leash/off lead in Knox • Promote desexing of cats and dogs to prevent overpopulation • How to report and prevent dog attacks • Picking up dog waste/carrying waste bags • Managing barking dog complaints • Managing cat nuisances • Promoting State Government initiatives around responsible pet ownership 	Ongoing	Annual communication plan developed, updated and implemented.
3.0.2	Investigate additional ways to provide Council and State Government educational materials to newly registered dog and cat owners	December 2028	Material provided to owners
3.0.3	Engage a qualified animal trainer to run free or discounted sessions in Council reserves.	Ongoing	Number of owners who participate in these sessions.

4. PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS OVER-POPULATION RATES AND ANY HIGH EUTHANASIA RATES

Section 68A(2)(c)(iv) of the Act requires Council to outline programs, services and strategies to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats.

4.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

During the life of the 2021-2025 DAMP, there has been an increase in the number of euthanised impounded cats and dogs. This is largely due to a rise in animal surrenders post-COVID and an increase in impounded cats from hoarding circumstances, many of which were diseased or had behavioural issues. Moving forward, Council will work closely with our Pound provider, Animal Aid, to implement early intervention strategies that help keep pets in their homes and address behavioural concerns—ultimately aiming to reduce euthanasia rates.

In 2021 Council received grant funding from State Government to provide a reduced cost desexing program for eligible vulnerable and/or disadvantaged residents. As a part of this funding, Knox helped desex 99 cats and dogs. This grant is now exhausted however Council will look to apply for any additional grants put forward by the State Government to reinitiate this program.

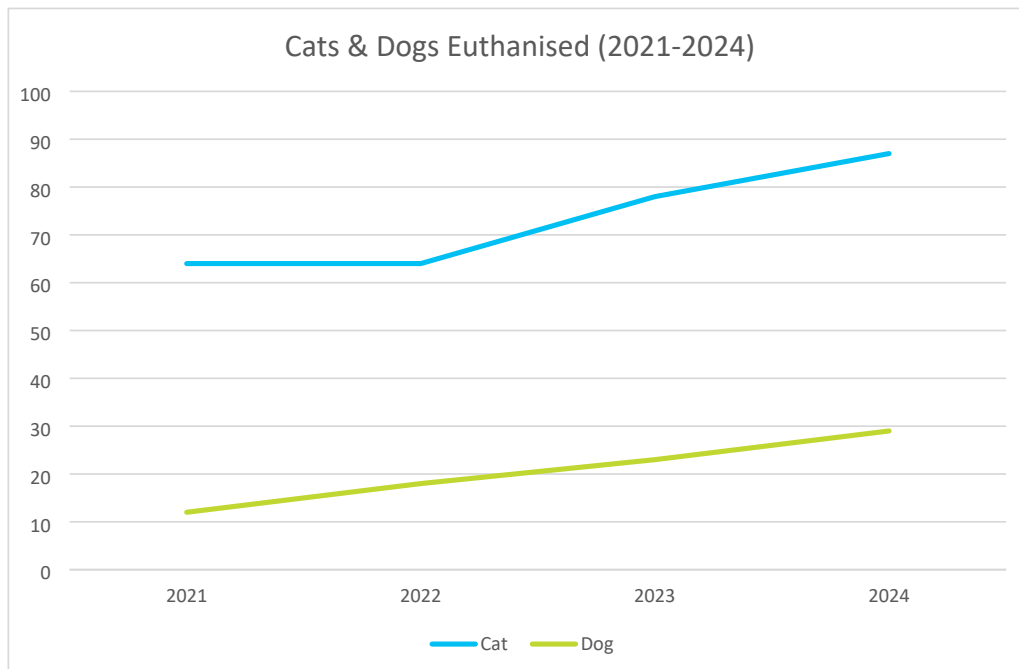
One potential measure to reduce euthanasia rates for dogs would be the introduction of an order made under Section 10A of the Act requiring the mandatory desexing of dogs, similar to the order already in place for cats. Increasing desexing rates of dogs offers several important benefits for both pets and the community. Such a measure though needs to be assessed against other initiatives that also encourage increased desexing rates.

One major advantage of increasing desexing rates is the reduction in unwanted litters and overpopulation, which in turn helps lower euthanasia rates in the shelter and pound environment. Desexed dogs are also less likely to exhibit aggressive behaviours and are generally calmer. Additionally, desexing reduces the urge for dogs to escape, leading to fewer strays and lost pets. Overall, increased desexing contributes to better behaviour and increased safety.

Our current and ongoing activities and programs to address overpopulation and euthanasia rates:

- Mandatory desexing order for cats.
- In 2017 Council reduced release fees of already registered cats and dogs from Council's pound facility.
- Implementation of the 24 hour cat containment requirement.
- Promotion of information sessions about responsible animal ownership for both children and the community.
- Promotion of registration and responsible pet ownership in Council's Knox News publication.
- Proactive and complaint-based park patrols are undertaken throughout the year.
- Council promotes a number of responsible pet ownership topics via social media channels including Facebook.

- In 2021 successfully obtained grant from the State Government to assist vulnerable community members desex their dogs and cats.
- Actively enforce and prosecute non-compliant dog and cat breeders.



4.2 OUR ORDERS & LOCAL LAWS

CURRENT ORDERS & LOCAL LAWS APPLICABLE TO THIS SECTION:

- **Mandatory desexing of cats (*Domestic Animals Act 1994* section 10A(1))** adopted in 2011
- **Cat containment (*Domestic Animals Act 1994* section 25(2))** adopted in 2021
- **Limits on number of animals kept (*Amenity Local Law 2020* section 4.1)**

4.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 4.0: Increase desexing and decrease euthanasia rates of dogs and cats

Action Number	Activity	When	Evaluation
4.0.1	Investigate initiatives to increase the number of desexed dogs, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Animal Management clauses in the Local Law 	December 2026	Engagement completed and decision made on implementation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with organisations that provide low cost desexing to vulnerable community members Assess efficacy of an order under section 10A of the Act requiring the mandatory desexing of dogs Reviewing registration fees for entire dogs Review of Council's annual budget to consider additional funding for a desexing program for vulnerable and disadvantaged community members. 		
4.0.2	Apply for government grants to run a low-cost desexing program to support disadvantaged Victorian families within our municipality	When available	Grant received from State Government and complete desexing of cats and dogs
4.0.3	Work with Council's pound provider to implement early intervention strategies to reduce the number of cats and dogs surrendered to Council	December 2027	Reduction in number of surrendered cats and dogs and decrease in euthanasia rates

Objective 4.1: Raise awareness of semi-owned cat population and the impact on environmentally significant areas

Action Number	Activity	When	Evaluation
4.1.1	Partner with Council's Biodiversity team to run targeted education campaigns where the effect of semi-owned cats on biologically significant areas is known.	December 2028	Education program rolled out

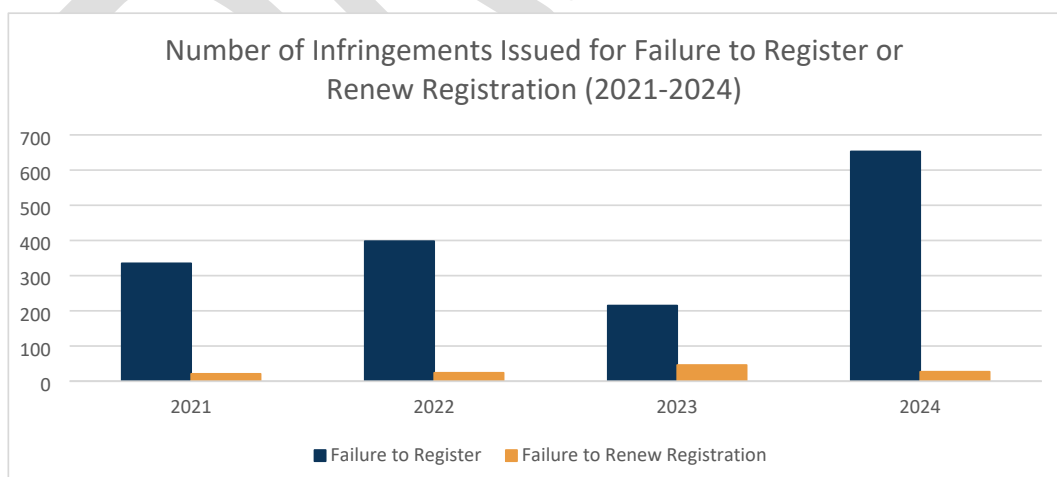
5. REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION

Section 68A(2)(c)(v) of the Act requires Council to outline programs, services and strategies to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats.

5.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

The Act requires all dogs and cats to be registered with Council at 3 months of age, with renewals due annually on 10 April. When a pet is registered with Council they are required to be microchipped and are provided with a Council identification tag. Knox makes every effort to reunite lost cats and dogs with their owners that are registered and wearing their Council tag. Animal registration fees go toward the ongoing operational costs associated with the running of Council's animal management services.

The number of registered dogs and cats in Knox has declined over the life of the previous 2021–2025 Plan. This is largely due to a number of registration programs, including proactive registration door knocks and property inspections and analysis of the various microchip registries being paused during the pandemic and in the years immediately after the pandemic. Every effort has been made to catch up on unpaid registrations for the years up to 2024, with door knocks for the 2025 registration year being completed in the second half of the year. A key focus of this updated Plan is to increase registration numbers for both cats and dogs. Council will continue to deliver core registration activities such as the annual doorknock of properties with unpaid animal registrations, follow-up on animal sales through Domestic Animal Businesses, and proactive park patrols to monitor compliance. In addition to these established practices, Council will also look to implement new strategies to further boost registration rates, such as re-introducing microchip database follow ups and investigating the feasibility of a registration amnesty to encourage owners to register their pets.



Our current and ongoing activities and programs to encourage registration and identification:

- Council will investigate and carry out enforcement action when identifying unregistered dogs or cats.
- All non-renewals of animal registration are followed up and reviewed by the annual registration audit.
- Domestic Animal Business notifications, including following up on the registration of a dog or cat after the owner has been sent their new owner letter.
- Ensure all impounded or seized dogs and cats are registered prior to being released to their owner.
- Act on referrals from State Government relating to Pet Exchange register and source number breaches in relation to the breeding and selling of cats and dogs.
- Conduct park patrols in Council reserves and open spaces to check that dogs are registered.

5.2 OUR ORDERS & LOCAL LAWS

CURRENT ORDERS & LOCAL LAWS APPLICABLE TO THIS SECTION:

- **Mandatory desexing of cats (*Domestic Animals Act 1994* section 10A(1)) adopted in 2011**
- **Limits on number of animals kept (*Amenity Local Law 2020* section 4.1)**

5.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 5.0: Increase the number of dog and cat registrations

Action Number	Activity	When	Evaluation
5.0.1	Implement programs to further increase animal registration through proactive audits, initiatives and programs	Annual	Increase in numbers of pets registered with council following audit.
5.0.2	Investigate the feasibility of a registration drive/amnesty to encourage owners to register their pets.	2027	Increase in numbers of new pet registrations with Council.

Objective 5.1: Increase awareness among culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities of per registration requirements

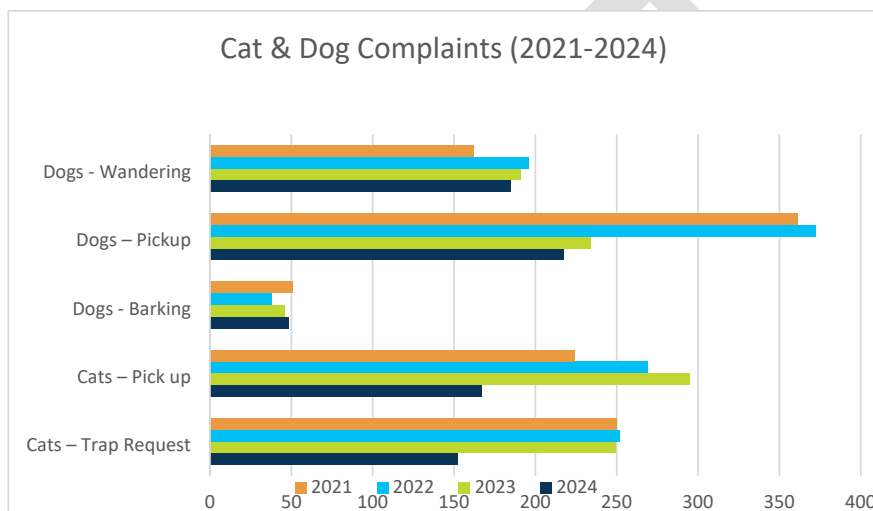
Action Number	Activity	When	Evaluation
5.1.1	Produce information in multi-lingual formats including desexing and registration requirements	2029	Material produced for use by Council and published on the Council website

6 NUISANCE

Section 68A(2)(c)(vi) of the Act requires Council to outline programs, services and strategies to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance.

6.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Council has been successful in dealing with nuisance complaints and promoting responsible pet ownership for a number of years. This has seen a reduction in the number of nuisance related complaints received over the last five years, as outlined in the graph below. With expected population growth, pet numbers are also expected to increase over the life of this Plan.



Nuisance barking

In recent years, Council has observed a decrease in nuisance barking complaints, largely due to a shift in 2019 toward a more educative approach involving both the complainant and dog owner. This change, along with the use of noise recording equipment, has reduced the number of complaints requiring formal enforcement.

Barking dog investigations can be resource intensive, though most are resolved quickly once the owner becomes aware and takes action. However, ongoing issues can impact individual and neighbourhood wellbeing.

Despite the overall decline, our *Have Your Say* survey found that 44% of respondents experienced nuisance barking at least once a week in the past year. This highlights the need to review and refine the current process to ensure it remains effective. There is also a need to review education material available for dog owners to ensure it is current, useful and meaningful.

Dog waste

Dog waste poses health and environmental risks, along with amenity and reserve useability impacts and being simply unpleasant, remaining as a common concern in the community. In the *Have Your Say* survey, 71% of respondents reported seeing dog waste left on the ground at least once a week, and 66% supported Council patrols in parks and reserves.

Under the Knox Amenity Local Law 2020, dog owners must carry a facility (bag) to clean up after their pet, which is enforced through officer patrols. There are a number of programs that can be investigated to increase compliance with the local law, including increased park patrols, a refresh of education material, the provision of free dog waste bags and increased access to bins within our parks and reserves. Generally, a combination of all of these activities would have the greatest positive impact for the community. The plan proposes ongoing work with Councils Waste team to review the provision on bins within our parkland and reserves.

Nuisance cats and dogs

Council regularly receives complaints about nuisance cats. To assist residents, a cat trap hire service is available to help manage semi-owned and stray cats. In 2022, Council introduced 24-hour cat containment restrictions (see Attachment C) to improve cat safety, reduce nuisance behaviours like spraying and fighting, and protect local wildlife.

Containment also prevents issues such as defecating, digging, and excessive noise on private property. State Government support is increasing through the Victorian Cat Management Strategy 2025–2035, which promotes wider containment, education programs, and simplified cat enclosure guidelines.

Our current and ongoing activities and programs to reduce nuisance cats and dogs:

- Reports of dogs wandering at large or not securely contained are investigated immediately. Fines may be issued to owners of offending dogs. If the animal is impounded the owner must also pay a reclaim fee.
- Issues of dog containment relating to inadequate fencing are investigated and the owner provided with relevant information.
- Reports of dogs off lead are investigated and the owner may be fined when they are able to be identified.
- Reports of dog owners not removing dog waste are investigated and owners may be fined when they are able to be identified
- Noise recording devices are available for nuisance barking complaints.
- Cat traps are available to the community to assist with nuisance cat complaints.
- Cats found wandering at large off their property and/or creating a nuisance are issued with infringements.

- Conduct park patrols in Council reserves and open spaces to check that owners are carrying dog waste bags.

6.2 OUR ORDERS & LOCAL LAWS

CURRENT ORDERS & LOCAL LAWS APPLICABLE TO THIS SECTION:

- **Dogs in public places** (*Domestic Animals Act 1994* section 26) adopted in 2005
- **Mandatory desexing of cats** (*Domestic Animals Act 1994* section 10A(1)) adopted in 2011
- **Cat containment** (*Domestic Animals Act 1994* section 25(2)) adopted in 2021
- **Limits on number of animals kept** (Amenity Local Law 2020 section 4.1)
- **Removal of animal waste** (Amenity Local Law 2020 section 4.6 & 4.7)
- **Animal noise and odour** (Amenity Local Law 2020 section 4.8 & 4.9)

6.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 6.0: Reduce nuisance dog complaints

Action Number	Activity	When	Evaluation
6.0.1	Review infringement penalty amount for not carrying waste bag & not picking up waste as a part of Councils Local Law review	2026	reviewed infringement amounts implemented
6.0.2	Investigate opportunities to provide dog waste bags to pet owners in certain circumstances.	2026	Reduction in complaints of dog waste
6.0.3	Review the provision on bins for the disposal of dog waste within our parkland and reserves.	2026	Bin locations reviewed and changes implemented
6.0.4	Promote the use of Knox resident discount of dog waste composters available to Knox residents	Ongoing	Reduction in complaints of dog waste
6.0.5	Review and update barking dog process and material provided to the community. Investigate the feasibility of using noise recording devices such as Noise Net to manage difficult complaints	2027	Updated process and material on website

Objective 6.1: Reduce nuisance cat complaints

Action Number	Activity	When	Evaluation
6.1.1	Promote the Victorian Government 'Cat Management Strategy 2025-2025' to the community	Ongoing	Reduction in nuisance cat complaints
6.1.2	Provide educational material to the community from the Victorian Government relating to cat containment and 'Safe Cats, Safe Wildlife'.	Ongoing	Reduction in nuisance cat complaints

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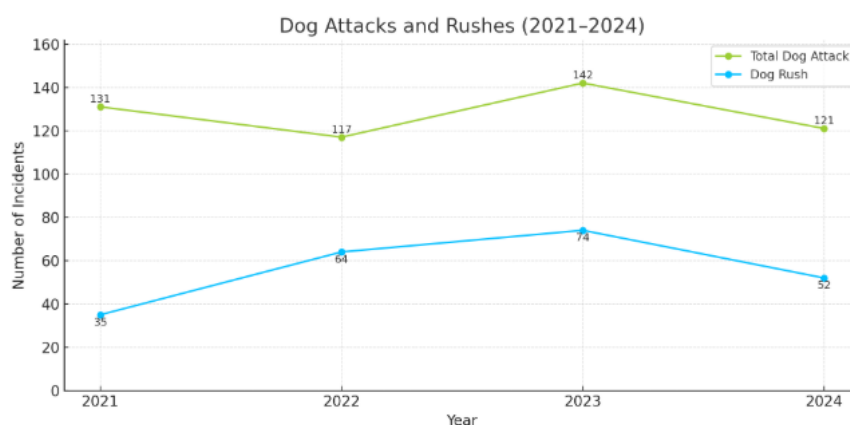
7 DOG ATTACKS

Section 68A(2)(c)(iii) of the Act requires Council to outline programs, services and strategies to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals.

7.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Dog attacks and aggression in public places pose the highest risk in animal management—for the community, other animals, and the Animal Management Officers who respond to these incidents. Council investigates all reported attacks and prosecutes serious cases through the Magistrates' Court. Dogs suspected of involvement may be seized and impounded until proceedings are finalised. Reports come from a variety of sources, including victims, dog owners, other councils, government agencies, and veterinary clinics. Motivations to report can include public safety concerns, financial compensation, or a sense of duty.

Most attacks involve dogs that are not adequately socialised, not contained to their property, or not under effective control. The high number of off-lead areas in Knox may also contribute to increased risk. The following graph shows dog attack and dog rush complaints received over the past four years. A dog rush is when a dog aggressively approaches a person within 3 metres.



In 2024, Council received 401 requests related to dog pickups and reports of dogs wandering at large. Dogs that are not properly contained to their property are at increased risk of being involved in dog attacks or rush incidents. Currently, Council enforces these matters under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*. When addressing cases involving dogs escaping due to inadequate fencing, Council must apply for a fencing order through the Magistrates' Court — a process that can be both complex and time consuming.

Council is scheduled to review the Amenity Local Law in 2026, and as part of this process, this Plan proposes investigating the introduction of a new clause requiring dog owners to repair inadequate fencing when directed.

Current and ongoing activities and programs addressing dog attacks:

- Respond promptly to all reported dog attacks, rush incidents, and dogs found wandering at large. This includes both business hours and after-hours responses via the on-call officer to help prevent further incidents.
- Seize and impound dogs involved in serious attacks or with a known history of aggressive behaviour, pending investigation and/or legal action.
- Declare offending dogs as *Menacing* or *Dangerous* where appropriate, or seek Court Orders for their destruction in serious cases.
- Conduct targeted patrols in parks and reserves where off-lead dogs or aggressive behaviour have been reported.
- Liaise with other councils regarding the movement of declared dogs into or out of Knox.
- Maintain accurate and up-to-date records of all declared dogs in both the Victorian Declared Dog Registry and Council's internal systems.
- Carry out unannounced inspections at properties housing declared dogs or subject to Court orders to ensure compliance with containment requirements.

7.2 OUR ORDERS & LOCAL LAWS

CURRENT ORDERS & LOCAL LAWS APPLICABLE TO THIS SECTION:

- **Dogs in public places (*Domestic Animals Act 1994* section 26) adopted in 2005**
- **Limits on number of animals kept (*Amenity Local Law 2020* section 4.1)**

7.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 7.0: Increase awareness of Councils dog attack process and capabilities and outcomes

Action Number	Activity	When	Evaluation
7.0.1	Increase transparency in dog attack investigations for victims and accused by creating dog attack information booklet that can be provided to involved parties.	2028	Feedback sought from users of the new kit
7.0.2	During the review of the Knox Amenity Local Law 2020 investigate animal management clauses to adequately address the needs of the community. Specifically develop clauses relating to containment of dogs.	2026	Adoption of the new amenity local law
7.0.3	Refer court outcomes to the communications team for media releases to generate public awareness.	Ongoing	Internal process developed to publicise Court outcomes

8. DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREED DOGS

Section 68A(2)(c)(vii) of the Act requires Council to outline programs, services and strategies to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations

8.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Council follows up all reports of dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs promptly to reduce risk to the community. In addition, all declared dogs on Council's database are inspected annually to ensure that they are compliant with the relevant legislation and regulations.

Dangerous dogs can be three types of dogs:

- A dog declared dangerous by Council due to an attack;
- A dog kept as a guard dog for the purposes of guarding non-residential premises; or
- A dog trained to attack or bite any person.

Council may also declare a dog to be a dangerous dog if the dog is a menacing dog and the owner is in breach of the associated regulations or if the dog has been declared a dangerous dog under the law of another State or Territory of the Commonwealth.

A menacing dog is a dog declared as such by Council because:

- The dog has rushed at or chased a person;
- The dog bites any person or animal causing a non-serious injury; or
- The dog has been declared a menacing dog under a law of another State or Territory of the Commonwealth.

A restricted breed dog is a dog that is any one of the following breeds:

- Japanese Tosa
- Fila Brasileiro
- Dogo Argentino
- Perra de Presa Canario (or Presa Canario)
- American Pit Bull Terrier (or Pit Bull Terrier).

Council's authorised officers undertake the Ministerial approved Canine Anatomy Identification Training course under section 98A(4)(b) of the Act. This training assists officers in the identification of restricted breed dogs and the application of the restricted breed dog standard.

At the start of a prosecution for a serious dog attack, Council will decide whether to seek a destruction order from the Court. Any such recommendation must be approved by the Manager City

Safety and Health or the Director City Liveability. The dog owner will be advised of Council's position and informed that, if the destruction order is not granted, Council may consider declaring the dog dangerous.

If a declaration is considered, the owner will have the opportunity to provide written and/or oral submissions under the *Domestic Animals Act*, usually within 48 hours of the Court decision. This process is discussed with the owner in advance to minimise the dog's time in the pound.

The final decision on a dangerous dog declaration will be made by the Manager Governance & Risk or the Director Customer & Performance - neither of whom will have been involved in the prosecution.

Our ongoing activities and programs relating to declared restricted, menacing and dangerous dogs:

- Ensure all declared dogs are recorded on the Victorian Declared Dog Register, including any changes to details
- All declared dogs are recorded on an in-house register
- Inspections of declared dogs are conducted on an annual basis
- Communication with other councils in relation to declared dogs which have moved out of or into Knox
- Proactive inspections of industrial areas to identify undeclared guard dogs
- Issuing of infringement notices or summons when in breach of the Domestic Animals Act or Regulations
- Review of registration database of all industrial properties to identify un-declared guard dogs
- Monitor all new registrations for potential restricted breed dogs.

Declared dogs	2012/2013	2016/17	2020/21	2025/26
Menacing dogs	3	1	1	0
Restricted breed dogs	6	3	1	0
Dangerous dogs	6	6	11	9

8.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 8.0: Increase safety for the community around declared dogs

Action Number	Activity	When	Evaluation
8.0.1	Develop a written process to assist decision making regarding the outcome for offending dogs involved in attacks	2027	Process implemented

8.0.2	Cross reference microchip details of all dogs reported as missing from the Victorian Declared Dog Registry	Annually in August/September	Locating missing declared dogs
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9 DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES

Section 68A(2)(c)(ii) of the Act requires Council to outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation.

9.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Council ensures all Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs) in Knox are registered and compliant with the relevant Code of Practice. Inspections are conducted at registration and annually thereafter, with additional checks as needed. Council works collaboratively with businesses to support compliance and will take enforcement action if required.

Council also investigates reports of backyard breeders and follows up on all cats and dogs sold to Knox residents to ensure they are microchipped and registered.

As of 2025, Knox had 19 registered Domestic Animal Businesses, comprising:

- 6 pet shops
- 4 dog training businesses
- 8 boarding facilities
- 1 animal rearing facility.

Council saw a marked decrease in the number of registered DABs over the life of the 2021-2025 Plan. In 2021 there was 28 registered and in 2025 there were only 19 registered. This Plan will look to identify any non-registered businesses through web searches, community boards, local papers and word of mouth.

Current and ongoing activities and programs related to domestic animal businesses (DABs):

- Community Laws Officers conduct annual inspections and provide education and support to DABs to help them understand and meet their legislative responsibilities and comply with relevant codes of practice.
- Non-compliance is followed up with further inspections and, where necessary, enforcement action such as infringements or prosecution for repeated breaches.
- Council actively monitors and investigates the illegal sale of pets.
- All complaints about DABs from the public are investigated.
- Council follows up on all cats and dogs sold to Knox residents to ensure they are microchipped and registered.

9.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 9.0: Identify and register all unregistered Domestic Animal Businesses

Action Number	Activity	When	Evaluation
9.0.1	Identify all businesses that should be registered DABs in the municipality, including businesses selling pets / pet products / services in the municipality. Follow up to determine whether they are and should be registered with Council	Ongoing	Compare number of registered DABs before and after activity
9.0.2	Monitor Councils registration database and the Pet Exchange Register for owners that meet the criteria for a breeding DAB.	Annually in October	Compare number of registered DABs before and after activity

10 OTHER MATTERS

Section 68A(2)(e) of the Act provides for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary.

10.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Council Order – dogs in public places

Council's permitted on/off leash areas are established under section 26 of the Act. The current Order was made in 2005 and was effective from 10 April 2006. In Knox City Council, dogs are permitted to be off leash in all open spaces and reserves aside from 9 conservation bushland reserves. Dogs are required to be on leash in public places, which includes footpaths, shopping centres, car parks, bike tracks, walking tracks, anywhere within an active reserve where an organised sporting event is being conducted, all children's play equipment areas, an organised public meeting and permanent barbecue or picnic areas.

Exercising a dog in an off leash area must only be done if the owner can maintain effective voice or hand control of the dog at all times. The dog is not allowed to bother, worry or annoy another person or a dog.

Initial stakeholder engagement indicated the opportunity to review the outdated Section 26 Order relating to dogs off lead across the municipality. This was of particular interest to sporting clubs and the relevant Council teams that manage sporting grounds and reserves for active recreation as dogs pose a number of issues such as digging holes and causing damage to playing fields, dog owners not picking up after their animals, and conflict between dog owners and sporting club members and players. Initial feedback to the *Have Your Say Survey* showed that 47% of respondents had seen dogs not under effective control by their owner in an off-leash area at least once per month in the previous 12 months.

Benchmarking of surrounding municipalities suggests that the Knox S26 Order is somewhat unique in that Knox currently allows dogs to be run off leash in the majority of reserves, including sporting fields, throughout the municipality, rather than limiting off leash areas to selected reserves that are best suited to this activity. It should also be noted that Council has not reviewed leash controls in line with improvements being carried out to areas of open space such as the creation of wetlands, revegetation and improvements to playing fields and facilities. Surrounding councils, including Whitehorse, Maroondah, Dandenong and Yarra Ranges generally restrict dogs to being off leash to a select number of suitable reserves.

Our current activities and programs relating to all other dog and cat related matters:

- All animal complaints are investigated. Serious issues such as dog attacks, rushes and injured animals are dealt with as a high priority.

- All of Council's Community Laws officers are authorised under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (POCTA) and will investigate and enforce any reports of alleged animal cruelty.
- Authorised Officers are trained in Family Violence awareness and on how safely refer affected people to organisations that can assist them further.
- Eastern Metropolitan Region Emergency Animal Welfare Plan – this Plan defines the roles and responsibilities of Animal Management Officers and support staff during an emergency. The Plan is reviewed annually to be aligned with the Victorian Emergency Animal Welfare Plan to ensure Local Government responsibilities are addressed.

10.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 10.01: Review Council's Section 26 Order for dogs in public places

Action Number	Activity	When	Evaluation
10.0.1	Investigate a review of Council's off leash areas	December 2026	Order reviewed and recommendations implemented

11 ANNUAL REVIEW OF PLAN AND ANNUAL REPORTING

Under section 68A(3) of the Act, Council must review its DAMP annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan. Council must provide the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions Secretary with a copy of the plan, including any amendments, and publish an evaluation of the plan's implementation in its annual report.

EVALUATION OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DOMESTIC ANIMALS MANAGEMENT PLAN

Council will review this Plan annually with a full review being done in year four. Action items within the plan have time lines which will be reviewed on a regular basis throughout the life of the plan

An annual review will include:

- Activities completed in past 12 months
- Description of any changes made to the plan or planned activities
- Any new initiatives not included in the plan
- Any activities not completed
- Outcomes from activities completed.

Knox City Council

Report Type: Form Results Summary

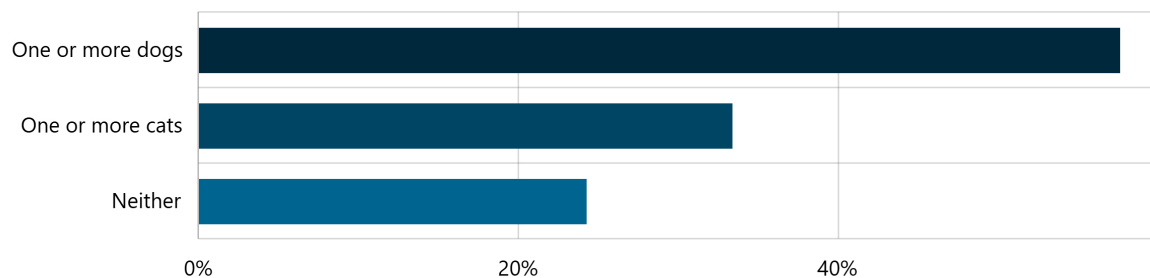
Date Range: 24-02-2025 - 16-04-2025

Exported: 09-05-2025 12:03:02

Closed

Survey on draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025
Managing dogs and cats in Knox343
Contributors351
Contributions**Contribution Summary****1. Do you own any of the following? Select all that apply** Required

Multi Choice | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 351 (100%)

**Answer choices****Percent****Count**

One or more dogs

57.55%

202

One or more cats

33.33%

117

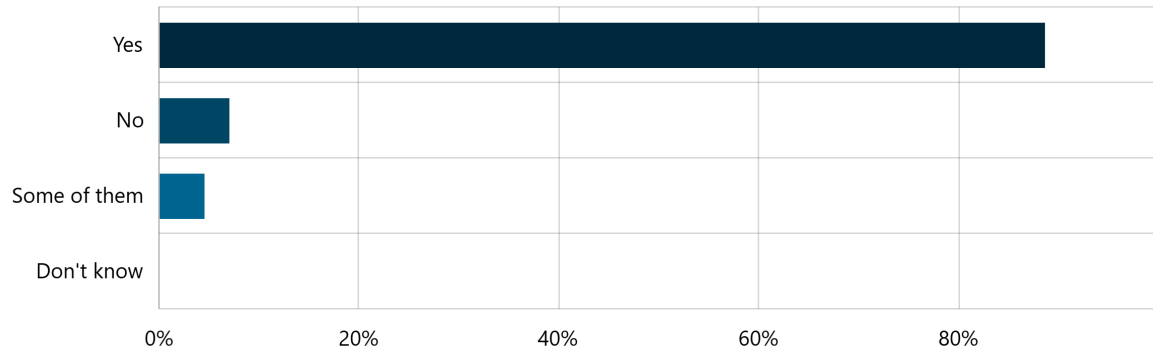
Neither

24.22%

85

2. Are your dogs desexed?

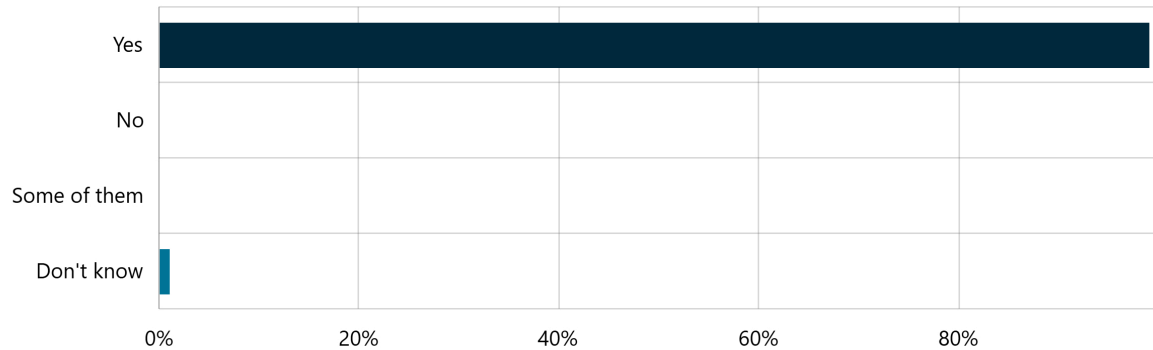
Multi Choice | Skipped: 150 | Answered: 201 (57.3%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	88.56%	178
No	6.97%	14
Some of them	4.48%	9
Don't know	0%	0
Total	100.00%	201

3. Are your dogs microchipped?

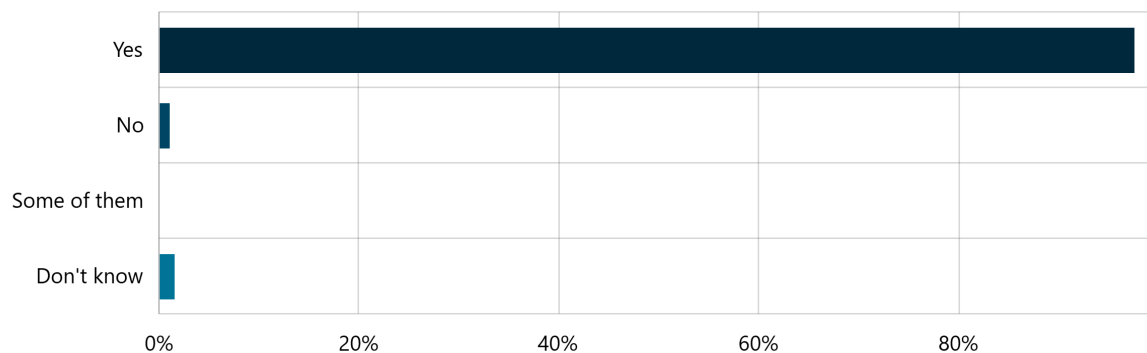
Multi Choice | Skipped: 150 | Answered: 201 (57.3%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	99.00%	199
No	0%	0
Some of them	0%	0
Don't know	1.00%	2
Total	100.00%	201

4. Are your dogs registered with Council?

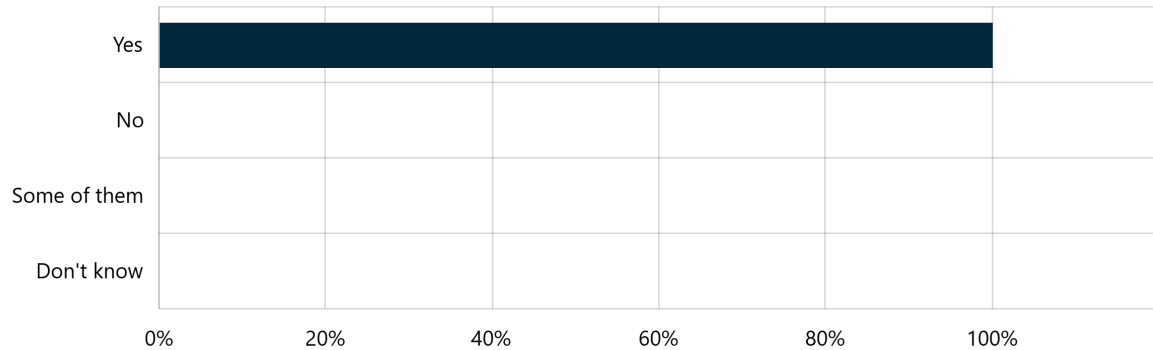
Multi Choice | Skipped: 150 | Answered: 201 (57.3%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	97.51%	196
No	1.00%	2
Some of them	0%	0
Don't know	1.49%	3
Total	100.00%	201

5. Are your cats desexed?

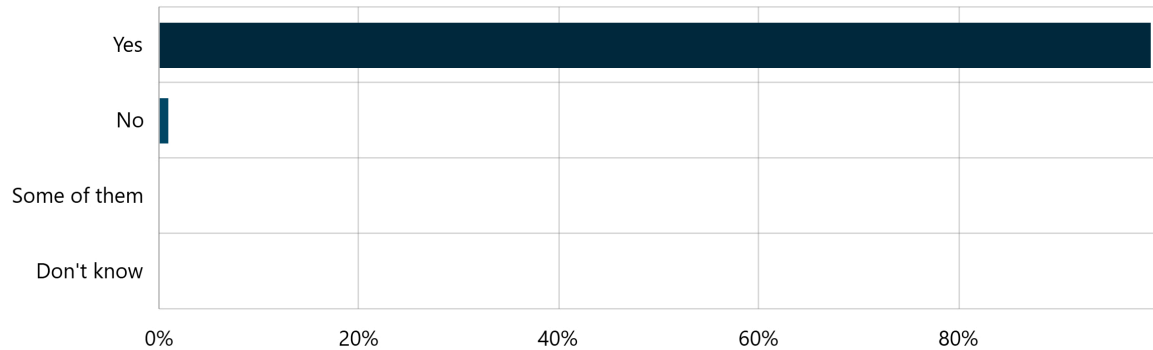
Multi Choice | Skipped: 235 | Answered: 116 (33%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	100.00%	116
No	0%	0
Some of them	0%	0
Don't know	0%	0
Total	100.00%	116

6. Are your cats microchipped?

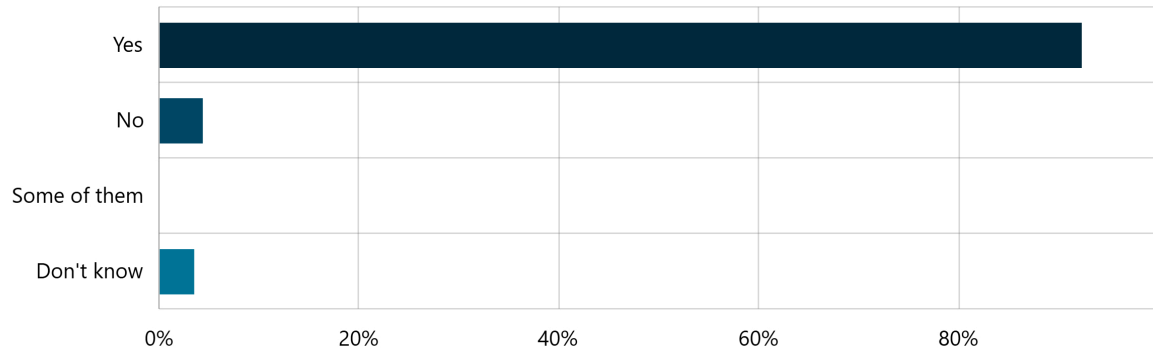
Multi Choice | Skipped: 235 | Answered: 116 (33%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	99.14%	115
No	0.86%	1
Some of them	0%	0
Don't know	0%	0
Total	100.00%	116

7. Are your cats registered with Council?

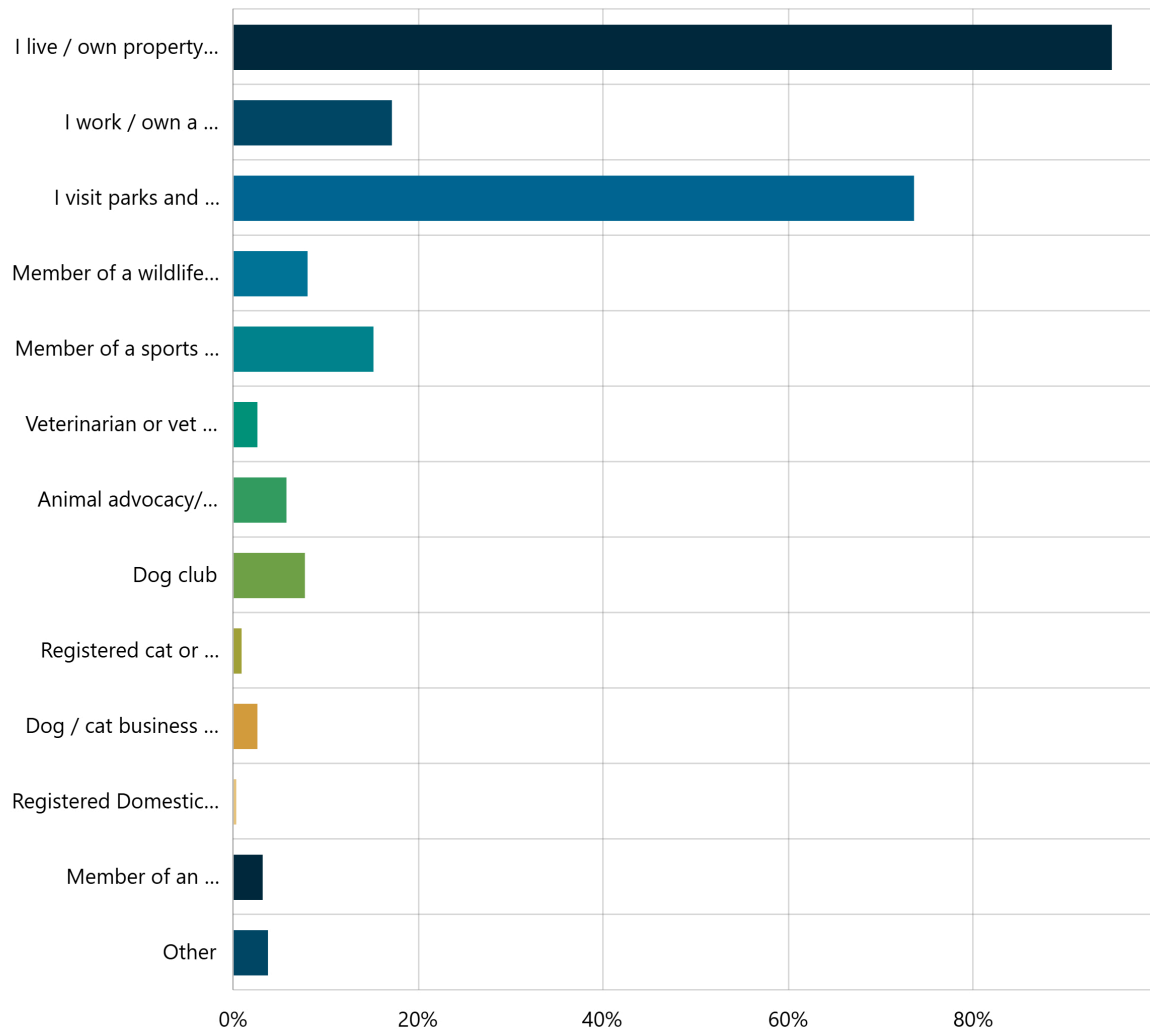
Multi Choice | Skipped: 235 | Answered: 116 (33%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	92.24%	107
No	4.31%	5
Some of them	0%	0
Don't know	3.45%	4
Total	100.00%	116

8. To help us understand your connection to dogs and cats in Knox, can you tell us if you are a member of any of these groups or categories? Select all that apply. Required

Multi Choice | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 351 (100%)

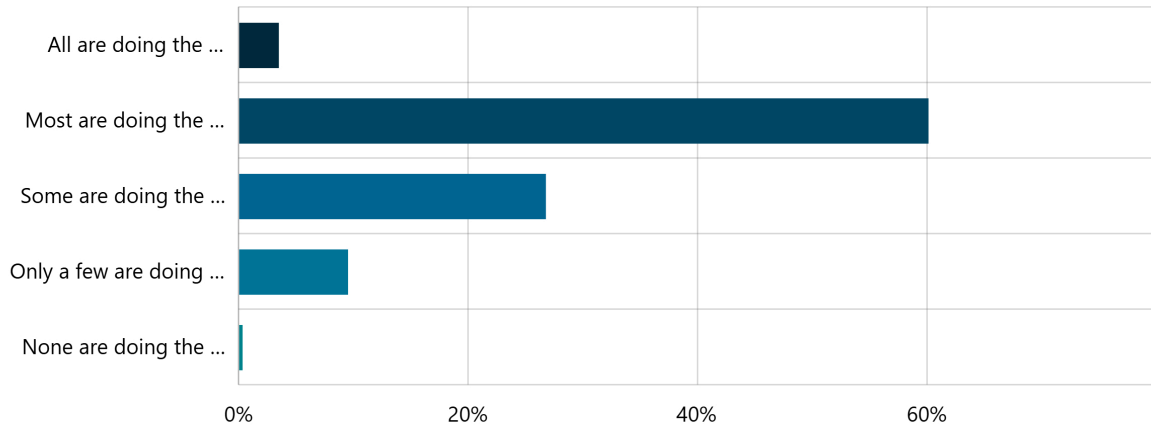


Answer choices	Percent	Count
I live / own property in Knox	94.87%	333
I work / own a business in Knox	17.09%	60
I visit parks and reserves in Knox	73.50%	258
Member of a wildlife or environmental group in Knox	7.98%	28
Member of a sports club in Knox	15.10%	53
Veterinarian or vet nurse	2.56%	9

Animal advocacy/rescue group	5.70%	20
Dog club	7.69%	27
Registered cat or dog breeder	0.85%	3
Dog / cat business operator (animal behaviourist/trainer/walker)	2.56%	9
Registered Domestic Animal Business operator	0.28%	1
Member of an applicable organisation (e.g. Dogs VIC, ANCA Cats)	3.13%	11
Other	3.70%	13

9. How would you describe your everyday experience of dogs and their owners in the community?

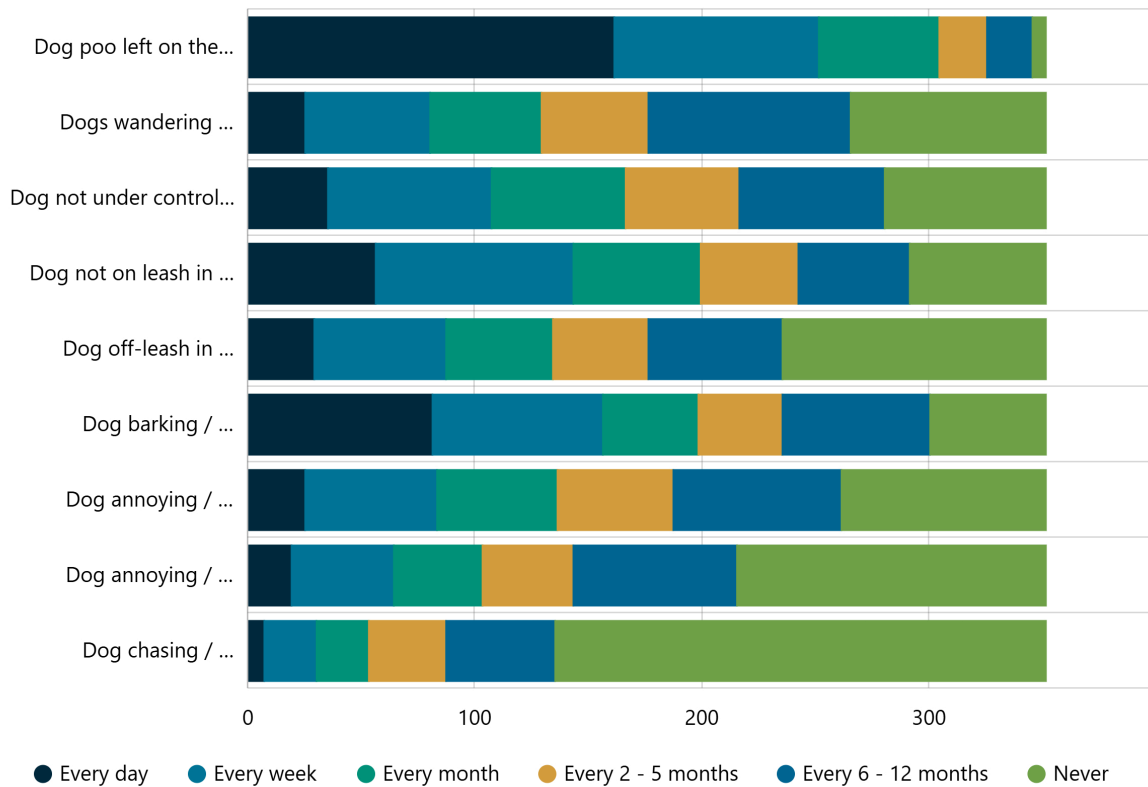
Multi Choice | Skipped: 3 | Answered: 348 (99.1%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
All are doing the right thing	3.45%	12
Most are doing the right thing	60.06%	209
Some are doing the right thing	26.72%	93
Only a few are doing the right thing	9.48%	33
None are doing the right thing	0.29%	1
Total	100.00%	348

10. In the last year, how often have you seen any of these dog related problems in Knox? Required

Matrix | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 351 (100%)

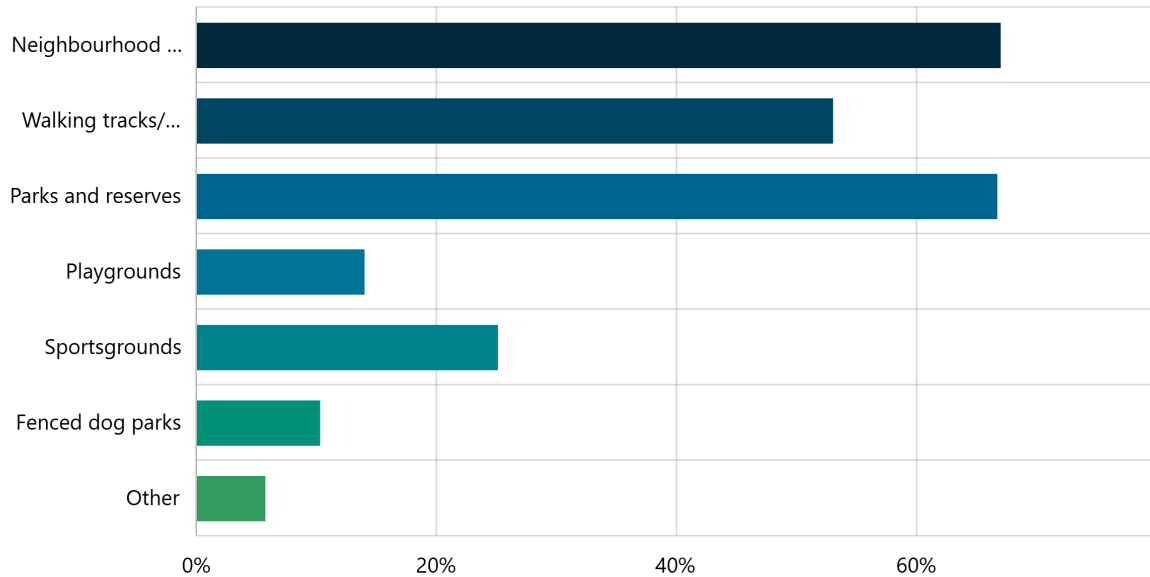


	Every day	Every week	Every month	Every 2 - 5 months	Every 6 - 12 months	Never	Count	Score
Dog poo left on the ground	45.87% 161	25.64% 90	15.10% 53	5.98% 21	5.70% 20	1.71% 6	351	2.05
Dogs wandering loose or without an owner	7.12% 25	15.67% 55	13.96% 49	13.39% 47	25.36% 89	24.50% 86	351	4.08
Dog not under control of its owner in off-leash areas	9.97% 35	20.51% 72	16.81% 59	14.25% 50	18.23% 64	20.23% 71	351	3.71
Dog not on leash in on-leash area	15.95% 56	24.79% 87	15.95% 56	12.25% 43	13.96% 49	17.09% 60	351	3.35
Dog off-leash in on-leash area	8.26% 29	16.52% 58	13.39% 47	11.97% 42	16.81% 59	33.05% 117	351	4.12

leash in playgrounds	29	58	47	42	59	116		
Dog barking / causing a nuisance	23.08% 81	21.37% 75	11.97% 42	10.54% 37	18.52% 65	14.53% 51	351	3.24
Dog annoying / intimidating other dogs	7.12% 25	16.52% 58	15.10% 53	14.53% 51	21.08% 74	25.64% 90	351	4.03
Dog annoying / intimidating other people	5.41% 19	12.82% 45	11.11% 39	11.40% 40	20.51% 72	38.75% 136	351	4.45
Dog chasing / attacking wildlife	1.99% 7	6.55% 23	6.55% 23	9.69% 34	13.68% 48	61.54% 216	351	5.11

11. What are the main places you see these problems? Select up to 3. Required

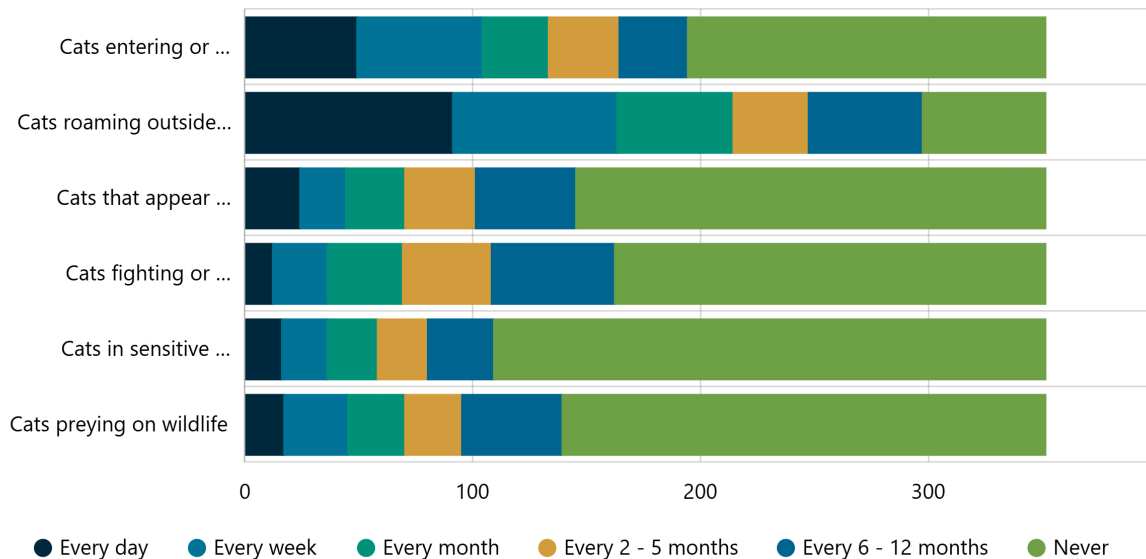
Multi Choice | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 351 (100%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Neighbourhood footpaths	66.95%	235
Walking tracks/shared paths	52.99%	186
Parks and reserves	66.67%	234
Playgrounds	13.96%	49
Sportsgrounds	25.07%	88
Fenced dog parks	10.26%	36
Other	5.70%	20

12. In the last year, how often have you seen any of these cat related problems in Knox? Required

Matrix | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 351 (100%)

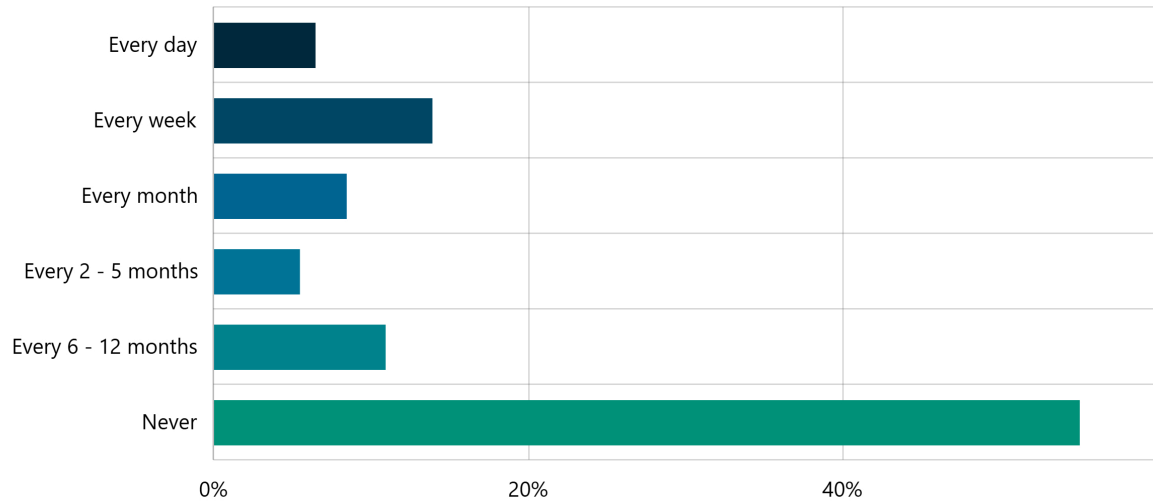


	Every day	Every week	Every month	Every 2 - 5 months	Every 6 - 12 months	Never	Count	Score
Cats entering or causing a nuisance on your property (eg cats digging, toileting)	13.96% 49	15.67% 55	8.26% 29	8.83% 31	8.55% 30	44.73% 157	351	4.17
Cats roaming outside their own property	25.93% 91	20.51% 72	14.53% 51	9.40% 33	14.25% 50	15.38% 54	351	3.12
Cats that appear unowned (strays)	6.84% 24	5.70% 20	7.41% 26	8.83% 31	12.54% 44	58.69% 206	351	4.91
Cats fighting or making loud noises	3.42% 12	6.84% 24	9.40% 33	11.11% 39	15.38% 54	53.85% 189	351	4.90
Cats in sensitive environmental areas or reserves	4.56% 16	5.70% 20	6.27% 22	6.27% 22	8.26% 29	68.95% 242	351	5.15

Cats	4.84%	7.98%	7.12%	7.12%	12.54%	60.40%	351	4.96
preying on wildlife	17	28	25	25	44	212		

13. How often do you use fenced off-leash dog parks in Knox? Required

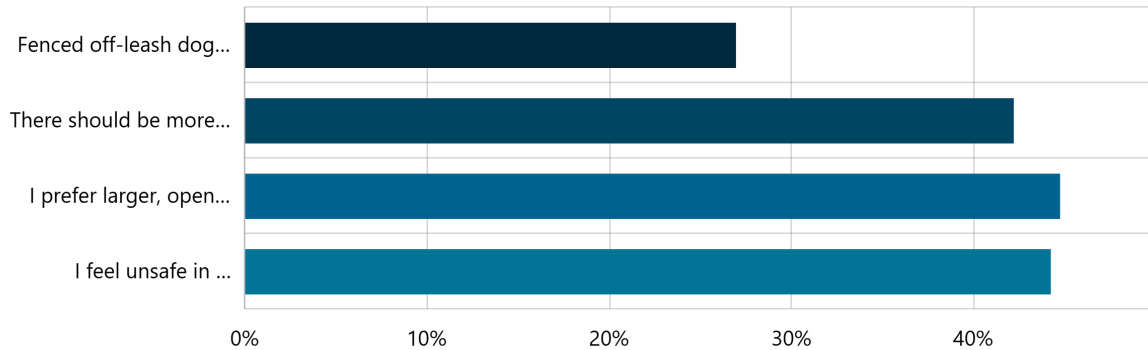
Multi Choice | Skipped: 149 | Answered: 202 (57.5%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Every day	6.44%	13
Every week	13.86%	28
Every month	8.42%	17
Every 2 - 5 months	5.45%	11
Every 6 - 12 months	10.89%	22
Never	54.95%	111
Total	100.00%	202

14. Do you agree with any of these statements? Select all that apply.

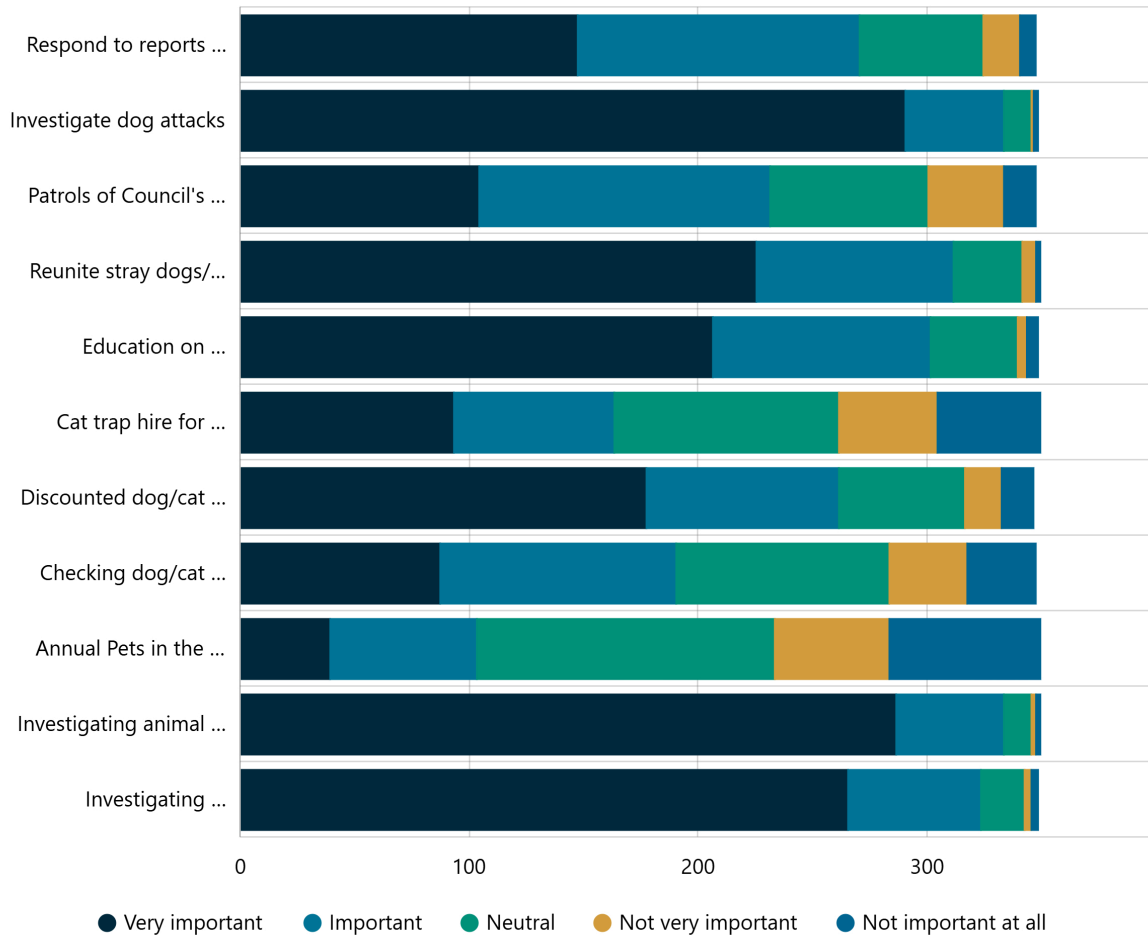
Multi Choice | Skipped: 154 | Answered: 197 (56.1%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Fenced off-leash dog parks give me piece of mind	26.90%	53
There should be more fenced off-leash dog parks	42.13%	83
I prefer larger, open off-leash areas over fenced dog parks	44.67%	88
I feel unsafe in fenced off-leash dog parks	44.16%	87

15. How important are the following services for the community?

Matrix | Skipped: 1 | Answered: 350 (99.7%)

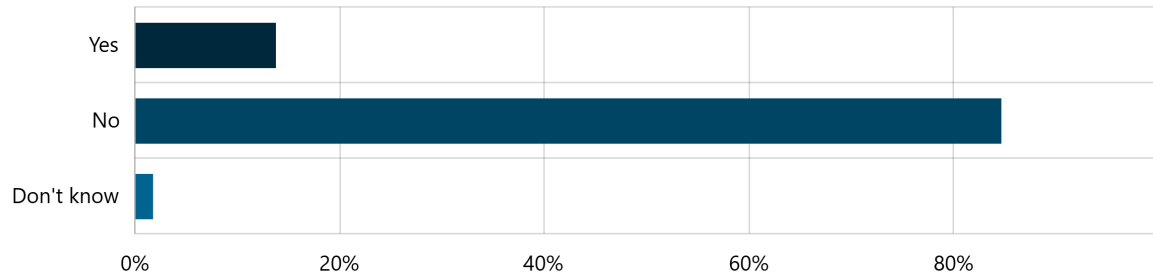


	Very important	Important	Neutral	Not very important	Not important at all	Count	Score
Respond to reports of nuisance dogs/cats	42.36% 147	35.45% 123	15.56% 54	4.61% 16	2.02% 7	347	1.88
Investigate dog attacks	83.33% 290	12.36% 43	3.45% 12	0.29% 1	0.57% 2	348	1.22
Patrols of Council's parks and reserves	29.97% 104	36.60% 127	19.88% 69	9.51% 33	4.03% 14	347	2.21
Reunite stray dogs/cats	64.47% 225	24.64% 86	8.60% 30	1.72% 6	0.57% 2	349	1.49

with owners							
Education on responsible pet ownership	59.20% 206	27.30% 95	10.92% 38	1.15% 4	1.44% 5	348	1.58
Cat trap hire for residents	26.65% 93	20.06% 70	28.08% 98	12.32% 43	12.89% 45	349	2.65
Discounted dog/cat desexing for pensioners	51.16% 177	24.28% 84	15.90% 55	4.62% 16	4.05% 14	346	1.86
Checking dog/cat registrations	25.07% 87	29.68% 103	26.80% 93	9.80% 34	8.65% 30	347	2.47
Annual Pets in the Park event	11.17% 39	18.34% 64	37.25% 130	14.33% 50	18.91% 66	349	3.11
Investigating animal cruelty matters	81.95% 286	13.47% 47	3.44% 12	0.57% 2	0.57% 2	349	1.24
Investigating non-compliant dog/cat breeders	76.15% 265	16.67% 58	5.46% 19	0.86% 3	0.86% 3	348	1.34

16. Have you had any interaction with Council's Community Laws team in the last 12 months regarding dogs or cats?

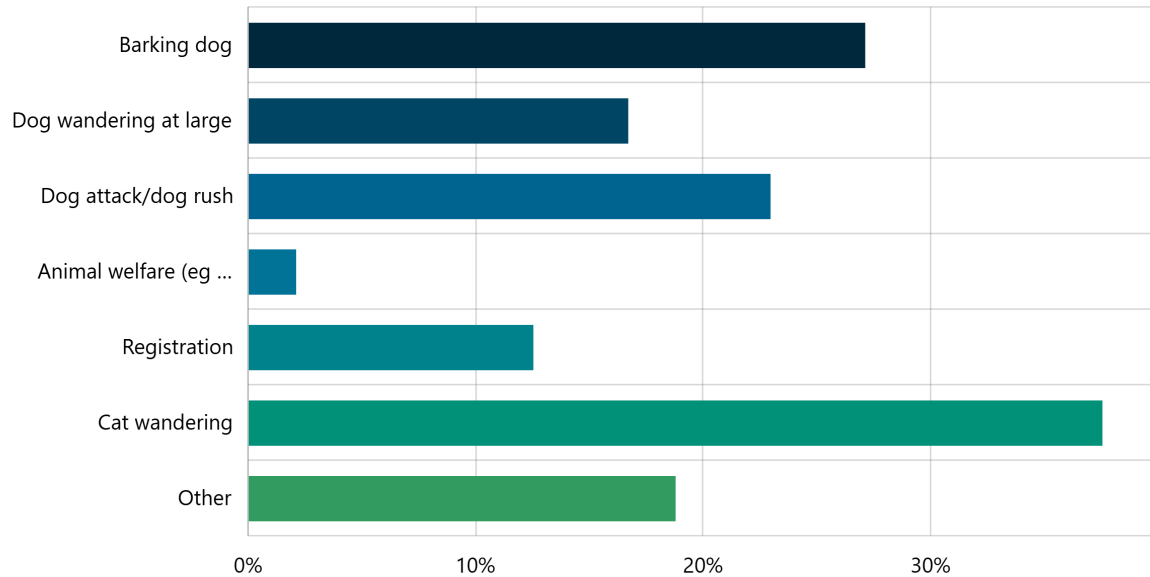
Multi Choice | Skipped: 1 | Answered: 350 (99.7%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	13.71%	48
No	84.57%	296
Don't know	1.71%	6
Total	100.00%	350

17. What was your enquiry/interaction about? Select all that apply.

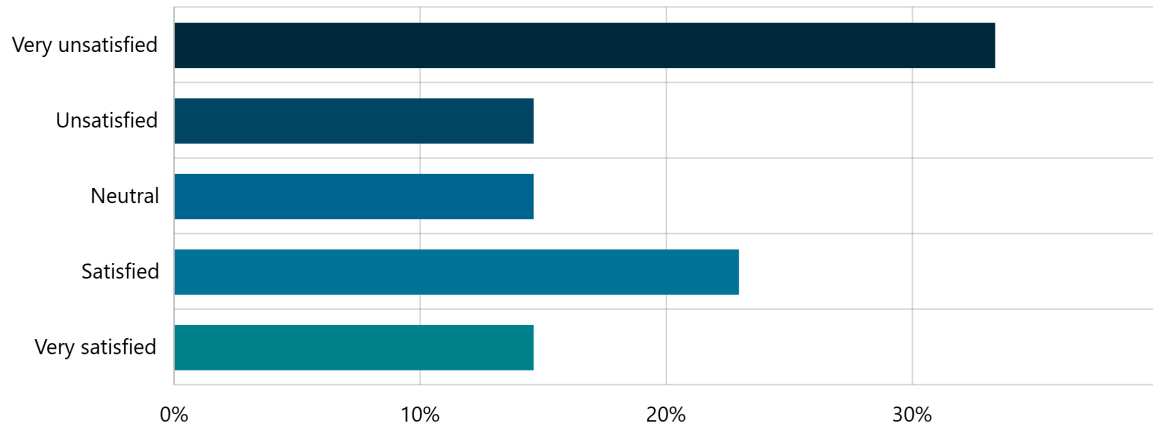
Multi Choice | Skipped: 303 | Answered: 48 (13.7%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Barking dog	27.08%	13
Dog wandering at large	16.67%	8
Dog attack/dog rush	22.92%	11
Animal welfare (eg animal wellbeing, injured animal etc)	2.08%	1
Registration	12.50%	6
Cat wandering	37.50%	18
Other	18.75%	9

18. How would you rate your experience with Council's animal management service?

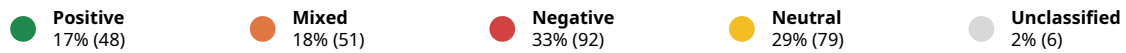
Multi Choice | Skipped: 303 | Answered: 48 (13.7%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Very unsatisfied	33.33%	16
Unsatisfied	14.58%	7
Neutral	14.58%	7
Satisfied	22.92%	11
Very satisfied	14.58%	7
Total	100.00%	48

19. Do you have any further comments or suggestions on how we can improve the management of cats and dogs in Knox?

Long Text | Skipped: 75 | Answered: 276 (78.6%)

Sentiment**Tags**

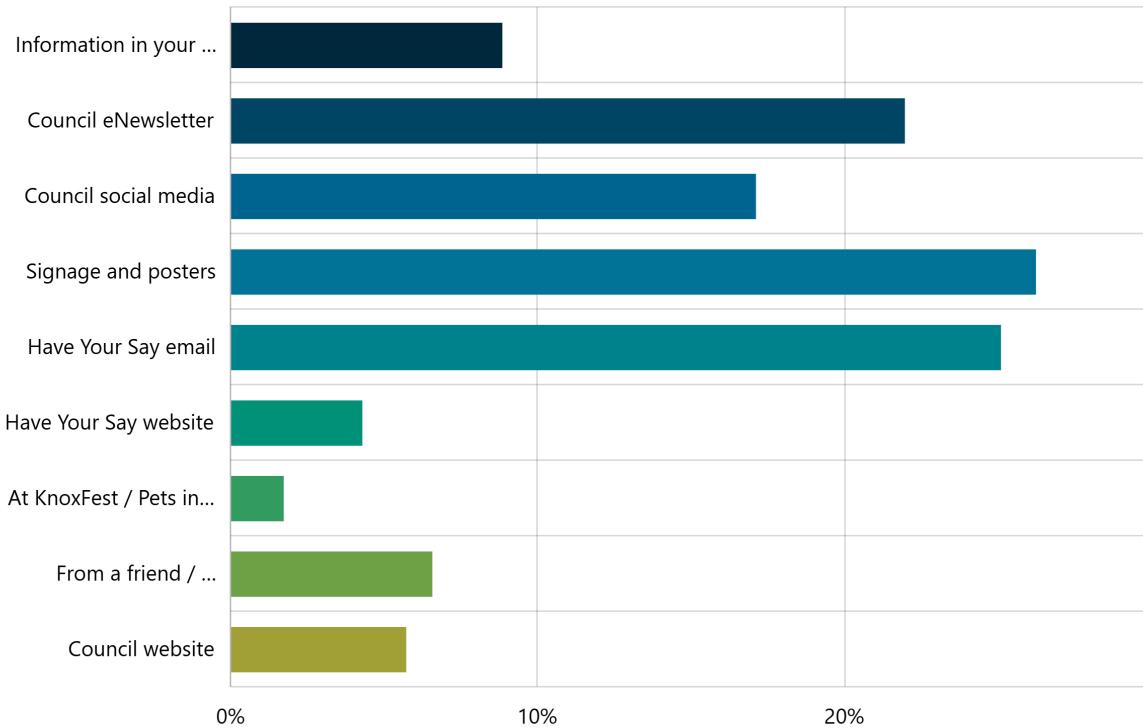
No tag data

Featured Contributions

No featured contributions

20. Where did you find out about this engagement? Required

Multi Choice | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 351 (100%)



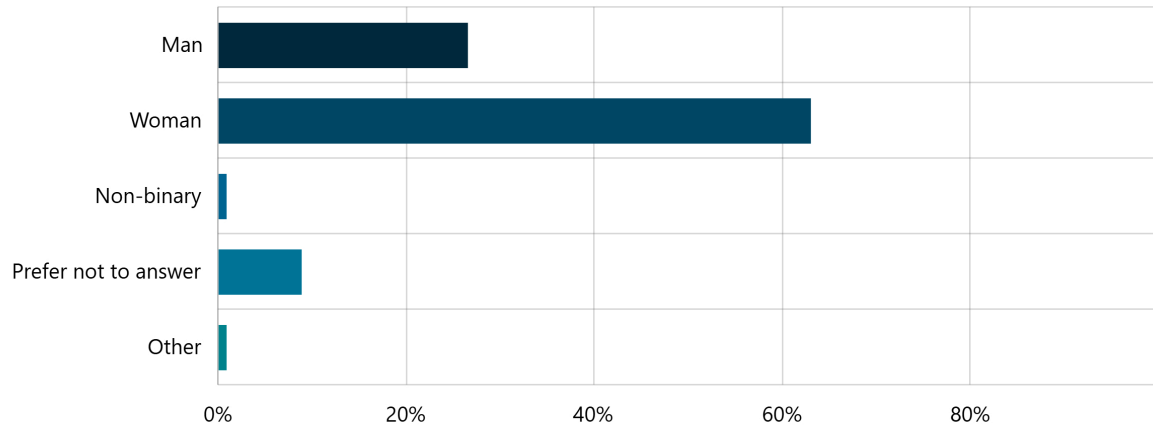
Answer choices	Percent	Count
Information in your pet registration letter	8.83%	31
Council eNewsletter	21.94%	77
Council social media	17.09%	60
Signage and posters	26.21%	92
Have Your Say email	25.07%	88
Have Your Say website	4.27%	15
At KnoxFest / Pets in the Park	1.71%	6
From a friend / family member	6.55%	23
Council website	5.70%	20

21. Year of Birth Required Number Skipped: 0 Answered: 351 (100%)
1987 Contribution 351 of 351 16 April 2025
1963 Contribution 350 of 351 16 April 2025
1981 Contribution 349 of 351 16 April 2025
1900 Contribution 348 of 351 16 April 2025
2001 Contribution 347 of 351 16 April 2025
1963 Contribution 346 of 351 15 April 2025
1985 Contribution 345 of 351 13 April 2025
1999 Contribution 344 of 351 13 April 2025
1976 Contribution 343 of 351 13 April 2025
1990 Contribution 342 of 351 13 April 2025
1986 Contribution 341 of 351 13 April 2025
1966 Contribution 340 of 351 13 April 2025

1958 Contribution 339 of 351 12 April 2025
1985 Contribution 338 of 351 12 April 2025
1986 Contribution 337 of 351 12 April 2025
1993 Contribution 336 of 351 12 April 2025
1977 Contribution 335 of 351 11 April 2025
2019 Contribution 334 of 351 11 April 2025
1948 Contribution 333 of 351 11 April 2025
1946 Contribution 332 of 351 11 April 2025
Showing 20 latest contributions only. Please see the data results for all contributions to this question.

22. How do you describe your gender? Required

Select Box | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 351 (100%)



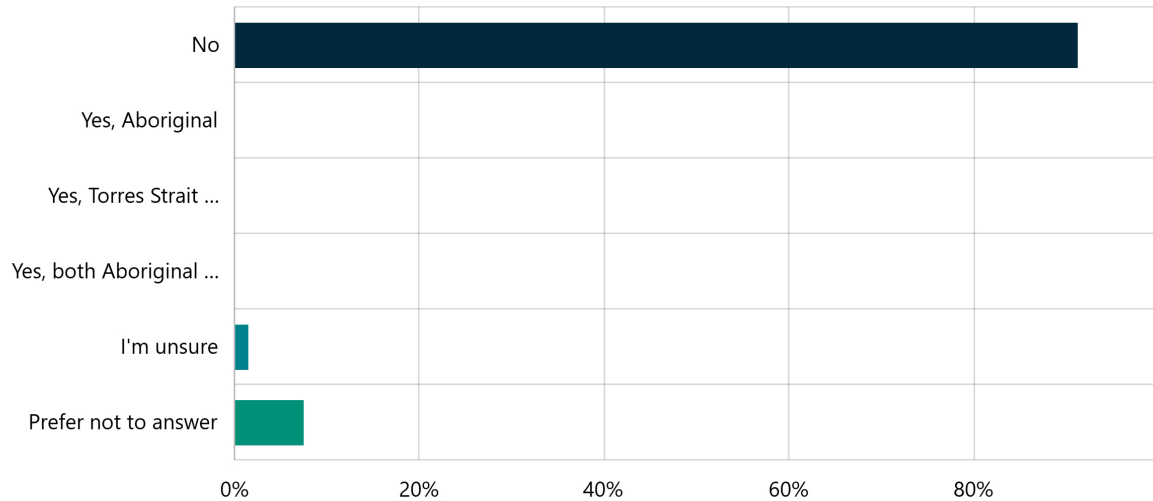
Answer choices	Percent	Count
Man	26.50%	93
Woman	62.96%	221
Non-binary	0.85%	3
Prefer not to answer	8.83%	31
Other	0.85%	3
Total	100.00%	351

23. Suburb Required Short Text Skipped: 0 Answered: 351 (100%)
Rowville Contribution 351 of 351 16 April 2025
Upper Ferntree Gully Contribution 350 of 351 16 April 2025
Ferntree Gully Contribution 349 of 351 16 April 2025
Boronia Contribution 348 of 351 16 April 2025
Boronia Contribution 347 of 351 16 April 2025
Boronia Contribution 346 of 351 15 April 2025
3153 Contribution 345 of 351 13 April 2025
Rowville Contribution 344 of 351 13 April 2025
Wantirna Contribution 343 of 351 13 April 2025
Upper Ferntree Gully Contribution 342 of 351 13 April 2025
Wantirna South Contribution 341 of 351 13 April 2025
Upper FERNTREE GULLY Contribution 340 of 351 13 April 2025

Wantirna Contribution 339 of 351 12 April 2025
Ferntree Gully Contribution 338 of 351 12 April 2025
Rowville Contribution 337 of 351 12 April 2025
Ferntree Gully Contribution 336 of 351 12 April 2025
Rowville Contribution 335 of 351 11 April 2025
All Knox suburbs Contribution 334 of 351 11 April 2025
Wantirna South Contribution 333 of 351 11 April 2025
Ferntree Gully Contribution 332 of 351 11 April 2025
Showing 20 latest contributions only. Please see the data results for all contributions to this question.

24. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin? Required

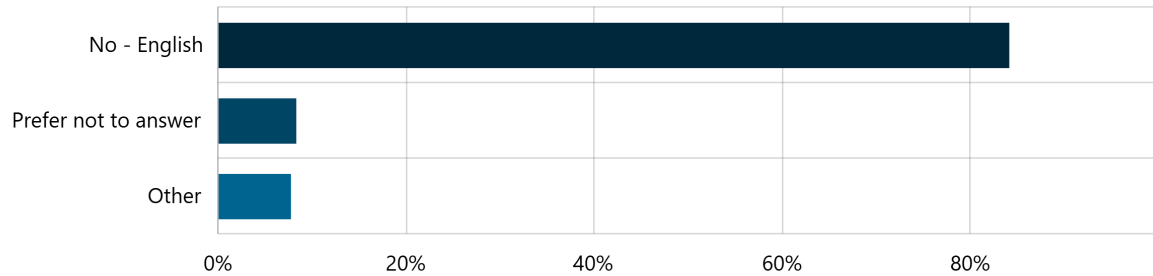
Select Box | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 351 (100%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
No	91.17%	320
Yes, Aboriginal	0%	0
Yes, Torres Strait Islander	0%	0
Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	0%	0
I'm unsure	1.42%	5
Prefer not to answer	7.41%	26
Total	100.00%	351

25. Do you speak a language other than English at home? (including Aboriginal and/or Torres Straight Islander language) Required

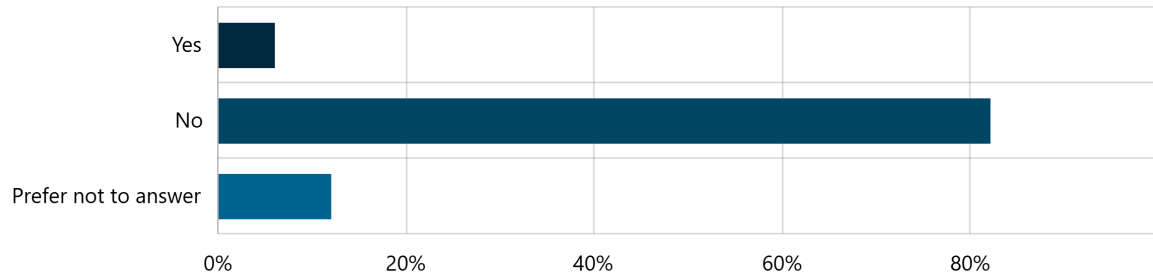
Multi Choice | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 351 (100%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
No - English	84.05%	295
Prefer not to answer	8.26%	29
Other	7.69%	27
Total	100.00%	351

26. Do you identify as part of the LGBTQI+ community? (i.e lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or gender diverse, intersex, queer or questioning) Required

Select Box | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 351 (100%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	5.98%	21
No	82.05%	288
Prefer not to answer	11.97%	42
Total	100.00%	351

Domestic Animal Management Plan – Phase 1 Community Engagement – Consultation Themes and Officer Comments

Feedback 24/7 Cat Containment	
<p>Feedback Snapshot:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 written responses clearly opposed cat containment. • 13 written responses expressed clear support for ongoing cat containment. • 8 written responses supported modifying containment hours to a dusk-to-dawn approach. • 29.6% of respondents reported experiencing cats entering or causing a nuisance on their property at least once per week over the past 12 months. • Overall, survey respondents appeared broadly supportive of continuing cat containment measures within Knox. 	
Opposing Cat Containment	
Impact to Cats	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 24/7 cat curfew is excessive, unnecessary, and cruel — many of us are responsible cat owners and don't need further restrictions. • Cats need to go outside — constant confinement causes stress, anxiety, weight gain, depression, and litter box issues. It's not natural, and it's not fair. • Cats are being treated unfairly compared to dogs, and Council appears biased in its approach to animal management. • Vilifying cats needs to stop — they're family pets, not pests. This policy has divided neighbours and caused unnecessary conflict. • 24/7 curfew deters adoption due to confinement concerns and costs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The containment order was introduced to promote responsible pet ownership, reduce cat nuisance issues, and protect local wildlife. While many owners care for their cats responsibly, roaming behaviour can lead to trespass, wildlife harm, nuisance and neighbourhood disputes. • Cats and dogs are managed differently due to their behaviours. Cats are more likely to roam and hunt, which requires a tailored response. Containment is supported by the State government and animal welfare organisations, and indoor or enclosed outdoor environments can still provide a healthy, enriched life for cats. • Council does not support the vilification of cats and recognises them as valued companions. The intent of the cat containment restrictions is not to punish, but to promote safety and harmony. Council will continue to monitor the

	impacts of the cat containment and consider community feedback in future reviews.
Impact to cat owners	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-income residents and renters are unfairly impacted — we can't all afford enclosures or fencing, and no financial support has been offered. • We're still expected to register our cats, but we get no benefits in return — no parks, no support, just restrictions. • The curfew deters families from owning cats — it's becoming too hard to responsibly have a pet cat under these rules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council acknowledges that the 24/7 cat containment restrictions may pose challenges for some residents, particularly renters and those on lower incomes. While enforcement focuses on education first, Council understands that not all residents can easily install cat enclosures or fencing. • Council is working to promote the State Government 'Victorian Cat Management Strategy' which provides cat owners with more information about cat containment ideas • Cat registration remains essential for reuniting lost pets and funding animal management services. While cats do not use public parks in the same way as dogs, registration contributes to the overall care and safety of pets in the community.
Comments on the implementation process	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's decision was rushed and felt politically motivated, ignoring strong opposition from the community. • Many of us wrote emails and left comments, but Council went ahead anyway. The community felt completely dismissed and blindsided. • The data used to justify the curfew was misleading or misinterpreted, and didn't reflect how many residents were against it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council carefully considered a broad range of factors, including community feedback, relevant legislative and enforcement requirements, animal welfare, the protection of native wildlife, and the aim of reducing nuisance to neighbours before making an informed and balanced decision in the best interest of the community. • The decision was made in 2021 and became effective in April 2022.
Alternatives to cat containment	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are better, proven alternatives like subsidised desexing, outdoor enclosure support, and Community Cat Programs — other councils have shown this works and even saves money. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council already promotes desexing and responsible ownership and is open to exploring further education and

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are better, proven alternatives like subsidised desexing, outdoor enclosure support, and Community Cat Programs — other councils have shown this works and even saves money. • We're asking Council to listen to residents and remove the 24-hour cat curfew in favour of a more balanced and humane approach. 	<p>support measures that improve outcomes for both cats and the wider community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 24/7 cat containment was introduced to reduce nuisance, protect wildlife, and improve pet safety. While it may not suit all households, it is one part of a broader approach to managing cats in urban environments. Council remains focused on practical and humane ways to support animal welfare and community harmony.
Support Cat Containment	
Support for 24-Hour Containment	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since implementation, native bird deaths from feral cats have significantly decreased. • The curfew helps reduce cats roaming and fouling gardens and streets. • Knox Council has a more positive and responsible approach to cat ownership compared to some other areas like Yarra Ranges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments noted, Council values feedback on the positive impact the cat containment restrictions are having on the community.
Enforce and Educate on Responsible Cat Ownership	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate cat owners to keep cats confined 24/7, either indoors or in fully enclosed outdoor cat runs. • Make it law that cats must be kept inside or in cat runs on the owner's property at all times. • Stronger enforcement is needed to ensure cats do not roam freely. • Council should require cat owners to provide enclosures and check compliance during registration. • Consider hefty fines for owners who fail to provide proper cat containment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council enforces cat containment through a combination of community education, complaint-based cat trapping, and follow-up action where necessary. Enforcement focuses on encouraging compliance. • Council cannot legally make cat owners install cat runs or to keep them indoors only. The cat containment restriction only enforce that cats stay on the property where they reside. Council encourages cat owners to take proactive steps to contain their pets. • The draft DAMP looks to provide educational material to the community from the Victorian Government relating to cat

	containment and ‘Safe Cats, Safe Wildlife’ to further support cat owners to keep their cats contained.
Changing Cat Containment Restrictions Back to Dusk to Dawn	
Support for Night Containment	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council should reinstate the dusk-to-dawn curfew or remove registration fees. • Paying registration but being charged to retrieve escaped cats is unfair. • The night curfew was easier to manage and worked better for cats used to outdoor access. • Night curfew would encourage more people to rescue and keep cats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council offers one free return home per year for registered animals, meaning they will be returned to their owners without impound fees and only a warning issued. Unregistered animals are taken to Council’s pound for owner collection and payment of registration. Additionally, a hardship policy is available to assist owners experiencing financial difficulties in reclaiming their pets. • Council understands that some residents preferred the previous dusk-to-dawn cat containment restrictions (trial) and feel it was more manageable, particularly for cats accustomed to some outdoor access. The shift to a 24/7 containment was made to better address issues such as wildlife protection, nuisance complaints, and pet safety, which occur at all hours — not just at night.
Cat Nuisance Feedback: Themes and Key Points	
Lack of Council Action and Enforcement	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knox animal management says federal law prevents action against trespassing cats—residents feel efforts to get help are wasted. • Council needs to change laws and take responsibility for cat nuisance and wildlife harm. • Calls for stronger enforcement, fines (\$2500) for cat killing wildlife or straying, with euthanasia on second conviction. • Requests for council to speak directly to cat owners and enforce compliance, rather than expecting residents to trap cats themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement of cats roaming is governed by State legislation, specifically the <i>Domestic Animals Act</i> 1994. Under this Act, Council has issued an order requiring cats to be contained on their property at all times, and Council actively enforces this requirement. • Without the ability to trap cats and scan for microchips, Council faces challenges in identifying cat owners and enforcing regulations effectively.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many residents report difficulties getting cat traps or even responses from council. Need for routine home checks to ensure cats are confined. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While strong enforcement and fines can act as a deterrent, they may be perceived as harsh and could provoke community backlash. Euthanasia is a sensitive and often unpopular measure. A balanced approach that combines education on responsible pet ownership with reasonable penalties is generally viewed as more effective and widely acceptable.
Wildlife and Environmental Impact	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cats roaming wildlife reserves and sensitive areas are stalking and killing native birds. Cat trespassing causes wildlife loss daily. Concern about cats fighting and destroying bird nests in private gardens. Residents trying to maintain wildlife-friendly gardens face constant cat disturbances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council offers a free cat trapping service to residents experiencing issues with cats trespassing on their property or harming local wildlife. We will deliver the trap to your property and collect any cats caught.
Community Concerns and Responsibility	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many cat owners don't keep cats indoors or confined, showing disregard for wildlife and neighbours. Cats wandering streets and parks cause nuisance, with some owners indifferent to problems caused. Cats entering neighbours' properties (through dog doors, fences) cause territorial disputes and stress for resident pets. Residents feel embarrassed or reluctant to report known neighbours, complicating enforcement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council offers a free cat trapping service to residents experiencing issues with cats trespassing on their property or harming local wildlife. We will deliver the trap to your property and collect any cats caught.
Fairness and Comparisons	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If dogs roam streets, owners are fined or dogs impounded; cats receive less enforcement despite similar nuisance. Residents feel council is dog-friendly but lax on cat issues. Calls for equal treatment and consequences for cats roaming freely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council provides a free cat trapping service to all residents who are experiencing cats wandering on to their property and/or killing wildlife on private property. Council will deliver the trap to your property and collect any cats caught in the trap.

Suggested Solutions and Requests	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make cat confinement (indoors or cat runs) compulsory and enforceable. • Increase fines and penalties for repeat offenders. • Council to provide more cat traps and better support for nuisance complaints. • Implement compulsory acquisition or removal of cats found off owners' properties. • Public education on responsible cat ownership needs improvement. • Consider leash laws for cats in public places. • Encourage council rangers to speak directly with offending cat owners. • Allow residents options to catch trespassing cats without legal restrictions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council cannot legally make cat owners install cat runs or to keep them indoors only. The cat containment restriction only enforce that cats stay on the property where they reside. • Increasing fines and penalties is regulated by state legislation. We will review current penalties and advocate for changes where necessary. • Expanding access to cat traps and increasing support for nuisance complaints would require additional resources or a reallocation of Community Laws officers, which could impact other service areas. Council aims to balance resources to maintain a high standard of service across all programs. • Allowing residents to trap trespassing cats without legal oversight can lead to negative outcomes. Council must ensure any actions taken comply with relevant legislation and that any traps used meet legal and welfare standards.

Feedback on Animal Registration	
Feedback Snapshot: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 respondents indicated the inequity in dog's vs cat registration and suggested the removal of registration requirements for indoor cats • 2 respondents suggested the implementation of increased registration fees for non-compliant owners. 	
Cost and Fairness for Indoor Cats	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owners of 100% indoor cats question why they must pay full registration when their cats don't leave the property. • There is little to no council service, benefit, or infrastructure provided for cats—especially indoor ones. • Many cat owners feel the registration fee is unreasonable, especially during a cost of living crisis. • Suggested solutions: Free or heavily reduced registration for indoor-only cats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The State Government requires all cats and dogs to be registered once they are over three months of age. • Animal registration fees help support Council's Community Laws and Animal Management related services, including managing stray and semi-owned cat populations, responding to nuisance cat complaints, and supporting programs such as cat trapping; along with promoting responsible pet ownership, including the annual Pet Expo.

Optional cat registration or linking it to property rates. Clear explanation of where cat registration fees go and what they fund.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A part of the draft DAMP looks to investigate the feasibility of a 'registration drive' which may look to reduce the cost of new registrations.
Incentives for Responsible Pet Ownership	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggest reduced fees for owners who can prove responsible care, such as: Obedience training for dogs (beyond puppy school). Containment of cats indoors or in cat enclosures (cattos). Good behaviour rebates (e.g., partial refund for no council interactions). Older pets (who don't leave the property) should also receive discounts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council offers reduced registration fees for certain animals, including: entire animals that have completed approved obedience training, puppies under six months old that are not yet desexed, animals over 10 years of age, and animals registered with an applicable organisation. Additional fee reductions are also available for pensioners.
Enforcement and Equity Issues	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frustration that registration fees are rising while irresponsible pet owners go unpunished. Dogs and cats are still seen roaming off-lead or outside homes with little enforcement. Some suggest harsher penalties for unregistered or roaming pets to offset reduced fees for responsible owners. Cat owners feel particularly disadvantaged since they're expected to confine cats 24/7 yet pay the same or more without benefit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration fees are reviewed annually as part of Council's budget process, with adjustments made based on service costs and inflation. The draft DAMP provides data on the number of infringements and enforcement activities. These have increased over the life of the Plan, showing that more people are being held to account for non-compliance. Penalty amounts for wandering animals and non-registration are set by the <i>Domestic Animals Act 1994</i> and cannot be changed through this Plan. However, the draft DAMP does propose reviewing penalties for owners who fail to carry dog waste bags or pick up after their dogs as part of Council's proposed Local Law review. Under the <i>Domestic Animals Act 1994</i>, all cats and dogs must be registered with Council by 10 April each year. This requirement is separate from any cat containment restrictions.

Communication and Transparency	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests for better communication from council about: Why registration is required. What services it funds—especially for cat owners. • One incident highlighted poor treatment by council staff over a misunderstood registration, calling for more respectful, informed interactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal registration pays for Animal management staff to support the collection and return of stray animals to owners, operating the pound service, investigating animal related complaints (including dog attacks, nuisance animals and animal welfare and cruelty concerns), registration and inspection of Domestic Animal Businesses (incl Pet Shops, Boarding Kennels and Breeders), subsidised desexing scheme and discount incentive schemes for new registrations. • All Council Officers receive customer service training; however, their enforcement responsibilities can sometimes be perceived as rude, particularly when individuals are subject to enforcement action. If there are specific concerns about an interaction with an Officer, individuals are encouraged to lodge a formal complaint with Council so the matter can be properly investigated.
Additional Comments	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some owners feel the focus is too heavily on dogs; more support should be given to cat owners who follow rules. • Suggest equality across species—cats and dogs—when it comes to enforcement, service, and cost. • Suggestions included sending advice kits upon pet registration, and ongoing education campaigns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council are committed to ensuring fair and consistent management of all cats and dogs, and will continue to review our policies to promote equity where appropriate. This includes evaluating the distribution of resources, enforcement practices, and registration fees to ensure they reflect community needs and expectations.

Signage	
<p>Feedback Snapshot:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 respondents specifically noted the need for additional signage in Council's open spaces to better inform dog owners of the applicable rules. 	
Clearer Signage for On/Off-Leash Areas	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better signage would help prevent conflict by setting clear expectations and reducing misunderstandings. Increase signage indicating where dogs are allowed on-lead vs. off-lead. Many park users, including those who speak limited English (e.g. Mandarin speakers), don't understand current rules—clearer signs would help. Suggested improvement: multilingual signage and symbols for better accessibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under Council's current leash restrictions, dogs are permitted off-leash in nearly all Council reserves, except for nine biologically significant areas. The draft DAMP includes a review of these restrictions, which will also involve an assessment of all signage in Council-managed open spaces. The draft DAMP touches on creating multilingual educational references to support responsible pet ownership.
Improve Visibility and Effectiveness of Signs	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current signage is small, unclear, or easy to miss. Request for larger, more prominent signs at entrances, paths, and key locations. Use better-designed signs like those in Mount Gambier, which clearly show rules and applicable fines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under Council's current leash restrictions, dogs are permitted off-leash in most Council reserves, except for nine biologically significant areas. The draft DAMP proposes a review of these orders, which will include an assessment of all signage in Council's open spaces.

Dogs Off Leash	
<p>Feedback Snapshot:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 47% of respondents stated they had seen dogs not under effective control in off leash areas at least once in the previous 12 months • 56% of respondents stated they had seen dogs off leash in on leash areas at least once in the previous 12 months • 8 respondents called for Council to provide additional fenced off leash areas for dog owners to use 	
Dogs Not Under Effective Control	
Strong Support for Stricter Leash Laws	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dogs should be on-leash at all times in public spaces unless in designated, fenced off-leash parks. • Too many owners believe “friendly” dogs don’t need to be leashed—this is not acceptable. • Off-leash dogs cause distress, fear, and in some cases aggression or injury to people and other animals. • Reactive dog owners are asking for clearly signed on-leash-only parks for safer access. • Current rules favour off-leash freedom, making it difficult for others to enjoy public spaces safely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under Council’s current leash restrictions, dogs are allowed off-leash in most Council reserves, except for nine biologically significant areas. The draft DAMP includes a review of these restrictions. • Alongside the review of off-leash areas, the draft DAMP aims to enhance community education through Council channels about the requirements for dogs to be kept under effective control and the rules for off-leash areas. • Council Authorised Officers often patrol on and off leash parks during business hours and afterhours to ensure dog owners are doing the right thing, this is a service that will continue for the life of the draft DAMP. Council provides education and enforcement where required during these patrols.
Safety Concerns for the Public, Especially Children	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeated reports of dogs running up to children in playgrounds, sports ovals, and public paths. • Many people (especially parents and older residents) feel unsafe or have stopped using shared spaces. • Owners often underestimate the threat their dog poses—especially large breeds or reactive dogs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council’s current leash restrictions prohibit dogs off-leash near playgrounds and public paths. If you observe this occurring, please contact Council so patrols can be conducted in the area. These restrictions also apply to sporting ovals during organised sporting events.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension leads and “voice control” are often used as excuses, but many owners don’t have real control. • Dog parks are sometimes misused, with owners distracted or allowing aggressive or unsocialised dogs to roam freely. 	
Enforcement & Monitoring Needed	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calls for discreet ranger patrols, fines for off-leash breaches, and real-time reporting (e.g. photo-based complaints). • Problem areas include sports grounds, school zones, wetlands, and local parks after hours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Authorised Officers often patrol on and off leash parks during business hours and afterhours to ensure dog owners are doing the right thing, this is a service that will continue for the life of the draft DAMP. Council provides education and enforcement where required during these patrols.
Keep Dogs Out of Sensitive Areas	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dogs off-lead are damaging sporting ovals, leaving waste, and threatening native wildlife in wetlands. • Requests to ban dogs from sports fields, playgrounds, and environmentally sensitive zones (e.g., Stamford Park, Lakewood, Kings Park). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draft Plan includes a review of off-leash areas, which will also encompass an assessment of all sporting ovals and environmentally significant sites.
Additional Off Leash Parks	
Need for More Fenced, Dedicated Dog Parks	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current off-leash areas are limited, often shared with sporting activities (e.g., Templeton Reserve, Kings Park), making them unsafe or unavailable. • Requests for purpose-built, fully fenced dog parks, especially near roads and in high-density areas like apartments. • Knox is falling behind other councils (e.g., Frankston, Berwick, Bayside, Echuca) that offer well-designed, enclosed dog parks. • Suggested features for new parks: Large fenced areas with shade, water stations, and bins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over the past four years, Council has installed additional dedicated dog parks across the municipality, supported by State Government funding. Currently, two parks are open: Knox Dog Park at Knox Park Reserve and Rowville Dog Park on Emerson Place. Two more parks are under construction, located at Kings Park in Upper Ferntree Gully and Wantirna Reserve.

Poo bag dispensers and regular maintenance Activity zones and options for dog-related events or fundraisers	
Safety and Accessibility	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many owners can't safely let dogs off-leash without fencing due to proximity to roads or poor recall. Calls for separate areas for large and small dogs to reduce risk and improve safety. Fenced parks would reduce anxiety for owners of older or more vulnerable dogs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the addition of new dedicated dog parks, dog owner have more options of safely fenced places to take their dogs to. The new proposed dog park at Wantirna Park intends to have 'small dog area' to reduce risk for small or more vulnerable dogs.
Education and Behaviour Management	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor dog behaviour (e.g. aggression, lack of recall) is a common concern—better socialisation and off-leash opportunities could help. More Public education needed on voice control requirements and responsible off-leash use. Support from dog trainers and responsible owners for parks that promote safe, structured interactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The draft DAMP includes engaging a dog trainer to conduct sessions for the community at Council's dedicated dog parks. In addition to reviewing off-leash areas, the draft aims to enhance community education through Council channels about the requirements for dogs to be kept under effective control and rules around off-leash areas.

Animal Waste	
Feedback Snapshot: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 72% of respondents have stated they see dog poo left on the ground daily or weekly 66% of respondents stated they believe it is particularly important or important that the Council conduct patrols in parks and reserves 	
Widespread Non-Compliance	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many dog owners fail to pick up after their pets, or pick up waste and then discard bags inappropriately (e.g. under bushes, on the ground, in waterways). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council recognises dog waste as a significant community concern. A Local Law already requires pet owners to carry waste bags and clean up after their dogs. The draft DAMP includes an action to investigate increasing penalties for

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue is prevalent in off-leash parks, walking trails, footpaths, nature strips, playgrounds, and sporting fields. • Cats also contribute to waste on private lawns and gardens. • Strong frustration from residents about stepping in waste, cleaning lawns, and health/safety concerns. • Some owners walk dogs at night specifically to avoid being seen not picking up waste. • Fear of escalation: Some residents express concern that confrontation over dog waste could lead to conflict or violence. 	<p>non-compliance, aiming to promote responsible behaviour and keep public spaces clean.</p>
Calls for Better Infrastructure	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High demand for more bins in key areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Trails (e.g., Blind Creek, Liverpool Rd Retarding Basin) ○ Pocket parks and reserves ○ Dog parks (especially entrances) ○ Near playgrounds and waterways • Strong support for poo bag dispensers across parks and trails. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing dog waste bags can create dependence, as some owners rely solely on park dispensers and don't carry their own bags. This is a problem when collection is needed remote to a bag dispenser. When dispensers are empty, owners may blame Council and fail to pick up after their dogs. Waste is often left on footpaths or nature strips if owners don't bring bags from home. Dispensers are frequently vandalised through broken locks, damage, theft, or bags being removed, scattered, leaving them unusable or empty for long periods and increasing the chance of dog waste being left in public areas. There is also a potential significant cost to providing this service that is not budgeted. • The draft DAMP aims to further explore the feasibility of providing waste bags and bins in public spaces to better support dog owners, acknowledging that such initiatives need to be considered within Council's financial means.
Enforcement and Accountability	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests for: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Officers routinely conduct park patrols in open spaces, this practice will continue during the life of the draft

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased patrols or discreet ranger presence, especially early morning ○ Fines for offenders ○ Public awareness/education campaigns • Some suggested innovative solutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dog waste composters subsidised by council ○ DNA tracking of waste (not practical, but shows frustration level) 	<p>DAMP. Patrols are conducted during business hours as well as early mornings/late in the evening and weekends.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Local Law already requires pet owners to carry waste bags and clean up after their dogs. The draft DAMP includes an action to explore increasing penalties for non-compliance to promote responsible behaviour and keep public spaces clean. • Knox residents can currently purchase Ensopet dog waste composters at a discounted rate. This draft DAMP aims to promote this option to dog owners.
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Barking Dogs	
<p>Feedback Snapshot:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 56.6% of respondents stated they have had an issue with a dog barking or causing a nuisance at least once in the previous 12 months • 11 respondents cited barking dogs as an issue as well as the difficulty in reporting the issue to Council 	
Ongoing Noise Nuisance	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent barking from unattended or distressed dogs is a major issue, particularly when dogs are left alone for long hours. • Some residents describe the problem as ongoing for years, affecting multiple households and entire neighbourhoods. • Barking causes disturbance day and night, disrupting sleep and daily life. • Concerns are heightened for vulnerable residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council acknowledges that barking dogs can be a significant issue for some residents. A detailed process is in place to manage barking dog complaints, with an understanding of the impact on complainants and the evidence required from them.
Reporting Process Concerns	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current reporting system is seen as inadequate, too slow, or difficult to navigate. • Calls for a stricter, more robust and transparent complaints process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's barking dog process was last reviewed in 2019. The draft DAMP aims to revisit the process to identify opportunities for improvement. While the complaint procedure may seem burdensome for complainants, this is necessary to gather legal evidence suitable for court if

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frustration exists on both sides — residents dealing with barking and those facing false or repeated complaints without evidence. 	<p>required. The draft DAMP also explores the use of noise recording devices, such as Noise Net, to help lessen this burden on reporting residents.</p>
Suggested Improvements	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make it easier to lodge legitimate complaints. Actively investigate noise complaints, especially those with multiple or long-term reports. Introduce stricter penalties for negligent dog owners. Address false or vexatious complaints by identifying serial reporters without substantiated claims. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council's barking dog process was last reviewed in 2019. The draft DAMP aims to revisit the process to identify opportunities for improvement. While the complaint procedure may seem burdensome for complainants, this is necessary to gather legal evidence suitable for court if required. The draft DAMP also explores the use of noise recording devices, such as Noise Net, to help lessen this burden on residents. The penalties for nuisance dogs are investigated and enforced under the <i>Domestic Animals Act 1994</i> and Council is unable to review these penalty amounts. Council investigates every barking dog complaint that includes a submitted log. An Officer reviews the logs and determines whether a nuisance is occurring; this decision is made by Council, not the complainants. If no nuisance is found, the matter will be closed.

Enforcement & Education	
<p>Feedback Snapshot:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66% of respondents believe that it is very important or important that Council conducts patrols in parks and reserves • 55% believe it is very important or important for Council checking dog and cat registrations • 86% of respondents believe that it is very important or important that Council provide education for responsible pet ownership. 	
Stronger Enforcement Needed	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many residents called for more visible patrols, particularly in high-traffic areas and at peak times (early mornings, evenings). • Requests for stricter penalties for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dogs off-lead in on-leash areas Failure to pick up animal waste Dogs exhibiting aggression Cats roaming or breaching curfew • Some asked for follow-up on incidents, including dog attacks and barking complaints, to be handled more seriously and efficiently. • Residents want greater accountability for irresponsible pet owners, including microchipping enforcement and registration checks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Officers routinely conduct park patrols in open spaces, this practice will continue during the life of the draft DAMP. Patrols are conducted during business hours as well as early mornings/late in the evening and weekends. • Penalty amounts can only be reviewed for offences under Council's Local Law. Offences governed by the Domestic Animal Act such as dogs off-leash, dog attacks, and cats roaming are subject to review only by the State Government. • Councils Customer Charter details Councils response times to customer complaints, barking dogs addressed within 10 business days and dog attacks handled immediately or within one business day. All reports of dog attacks are taken seriously with Council prosecuting a large number of incidents every year. • Council regulating conducts registration checks through the annual doorknock program, microchipping database checks park patrols and reactive complaints. The draft DAMP touches on investigating additional ways in which to increase registration compliance within Knox.
Education & Awareness	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support for better public education campaigns focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible pet ownership (on-leash laws, waste disposal, animal welfare) The impact of free-roaming cats on wildlife Safe walking practices and dog etiquette on shared paths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draft DAMP touches on developing a communication plan for education campaigns for a number of issues such as dogs wandering, animal waste, registration, and desexing. • Council uses animal registration renewal mail-outs to inform pet owners about important updates, including cat

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents want welcome kits or educational materials provided with registration (physical or digital), including health tips and legal obligations. Suggested mail drops, signage, and reminders with registration to improve awareness and compliance. 	<p>containment changes and upcoming events like Pets in the Park.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the cat containment restrictions were introduced in 2022, Council sent a letter to cat owners advising that cats must be kept on their property at all times. The letter included a four-page FAQ and an informational booklet from the RSPCA.
Support for Responsible Pet Owners	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calls for a more balanced approach: educate before penalising, especially in cases of accidental escapes or first-time non-compliance. Suggested incentives for desexing, containing cats (e.g., catios), and responsible behaviour. Some residents feel responsible pet owners are unfairly penalised, and enforcement should target persistent or severe offenders instead. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council offers one free return home per year for registered animals, meaning they will be returned to their owners without impound fees and only a warning issued. Unregistered animals are taken to Council's pound for owner collection. Additionally, a hardship policy is available to assist owners experiencing financial difficulties in reclaiming their pets. Each year, the Council receives numerous reactive complaints about irresponsible pet ownership and compliance issues, all of which are prioritised and thoroughly investigated.

Other comments/feedback	
Dangerous or Uncontrolled Dogs	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong concern about large or dangerous breeds (e.g. Staffies, Bullmastiffs, German Shepherds) being: Off-lead Without muzzles Walked by people unable to control them Suggestions included: Mandatory muzzling for certain breeds in public Tighter control and response to dangerous dogs Better support and follow-up in cases of attacks or threatening behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The <i>Domestic Animals Act</i> 1994 is clear in its application of declaring menacing, dangerous and restricted breed dogs and requiring these animals to wear muzzles outside of their property and install dangerous dog pens on properties. Officers conduct unannounced inspections every 12 months on all declared menacing, dangerous and restricted breed dogs to ensure they are complying with the legislation. The draft DAMP cannot change legislation to make certain breed types to wear muzzles or be kept on lead.

Desexing & Breeding	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidised desexing and microchipping for cats and dogs, especially with registration • Stricter breeding regulations, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limiting litters Preventing pet shops from selling animals Enforcing laws for backyard breeders Heavier penalties for non-compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2021, the Council received a State Government grant to offer reduced cost desexing services to vulnerable community members. Through this program, 99 cats and dogs were desexed. The draft DAMP outlines the Council's commitment to applying for future grants to maintain and expand this valuable service. • The draft DAMP proposes a review of the Council's Section 10 order, including the consideration of mandatory desexing for dogs. If implemented, this measure could help reduce backyard breeding and decrease the number of unwanted litters. • There are limits to Council's jurisdiction and some points made are relevant to state legislation and regulations that Council is not able to change or contradict.
Service Delivery & Enforcement	Officer comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faster responses to barking complaints and dangerous dog reports • Improved communication, with concerns sometimes going unanswered • More compassionate processes when reuniting lost pets with owners, including fee relief 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's Customer Charter details Council's response times to customer complaints, barking dogs addressed within 10 business days and dog attacks handled immediately or within one business day. Customers receive updates, and service complaints can be made if no response is received. • Council offers one free return home per year for registered animals, meaning they will be returned to their owners without impound fees and only a warning issued. Unregistered animals are taken to Council's pound for owner collection. Additionally, a hardship policy is available to assist owners experiencing financial difficulties in reclaiming their pets.

Knox Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029

Action Summary

Objective 2.0: Ensure all Officers involved in animal management are appropriately qualified and skilled

Action Number	Activity	When	Evaluation
2.0.1	Develop training plans for each individual officer	Annually	Review annually to determine training goals and identification of skill gaps, as part of the work and development plan for each individual officer
2.0.2	Develop an induction program for all new officers	2026	Induction program implemented

Objective 3.0: Educate and promote responsible pet ownership messaging to pet owners

Action Number	Activity	When	Evaluation
3.0.1	Develop an annual communication plan to support animal management objectives, incorporating messaging on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The benefits of pet registration (i.e.. reuniting lost pets) • Containing and keeping dogs under effective control • Dogs on leash/off lead in Knox • Promote desexing of cats and dogs to prevent overpopulation • How to report and prevent dog attacks • Picking up dog waste/carrying waste bags • Managing barking dog complaints • Managing cat nuisances • Promoting State Government initiatives around responsible pet ownership 	Ongoing	Annual communication plan developed, updated and implemented.
3.0.2	Investigate additional ways to provide Council and State Government educational materials to newly registered dog and cat owners	31 December 2028	Material provided to owners

Knox Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029

Action Summary

3.0.3	Engage a qualified animal trainer to run free or discounted sessions in Council reserves.	Ongoing	Number of owners who participate in these sessions.
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Objective 4.0: Increase desexing and decrease euthanasia rates of dogs and cats

Action Number	Activity	When	Evaluation
4.0.1	Investigate initiatives to increase the number of desexed dogs, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Animal Management clauses in the Local Law Collaborate with organisations that provide low cost desexing to vulnerable community members Assess efficacy of an order under section 10A of the Act requiring the mandatory desexing of dogs Reviewing registration fees for entire dogs Review of Council's annual budget to consider additional funding for a desexing program for vulnerable and disadvantaged community members. 	31 December 2026	Engagement completed and decision made on implementation
4.0.2	Apply for a government grants to run a low-cost desexing program to support disadvantaged Victorian families within our municipality	When available	Grant received from State Government and complete desexing of cats and dogs
4.0.3	Work with Council's pound provider to implement early intervention strategies to reduce the number of cats and dogs surrendered to Council	31 December 2027	Reduction in number of surrendered cats and dogs and decrease in euthanasia rates

Knox Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029

Action Summary

Objective 4.1: Raise awareness of semi-owned cat population and the impact on environmentally significant areas

Action Number	Activity	When	Evaluation
4.1.1	Partner with Councils Biodiversity team to run targeted education campaigns where the effect of semi-owned cats on biologically significant areas is known.	31 December 2028	Education program rolled out

Objective 5.0: Increase the number of dog and cat registrations

Action Number	Activity	When	Evaluation
5.0.1	Implement programs to further increase animal registration through proactive audits, initiatives and programs	Annual	Increase in numbers of pets registered with council following audit.
5.0.2	Investigate the feasibility of a registration drive/amnesty to encourage owners to register their pets.	2027	Increase in numbers of new pet registrations with Council.

Objective 5.1: Increase awareness among culturally and linguistically diverse communities of per registration requirements

Action Number	Activity	When	Evaluation
5.1.1	Produce information in multi-lingual formats including desexing and registration requirements	2029	Material produced for use by Council and published on the Council website

Objective 6.0: Reduce nuisance dog complaints

Action Number	Activity	When	Evaluation
6.0.1	Review infringement penalty amount for not carrying waste bag & not	2026	reviewed infringement amounts implemented

Knox Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029

Action Summary

	picking up waste as a part of Councils Local Law review		
6.0.2	Investigate opportunities to provide dog waste bags to pet owners in certain circumstances.	2026	Reduction in complaints of dog waste
6.0.3	Review the provision on bins for the disposal of dog waste within our parkland and reserves.	2026	Bin locations reviewed and changes implemented
6.0.4	Promote the use of Knox resident discount of dog waste composters available to Knox residents	Ongoing	Reduction in complaints of dog waste
6.0.5	Review and update barking dog process and material provided to the community. Investigate the feasibility of using noise recording devices such as Noise Net to manage difficult complaints	2027	Updated process and material on website

Objective 6.1: Reduce nuisance cat complaints

Action Number	Activity	When	Evaluation
6.1.1	Promote the Victorian Government 'Cat Management Strategy 2025-2025' to the community	Ongoing	Reduction in nuisance cat complaints
6.1.2	Provide educational material to the community from the Victorian Government relating to cat containment and 'Safe Cats, Safe Wildlife'.	Ongoing	Reduction in nuisance cat complaints

Objective 7.0: Increase awareness of Councils dog attack process and capabilities and outcomes

Action Number	Activity	When	Evaluation
7.0.1	Increase transparency in dog attack investigations for victims and accused by creating dog attack	2028	Feedback sought from users of the new kit

Knox Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029

Action Summary

	information booklet that can be provided to involved parties.		
7.0.2	During the review of the Knox Amenity Local Law 2020 investigate animal management clauses to adequately address the needs of the community. Specifically develop clauses relating to containment of dogs.	2026	Adoption of the new amenity local law
7.0.3	Refer court outcomes to the communications team for media releases to generate public awareness.	Ongoing	Internal process developed to publicise Court outcomes

Objective 8.0: Increase safety for the community around declared dogs

Action Number	Activity	When	Evaluation
8.0.1	Develop a written process to assist decision making regarding the outcome for offending dogs involved in attacks	2027	Process implemented
8.0.2	Cross reference microchip details of all dogs reported as missing from the Victorian Declared Dog Registry	Annually	Locating missing declared dogs

Objective 9.0: Identify and register all unregistered Domestic Animal Businesses

Action Number	Activity	When	Evaluation
9.0.1	Identify all businesses that should be registered DABs in the municipality, including businesses selling pets / pet products / services in the municipality. Follow up to determine whether they are and should be registered with Council	Ongoing	Compare number of registered DABs before and after activity
9.0.2	Monitor Councils registration database and the Pet Exchange	Annually	Compare number of registered DABs before and after activity

Knox Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029**Action Summary**

	Register for owners that meet the criteria for a breeding DAB.		
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Objective 10.0: Review Council's Section 26 Order for dogs in public places

Action Number	Activity	When	Evaluation
10.0.1	Investigate a review of Councils off leash areas	December 2026	Order reviewed and recommendations implemented

4.5 Review of the Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Decision
Author:	Strategic Planning and Partnerships Lead, Robyn Renkema and Strategic Planning Officer, Maria Daels
Manager:	Manager Early Years, Sarah Kleine
Executive:	Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley

SUMMARY

In September 2021, Council endorsed the Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan 2021-2024 (KISP), a non-binding, but publicly available document developed with funding and in partnership with the Victorian Department of Education (DE).

The development of the KISP was intended to support the Victorian Government's kindergarten reform inclusive of the introduction of funded kindergarten for 3-year-old children and free kindergarten initiatives. Since the development of the KISP, the Victorian Government's Best Start Best Life (BSBL) reforms have been introduced, which are significantly increasing access to kindergarten for 3 and 4-year-olds across Victoria over the next ten years, creating a need for the KISP to be revised and updated. At Knox City Council, we have also experienced significant changes in community demographics that need to be captured within a revised plan.

This report presents the revised draft KISP (Attachment 1 – Knox City Council KISP - 2025) for Knox City Council, developed in partnership with DE. The revised draft KISP supports the ongoing implementation of the Victorian Government (BSBL) reforms.

While local governments are not responsible for delivering kindergarten infrastructure, Councils play a critical role in providing local insights, identifying emerging needs, and supporting place-based planning to ensure that services are accessible, viable and responsive to community needs.

The KISP is developed using a Victorian Government template that is largely fixed in the way it is presented. The template focuses on unmet demand, without accounting for surplus capacity, which is prevalent across many areas within the municipality.

The revised draft KISP assesses current kindergarten capacity, projects future demand through to 2036, and identifies areas where concentrated demand may emerge. The current findings confirm that existing infrastructure is expected to meet demand through to at least 2029. By 2034, moderate additional demand is anticipated and can likely be met through targeted optimisation of existing services. However, by 2036, particularly in light of the planned rollout of the universal 30-hour Pre-Prep Program, new services or infrastructure expansion may be required in some areas should the projected demand materialise.

As a non-binding but publicly available document, the KISP provides a shared evidence base to guide future planning. Council endorsement of the revised draft KISP will support alignment between State planning frameworks and local realities, enabling more coordinated planning, service delivery and strategic decision-making across all levels of government. It strengthens

Council's ability to advocate for public investment and guide private sector planning and investment for early years infrastructure.

This report provides Council with a copy of the revised draft Knox City Council KISP 2025 (Attachment 1) that has been developed with DE. DE have provided the draft document, Council officers have provided in-principle agreement on all sections specifically Section 4.4 – Agreed Estimates of Demand for Funded Kindergarten Places. Section 3 – Local Context is the only section authored by Council officers. As such, it is the section where Council has the opportunity and responsibility to reflect local knowledge, contextual nuance, and area-specific insights.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to:

1. Endorse the Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan 2025 as set out in Attachment 1, noting that:
 - i) It is an indicator of future unmet demand as predicted by currently available forecast data; and a planning tool for potential future investment by various parties to use at their own discretion.
 - ii) The approval is **not and should not be interpreted as** an indication that Council accepts responsibility for meeting identified unmet demand driven by the State Government Kindergarten reforms.
 - iii) Supplementary contextual information will be published on Council's website alongside the KISP to provide a more transparent and balanced understanding of kindergarten demand across the municipality.
2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to sign the Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan 2025 on behalf of Knox City Council.

1. DISCUSSION

On 27 September 2021, the Outer East Area Executive Director of the Department of Education and Training and the Chief Executive Officer of Knox City Council formally endorsed the 2021 Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan (KISP) for Knox City Council. As part of the endorsement, both parties acknowledged that the KISP is not intended to create legal relations or constitute a legally binding contractual agreement. Instead, it serves as a shared strategic framework to guide planning and coordination.

The agreement also noted the intention to review the KISP in 2024, with a view to publishing an updated version that would replace the 2021 edition and reflect evolving local needs and the ongoing rollout of the Victorian Government's BSBL reforms.

Victorian Kindergarten Reform

The KISP is a strategic planning document developed by the Victorian Department of Education (DE) in partnership with each individual local municipality Council. Its purpose is to ensure that the supply of kindergarten services aligns with current and future demand, so that all children have access to early learning when and where they need it.

The KISP was introduced to support the implementation of the Victorian Government's early childhood education reforms, which are fundamentally reshaping the kindergarten landscape across Victoria. These reforms included the introduction of Free Kinder from 2023 (offering up to 15 hours per week of kindergarten for 3 and 4-year-olds), the gradual expansion of 3-year-old kindergarten to 15 hours by 2029, and the planned rollout of a universal 30-hour Pre-Prep

Program for 4-year-olds by 2036 included in the BSBL reforms. Together, these initiatives are driving a significant and sustained increase in demand for kindergarten services.

Each KISP provides a detailed assessment of existing kindergarten capacity within a Local Government Area (LGA), forecasts future demand based on demographic trends and policy settings and supports the identification of future infrastructure priorities to meet anticipated needs. As a non-binding but publicly available document, the KISP guides Councils, service providers and government in coordinating efforts to expand and adapt services in a timely and equitable manner.

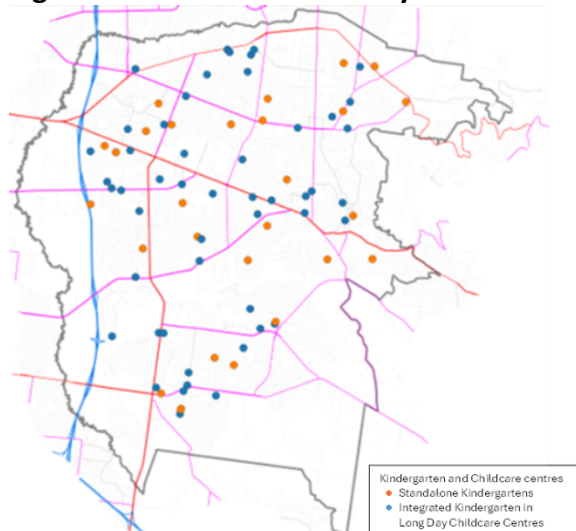
Key milestones to be considered in the current implementation timeline for the BSBL reforms are:

- **Current** – 15 hours of funded kindergarten for all 4-year-olds and up to 15 hours for 3-year-olds.
- **2029** – 15 hours of funded kindergarten for all 3 and 4-year-olds.
- **2034** – 15 hours of funded kindergarten for all 3-year-olds and 16-20 hours for 4-year-olds.
- **2036** – 15 hours of funded kindergarten for all 3-year-olds and 30 hours for all 4-year-olds (Pre Prep).

Current Knox Kindergarten Landscape

There are currently 81 early years education and care services operating in Knox City Council, including 24 standalone kindergartens, four kindergarten programs delivered within schools, and 53 long day care (LDC) services with integrated kindergarten programs.

Figure 1 – Distribution of Early Years Education and Care Services in Knox City Council



The current mix of sessional and integrated kindergarten services in Knox remains well-aligned with the preferences and usage patterns of local families. While there has been a gradual increase in the use of long day care (LDC) services, many families in Knox continue to show a preference for sessional kindergarten.

From the previously endorsed KISP in 2021, the number of LDC services in the municipality has increased from 45 to 53 as of July 2025, reflecting a steady expansion of this service type. In addition, Council's City Planning and Building Department has confirmed further projects, where private developers have sought planning permits for LDC services. These planning applications are

at various stages of development and remain under assessment. This sustained activity highlights continued private sector investment in expanding LDC provision across the municipality, contributing to a more diverse and responsive early years service landscape for local families. Maintaining balanced and diverse service offerings, including standalone sessional kindergarten programs, is essential to ensuring families can access early learning in ways that suit their needs, preferences, and circumstances.

Revised Draft Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan

As the municipal planner, work has been undertaken in partnership with DE towards developing the revised draft KISP for Knox City Council, specifically reaching in-principle agreement in relation to the data presented in Section 4.4 – Agreed Estimates of Demand for Kindergarten Places; and through authoring Section 3 – Local Context for Approval by DE. Council officers undertook a process grounded in local knowledge, planning expertise, and the cross-referencing of multiple data sources. The KISP template includes standard commentary that indicates that it has been developed in partnership with Council and DE following the recommended methodological framework regarding the standard demand data and infers a particular approach by local government in supporting the implementation of the BSBL reform.

Council officers have recently received final demand and capacity data from DE and prepared the local context section of KISP. The KISP template provides data to show both the projected demand for kindergarten based on population forecasts and the expected capacity available but does not show where there is a projected over supply of kindergarten places. Through discussions with DE, officers have received agreement to include the statement: “It is important to note that KISP data identifies areas of unmet demand but does not capture surplus capacity in nearby locations” within the KISP, as oversupply is of particular significance within the municipality.

Whilst there is broad in-principle agreement on the data presented in the KISP, the Local Context section raises three key points for consideration:

- **Population projections** may be overstated when compared with recent local birth registrations.
- **Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2) boundaries**, used in the modelling, do not always align with local suburb boundaries or reflect how families access services on the ground.
- The **KISP framework** focuses solely on unmet demand and does not account for areas with potential oversupply or existing surplus capacity.

To support transparency and provide a more complete picture for the community, Council will publish additional contextual information, such as localised surplus capacity analysis, on its website alongside the finalised KISP document.

KISP Local Context Structure and Assumptions

Estimating Demand – Population Projections

Accurately assessing future kindergarten demand requires drawing on multiple data sources. State-level forecasts, such as Victoria in Future (VIF), provide a consistent basis for long-term planning, while local data, such as birth registrations, offer real-time validation of emerging trends. Together, these sources help ensure planning is grounded in both forecasted trends and observed local patterns.

The revised draft KISP 2025 uses VIF data as the basis for population projections. However, recent birth notifications reported through Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Services show lower-than-expected births, highlighting a divergence between actual birth trends and VIF forecasts (see Figure 2). This gap will be monitored to determine whether it continues and whether projected population growth eventuates as expected. If the downward trend persists, it may lead to reduced future demand for kindergarten places, potentially lowering the projected 3 and 4-year-old population outlined in this KISP (Figure 3).

Figure 2 – MCH Birth Notifications in Knox

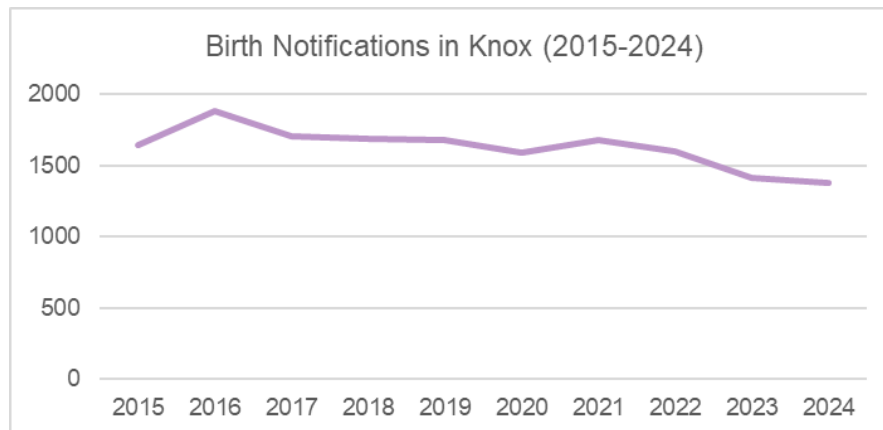
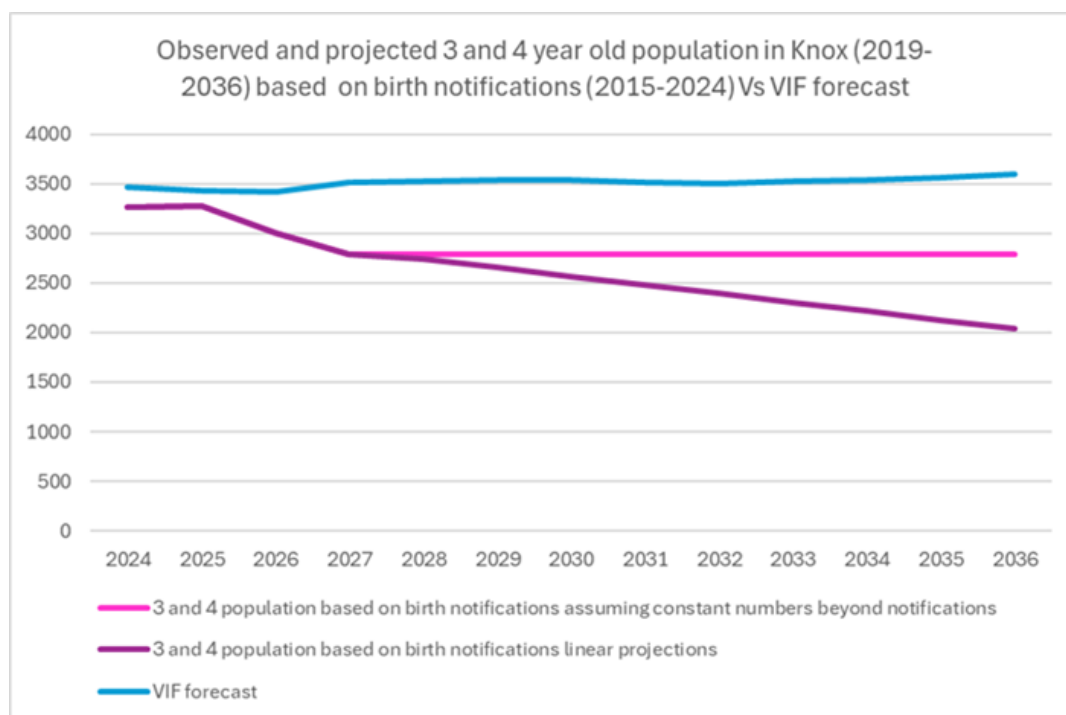


Figure 3 – Observed and Projected 3 and 4-Year-Old Population Based on Current Birth Notification Notices in Knox



Assessing Service Accessibility and Spatial Coverage

Assessing the accessibility and distribution of early years services is essential to understanding how well current infrastructure meets the needs of local families. Beyond headline demand

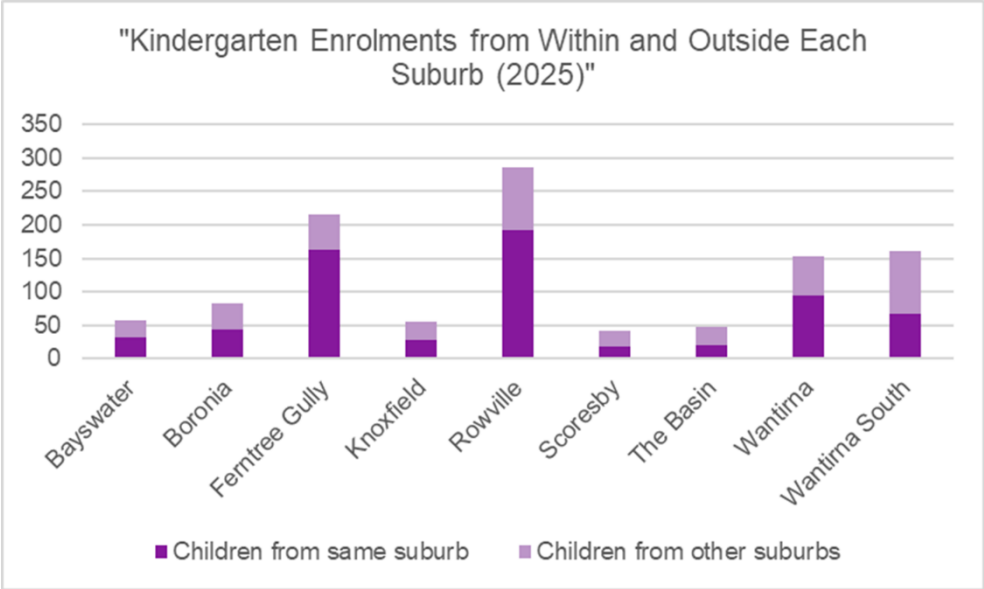
figures, spatial factors, such as proximity to services, transport connections and physical barriers (e.g., major roads or creeks), can significantly affect families’ ability to access available places or influence where they choose to attend kindergarten. Evaluating service distribution helps identify gaps, overlaps, and potential inequities, ensuring that planning considers not only where demand exists but also how easily services can be reached and used.

While DE’s methodology uses Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2) boundaries to assess demand and supply, these geographic units do not always reflect how families in Knox access services. Some SA2s span socio-demographically diverse neighbourhoods or are fragmented by physical features that limit movement. To provide a more accurate picture, Council has developed a Local Context section using planning areas (Local Community Areas) that better reflect local patterns of service use. This section helps interpret the data through a community lens, highlighting localised variations in access, infrastructure, and emerging service needs across the municipality.

KISP Estimates Unmet Demand for Kindergarten in Knox

The revised draft KISP presents projected **unmet** demand for kindergarten places across Knox but does not account for areas where there is **surplus** capacity. This focus on unmet demand may overstate localised pressure if nearby services with available places are not considered. In practice, many families in Knox access kindergarten outside their immediate suburb, reflecting established patterns of cross-suburb enrolment and mobility.

Figure 4 – Local vs Cross-Suburb Kindergarten Enrolments



Understanding these patterns is essential to interpreting demand accurately. While the revised draft KISP identifies specific suburbs with projected shortfalls, surrounding areas with surplus capacity often play a key role in meeting broader service needs.

For example, The Basin is identified as having unmet demand across the next ten years. However, nearby suburbs such as Bayswater and Boronia, which currently have surplus places, already support enrolments from families living in The Basin. This pattern is expected to continue, and the modelling incorporates cross-boundary enrolments and catchment overlaps to avoid overestimating demand in more isolated areas.

Based on current participation rates, population projections and existing service availability, kindergarten provision is expected to meet projected demand up to 2029 when taking into account kindergarten availability across SA2 boundaries.

By 2034, only moderate levels of additional demand are anticipated, which are expected to be manageable within the current service network through targeted adjustments and service capacity optimisation.

For 2035-36, Figure 5 indicates that the planned rollout of the universal 30-hour Pre-Prep Program may require new services, and/or infrastructure expansion in certain SA2 areas to meet projected demand. The SA2 areas include Bayswater, Ferntree Gully South (Upper FTG), Ferntree Gully North, Knoxfield/Scoresby, Lysterfield, The Basin, Wantirna and Rowville North and South.

As noted in the KISP, “any provider—state or local government, not-for-profit (including non-government schools), or for-profit— can build this additional infrastructure.”

However, as shown in Figure 6, when surplus capacity is taken into account across the entire municipality, the estimated unmet demand is reduced by 60%. While initial projections indicate an unmet demand of 612 places by 2036, this figure decreases to approximately 243 places when considering surplus availability in neighbouring suburbs.

Figure 5 – Unmet Demand Estimates

SA2	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Bayswater	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	72
Boronia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ferntree Gully (South) - Upper	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	68	132
Ferntree Gully - North	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	67
Knoxfield - Scoresby	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	54
Lysterfield	57	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	20	49
Rowville - Central	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rowville - North	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	39
Rowville - South	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	53
The Basin	11	13	14	20	20	23	23	24	24	33	43	59
Wantirna	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	35	87
Wantirna South	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LGA total	68	13	14	20	20	23	23	24	24	77	217	612

Figure 6 – Surplus Supply

SA2	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Bayswater	115	100	91	67	63	52	51	50	49	17	-16	-72
Boronia	372	349	334	289	278	257	251	246	242	180	117	10
Ferntree Gully (South) - Upper	62	48	40	14	10	0	0	1	2	-33	-68	-132
Ferntree Gully - North	85	74	70	49	49	42	44	46	48	18	-12	-67
Knoxfield - Scoresby	146	134	127	101	98	87	87	87	87	50	12	-54
Lysterfield	-57	50	42	27	23	16	14	13	13	-4	-20	-49
Rowville - Central	179	170	166	145	144	138	140	144	150	127	105	60
Rowville - North	57	50	45	33	30	25	24	24	24	7	-9	-39
Rowville - South	70	64	61	46	44	37	35	33	31	8	-14	-53
The Basin	-11	-13	-14	-20	-20	-23	-23	-24	-24	-33	-43	-59
Wantirna	45	40	39	21	21	14	17	19	22	-7	-35	-87
Wantirna South	475	457	447	420	417	409	412	415	418	387	356	299
LGA total	1538	1523	1448	1194	1157	1054	1051	1055	1063	716	374	-243

This does not necessarily reflect problematic concentration or uneven distribution of services. In fact, many of the surplus places are located in well-connected and central areas such as Wantirna South, Rowville Central, Boronia and Knoxfield (Figure 7 and 8), where cross-suburb participation

is already common. Families often choose to access services beyond their immediate area, reflecting patterns of mobility and service preference that help balance overall demand.

Figure 7 – Estimated Surplus and Unmet Demand of Kindergarten Places from a Spatial Perspective (2029)

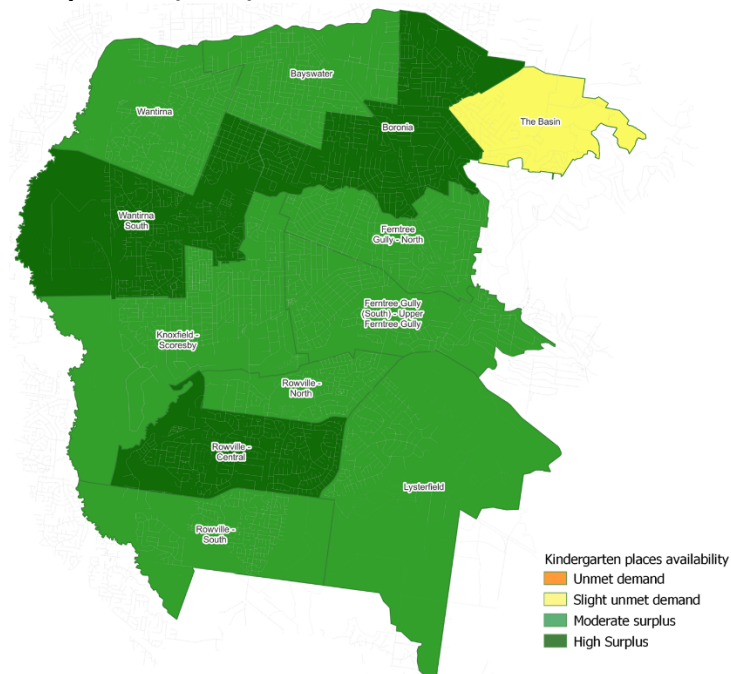
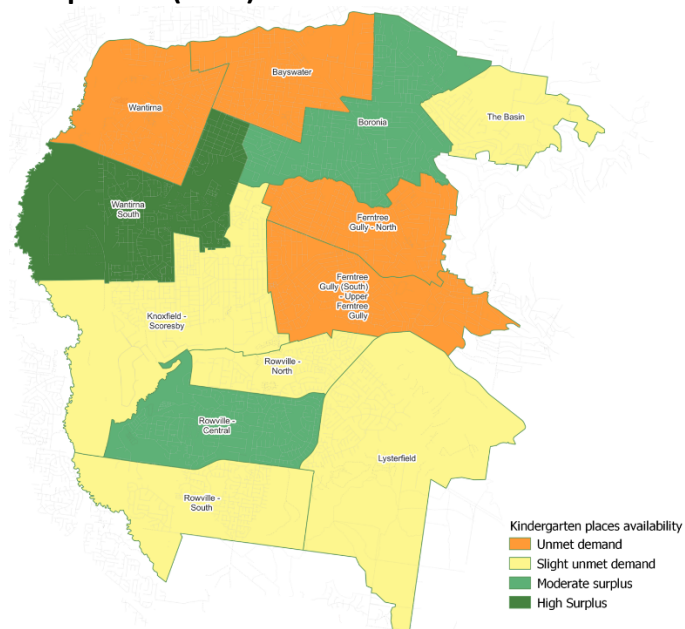


Figure 8 – Estimated Surplus and Unmet Demand of Kindergarten Places from a Spatial Perspective (2036)



Furthermore, consideration of potential planning applications may also reduce the need for additional infrastructure expansion by 2034–36 if they materialise. These developments have the potential to alleviate projected demand by increasing local capacity, particularly in areas identified as having moderate levels of unmet need.

KISP Endorsement by Council

In principle agreement between Council and DE on the content of the revised draft KISP has been reached, Council is now asked to endorse the document. As delegated, the CEO along with the Outer East Area Executive Director of DE will jointly sign the agreement prior to it being made publicly available. This version updates the original KISP 2021 and is intended to guide kindergarten infrastructure planning through to 2036; with a further review and update in three years to consider any population, demand and capacity changes.

2. ENGAGEMENT

Council officers have been working in collaboration with DE to develop the KISP document and identify the areas of unmet demand based on available forecast data.

Ongoing conversations with DE officers have articulated the implications of using the KISP to inform approval of capital grant funding applications through the Victorian Government's Building Blocks Grant Program and significant challenges posed by the reform for Council as well as other community kindergarten service providers in Knox.

Internally, Council officers worked closely with the City Research and Mapping Team to assess the suitability of different population forecasts. Following this internal review, Council officers agreed that using VIF projections, as applied by DE, was appropriate for this KISP update, given their closer alignment with recent local birth data. This process ensured that Section 3 of the document reflects both local planning knowledge and relevant demographic insights.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is now significant research evidence which indicates that two years of universal kindergarten has wide-ranging social and educational benefits for children, particularly those considered to be vulnerable/developmentally at risk. While the Victorian Government reforms and the KISP are evidence-based approaches to early years planning, it is still imperative that the implementation of the reform involves consultation with the communities affected.

Council's early years facilities play a critical role in supporting this ecosystem. In addition to hosting sessional kindergarten, they deliver a range of universal services such as Playgroups and Maternal and Child Health (MCH) programs. Playgroups provide informal, low-barrier environments where families can connect, build social networks and support children's learning through play. MCH services provide almost universal contact with families in the first years of a child's life, supporting healthy development, early detection of concerns and linkage to specialist services when needed. Together, these universal platforms help build trust with families, encourage early engagement and ensure that children and parents are connected with the right services at the right time.

Council has also invested significantly in infrastructure to support children and families, including the development of two award-winning integrated early years hubs. These centres bring together a wide range of services under one roof, including sessional kindergarten, long day care (LDC), maternal and child health, playgroups and allied health services. By co-locating programs and practitioners, the Hubs provide a seamless experience for families—supporting children's learning, health and wellbeing in a single, accessible setting. This integrated model has been recognised across the sector for its innovation and quality, helping families to navigate services more easily while strengthening pathways between universal and targeted supports.

Importantly, these Hubs were delivered through Council leadership and advocacy, with only limited State Government investment at the time of construction more than six years ago.

Beyond these Hubs, the majority of Council's early years infrastructure is made up of older standalone kindergarten and community facilities, many of which are between 50 and 70 years old. Council invests significantly to maintain and upgrade these facilities at cost to the community; ensuring they remain safe and functional so that families can continue to access essential early years services.

The impact of the reform for our tenants and Council is a significant challenge, as the existing infrastructure cannot be easily modified to increase licensed kindergarten places and amenity to meet future demand. Furthermore, increased demand for and utilisation of these facilities as a result of the reform will require increased maintenance and improved amenity to ensure occupational health and safety, staff wellbeing, community safety and adequate car parking as these impacts are not addressed as part of the KISP.

The development of the revised draft KISP in partnership with DE has been undertaken with a view to ensuring the future needs of the Knox community in terms of early years services and infrastructure are understood. Council decisions as the municipal planner and infrastructure holder for the community are centered around balancing the needs of the community over all ages and activity groups across the municipality.

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

There are no anticipated environmental or amenity considerations or implications arising from this report.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The implementation of two years of universal kindergarten for all children in the municipality is supported by a mixed market of approved providers through the provision of fit-for-purpose community infrastructure.

The outcomes from the revised draft KISP will help guide the implementation to ensure the rollout meets community needs and expectations while maintaining viable and sustainable high quality local kindergarten services.

Council's long history of investment in early years services includes capital works, facility maintenance and a variety of direct services for children and families in the Knox community. Council continues to make considerable investment in the many multi-use early years facilities which host kindergarten services for the Knox community.

Becoming a signatory to the KISP does not have direct financial and economic implications for Council. The KISP is intended to support the implementation of the reform in a mixed economy of kindergarten service providers across the municipality which includes State Government, Council,

not-for-profit providers, schools and privately-owned and for-profit providers; providing families with choice about the service which best suits their child and their family circumstances.

7. RISKS

Forecast Uncertainty

Like any long-term planning document, the KISP relies on demographic forecasts that may shift over time due to changes in population growth, housing patterns, or service preferences. These fluctuations could lead to projections that slightly under, or overestimate demand. To ensure projections remain current, a full review of the KISP is planned for 2028. In the meantime, Council will continue to track local data sources such as birth registrations, development activity and enrolment patterns to inform ongoing planning and service discussions.

Community Expectations

As a publicly available document, the KISP may be interpreted as a firm commitment to expand services or reopen specific facilities, particularly in areas identified as having future unmet demand. However, the Local Context Section offers Council a valuable opportunity to include clear disclaimers, emphasising that the KISP is a strategic, non-binding tool and does not create obligations around service delivery or infrastructure investment.

Data Scope and Limitations

The KISP's exclusive focus on unmet demand, without accounting for surplus capacity, may present an incomplete picture of early years service needs. To mitigate this risk, Council will publish supplementary contextual information on its website, including analysis of surplus capacity, service distribution, and cross-suburb enrolment patterns. This will provide a more transparent and balanced understanding of kindergarten demand across Knox and support more informed engagement with stakeholders and the broader community.

Reputational and Strategic Risk

Endorsing the KISP provides Council with a valuable platform to demonstrate professionalism, an evidence-based planning approach and a strong understanding of local needs. Through the Local Context Section, Council has the opportunity to shape the narrative by embedding disclaimers, clarifying roles and assumptions, and elevating locally relevant insights.

8. COUNCIL AND HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN 2025-2029

Embracing connection, inclusion and diversity

Strategy 2.3 - Our community is supported to thrive during all stages of life through the promotion and provision of services, advocacy and partnerships with local service providers.

Strategy 2.4 - There are opportunities for social connection and active living through planning, provision of facilities, program delivery, and support for local groups.

Planning our future city

Strategy 6.2 - High quality, integrated community services and facilities are available through planning and design that responds to population growth and our community's changing needs.

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 Knox City Council Governance Rules.

10. STATEMENT OF COMPATIBILITY

This report is compatible with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, as it does not raise any human rights issues.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

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

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment 1 - DRAFT Knox City Council KISP - 2025 - 2028 [4.5.1 - 20 pages]



Department
of Education

Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan

Knox City

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Department
of Education

1. Introduction

1.1. Reform context

The Victorian Government's \$14 billion Best Start, Best Life (BSBL) reforms are the most significant change to Victoria's early childhood sector in a generation.

The BSBL reforms include:

- **Free Kinder:** Free Kinder is now available for Victorian 3- and 4-year-old children at participating services in standalone (sessional) kindergartens and long day care centres – a saving of up to \$2,500 per child, every year.
- **Pre-Prep:** Four-Year-Old Kindergarten will gradually transition to 'Pre-Prep' – increasing to a universal 30-hour-a-week program of play-based learning for 4-year-old children in Victoria by 2036.
- **Three-Year-Old Kindergarten:** the continued roll-out of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, with programs increasing to 15 hours a week across the state by 2029.
- **Early learning and childcare centres:** the establishment of 50 Victorian government-owned and operated early learning and childcare centres. These centres will be built in areas with the greatest need and will make it easier for families to access early childhood education and childcare. The first of the centres will open in 2025.

These initiatives demonstrate a clear commitment to improving early learning outcomes for Victorian children, workforce participation and access for families, and present the most significant change to Victoria's early childhood sector in a generation.

Pre-Prep will roll-out in Knox City in 2034. Statewide, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from a refugee or asylum seeker background, and children who have had contact with Child Protection services, will be able to access up to 25 hours of Pre-Prep in 2026, increasing to up to 30 hours from 2028. Children who have (or have a parent or guardian who has) a Commonwealth concession card and children who are a multiple birth child (triplets or more) across the state will be able to access up to 25 hours of Pre-Prep in 2028, increasing to up to 30 hours from 2030.

1.2. Purpose of Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plans (KISPs)

New and expanded infrastructure is key to delivering the BSBL reforms and will require a large expansion of kindergarten facilities across the State. KISPs, which are jointly developed with Local Governments, indicate where and when new infrastructure will be required to support both reform implementation and population growth in each of Victoria's 79 local government areas (LGAs). KISPs help all kindergarten providers meet demand and collectively provide a clear picture of infrastructure need across the State.

KISPs support planning for services and future capital works and include detailed information about:

- Current capacity and demand for funded kindergarten

- Capacity to be delivered for planned infrastructure projects and future demand for kindergarten
- Forecast 'unmet demand' for kindergarten – that is, the kindergarten places needed that cannot be met by current or planned capacity
- Information specific to each local government area and its early childhood education and care landscape.

KISPs were initially developed to support the roll-out of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten and have now been updated to incorporate Pre-Prep.

KISPs are intended to support planning. They are not funding documents and do not commit any party to addressing the unmet demand identified.

However, it is expected that future investment requests through Building Blocks and funding decisions about Local Government, not-for-profit projects (including non-government schools) would align with the relevant KISP (including Section 3: Local Context).

1.3. Structure of the KISP

Each KISP consists of the following sections:

- **Section 1:** A short introduction to the Best Start, Best Life reform and the KISP.
- **Section 2:** A map of existing and planned Early Childhood Education and Care services.
- **Section 3:** Local context and knowledge of key information in Knox City relevant to early childhood education.
- **Section 4:** Unmet demand estimates in Knox City over the life of the reform.

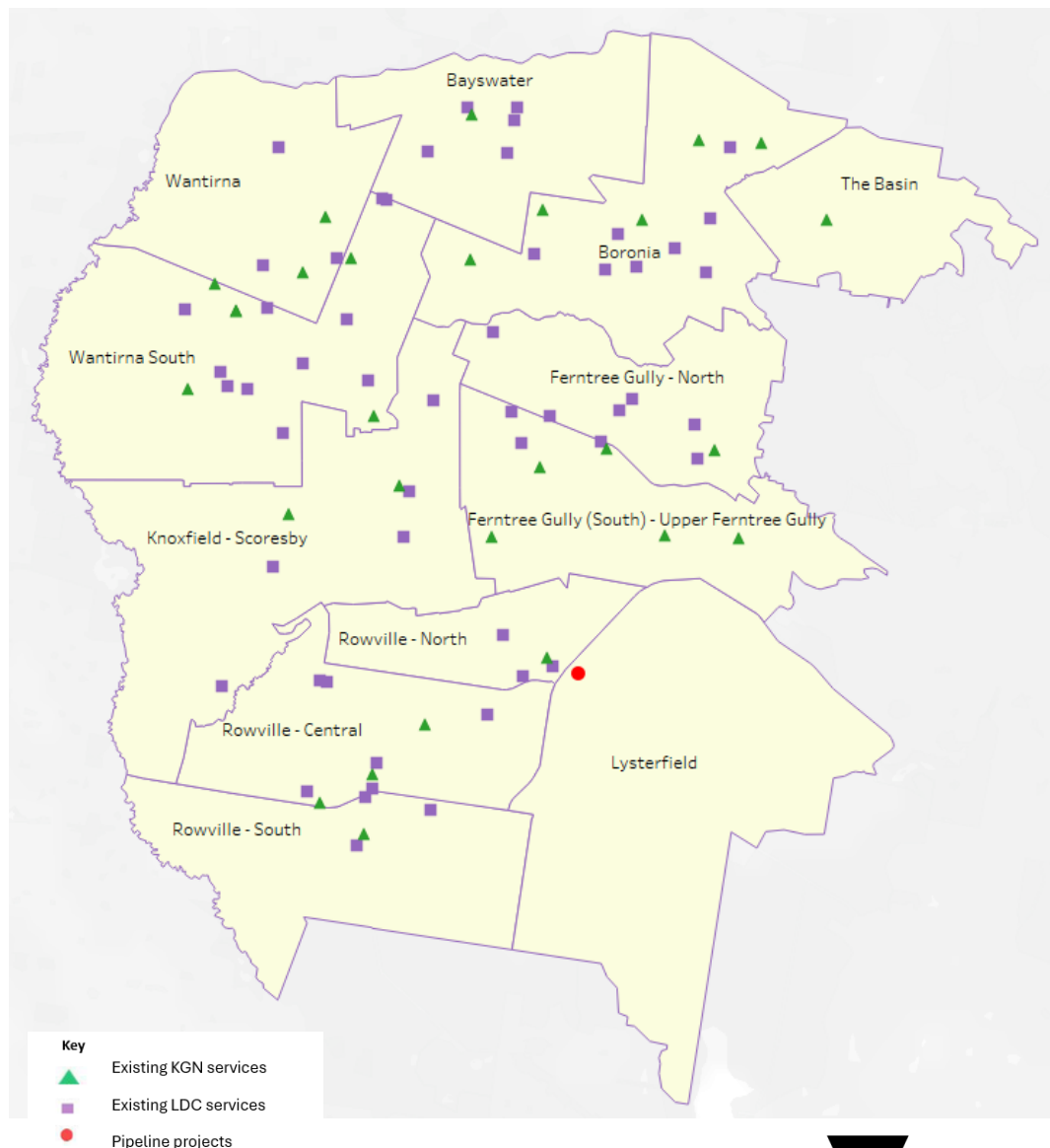
1.4. Disclaimer

All data presented in this document is published for information purposes only. Operational and business decisions should not be based solely on this document. Neither the Department nor Knox City Council warrants, guarantees, makes any representation or assumes any duty of care in relation to the data, including as to its suitability, completeness, accuracy or adequacy.

2. Map of Early Childhood Education services in Knox City

The map below shows the distribution of currently operating and new State-supported services that are planned to open in the future in Knox City. Planned services by the private sector are not included.

This map has been prepared using departmental data, from both the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQAITS) and the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA).



3. Local context

3.1 Purpose

Local, place-based knowledge and context play an important role in supporting the implementation of the BSBL reforms across Victoria. This section of the KISP documents this knowledge and context and should be considered alongside the kindergarten demand estimates in Section 4.

Information provided as local context may support applications through the Building Blocks Capacity Building and Planning Grants streams.

3.2 Key considerations

The City of Knox is a suburban municipality located in Melbourne's outer east, approximately 20 to 25 kilometres from the Central Business District. It is bordered by the City of Maroondah to the north, Yarra Ranges Council to the east, the City of Casey to the south, and the Cities of Monash, Whitehorse, and Greater Dandenong to the west. The municipality encompasses the suburbs of Bayswater, The Basin, Ferntree Gully, Upper Ferntree Gully, Lysterfield, Rowville (Central, North, and South), Scoresby, Knoxfield, Wantirna, and Wantirna South.

As part of Melbourne's established eastern metropolitan region, Knox is characterised by a diverse urban landscape that includes residential areas, commercial centres, industrial precincts, and extensive green spaces. This mix of land uses contributes to the municipality's distinctive identity and its role within the broader metropolitan area. The community's strong attachment to the area's leafy, green character also shapes local expectations around liveability, amenity, and urban development.

Knox City Council is committed to ensuring that every child has the opportunity to thrive by supporting access to high-quality kindergarten and early years services. This commitment is reflected in the various roles Council plays across the early years system:

- Direct service provision through its Children and Family Centres in Wantirna South and Bayswater.
- Infrastructure ownership, the provision of current facilities for community-managed and not-for-profit early years providers.
- Strategic municipal planning and advocacy, embedding early years needs in local policy and development processes.
- Administration of the Central Registration Scheme (CRS), coordinating registrations across participating kindergarten services in the municipality.

Kindergarten Service Landscape: A Mixed Model with Strategic Council Support

There are currently 81 early years education and care services operating in the City of Knox, including 24 standalone kindergartens, 4 kindergarten programs delivered within schools, and 53 long day care (LDC) services with integrated kindergarten programs.

The standalone kindergarten sector is predominantly managed by not-for-profit providers, comprising 7 community-managed services, 17 services operated by other not-for-profit organisations under Early Years Management (EYM) arrangements. Funded sessional kindergarten is also delivered through 2 independent schools, 2 government schools, and two Council-managed long day care centres.

The long day care (LDC) sector in Knox is primarily composed of 40 privately operated for-profit centres, along with 10 privately operated not-for-profit centres managed by other organisations. In addition, there is 1 community-managed not-for-profit centre and 2 Council-managed centres, reflecting a mix of governance models within the integrated kindergarten service landscape.

The Council-managed services refers to Knox City Council's Early Years Hubs, where they provide both sessional and integrated kindergarten alongside the long day care programs, offering a comprehensive model of early years education and care. Other early years integrated support services for children and families, including, Maternal Child Health, facilitated Playgroups and Allied Health services such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and counselling.

The kindergarten landscape in Knox reflects a strong presence of not-for-profit provision in standalone sessional kindergartens, while the LDC sector plays an increasingly important role in delivering funded kindergarten as part of a mixed delivery model. Knox City Council has shifted its focus from direct service delivery to enabling early years services through infrastructure, planning, and partnerships, retaining only two Council-managed services within its Early Years Hubs.

Key local geographic considerations or information relevant to Three-Year-Old Kindergarten and Pre-Prep

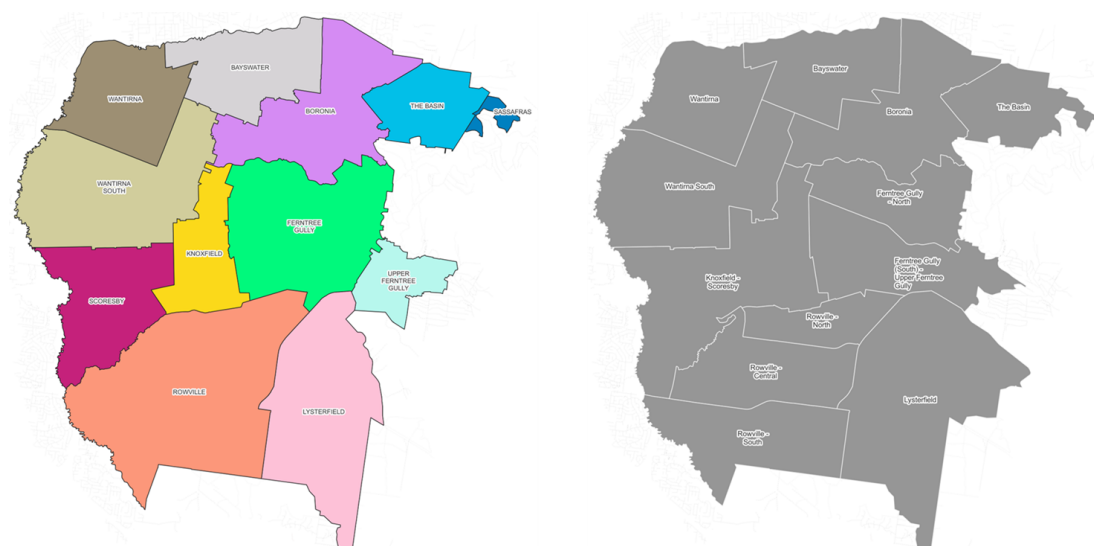
Understanding the Difference Between Suburbs and SA2s

Suburb boundaries and SA2 boundaries do not always align, and this can sometimes lead to confusion when interpreting spatial data. Suburbs are defined by local government for addressing and community identity purposes, whereas SA2s (Statistical Areas Level 2) are geographic units defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

SA2s often include multiple suburbs or parts of suburbs within a single boundary. For example, the Ferntree Gully (South) – Upper Ferntree Gully SA2 includes the entire suburb of Upper Ferntree Gully as well as the southern part of Ferntree Gully. Similarly, Knoxfield and Scoresby are grouped into a single SA2, while Rowville is divided across three different SA2s: Rowville - North, Rowville - Central, and Rowville - South.

This kind of misalignment means that data reported at the SA2 level may not correspond neatly with residents' understanding of their local suburb, which is important to keep in mind when analysing or presenting geographically based information.

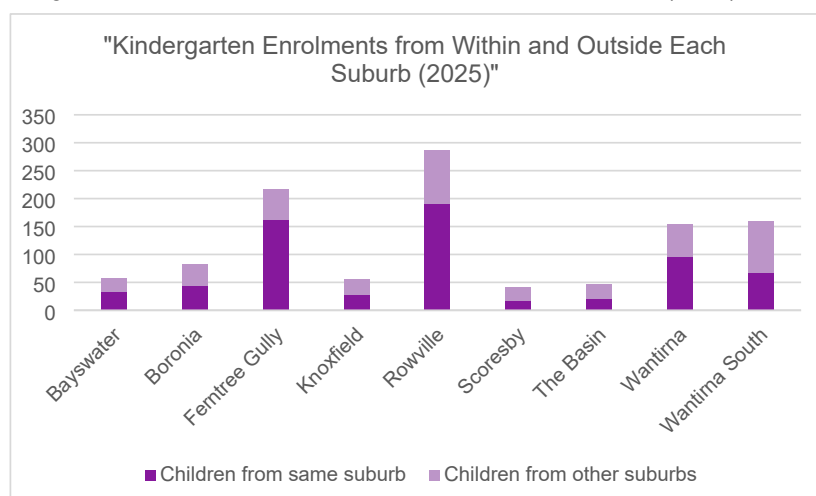
Figure 1. Comparison of Suburb Boundaries and Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2) Boundaries in the City of Knox



Understanding Demand Through a Local Lens

Children in Knox do not necessarily attend kindergarten in the same suburb where they live. According to central enrolment 2025 data¹, only 60% of children enrolled in kindergartens across the municipality reside in the same suburb as the service they attend. The tendency for children to attend kindergarten outside their suburb of residence has remained relatively stable over the last four years. In some suburbs, this proportion is significantly lower—for example, only 42% of children attending kindergartens in Wantirna South and 43% in Scoresby live locally. Conversely, areas like Ferntree Gully and Rowville show higher rates of local attendance (75% and 67% respectively). These figures highlight the variation in service catchments across Knox and reinforce the need to consider cross-suburb enrolment patterns in early years planning. Families often choose services based on availability, proximity to work, or perceived quality, rather than strictly on suburb of residence.

Figure 2. Kindergarten enrolments from within and outside each suburb (2025).



To better reflect how families access services in their local area, Council adopted Local Community Areas (LCAs) as part of its kindergarten priority allocation criteria since 2018. This place-based approach recognises that families often prefer to use early years services embedded in familiar community networks.

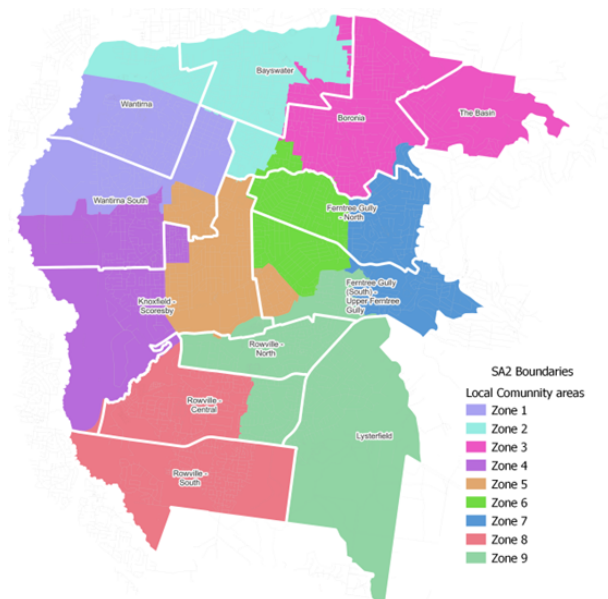
LCAs are informed by Maternal and Child Health (MCH) catchment boundaries and are reviewed regularly to reflect changes in birth patterns, local transport access, and walkability. From the moment a child is born, families are connected to local services through the MCH system—starting with birth notifications, followed by nurse key age and stage visits, regular health and development checks, and access to parent groups. These early connections often form the foundation of a family's support network and influence how they engage with community playgroups and services, and eventually transition to kindergarten and primary school.

Because families within the same LCA are more likely to have shared experiences and established social ties, this approach supports continuity of care and helps strengthen social cohesion across the early years system.

Unlike statistical geographies such as SA2s—which are suburb-scale areas used by the ABS for population data—LCAs are shaped by real-life patterns of service use and social interaction. LCA's can cross SA2 boundaries or span multiple suburbs, offering a more flexible and context-sensitive tool for planning and resource allocation.

¹ The central registration system (CRS) represents approximately 38% of total kindergarten enrolments across Knox. While it does not capture the full cohort, it provides a valuable and consistent sample to observe trends in enrolment patterns

Figure 3. Local Community Areas and SA2 Boundaries in the City of Knox



For example, while the SA2 of The Basin may appear to have unmet kindergarten demand in section 4.4, this does not necessarily reflect a shortage of kindergarten access as children who reside in The Basin travel out of the SA2 to receive their kindergarten. The only kindergarten in The Basin currently operates at approximately 90% utilisation, meaning that 90% of its available funded places are filled by enrolled children. Around 5% of these enrolments are from families residing in neighbouring local government areas. Additionally, kindergartens in Boronia, which is part of the same LCA Zone 3 as The Basin, however outside of the SA2 of The Basin, are often more accessible for local families, particularly given the location of The Basin Kindergarten on the suburb's outer edge.

It is important to note that KISP data identifies areas of unmet demand but does not capture surplus capacity in nearby locations.

Trends that may influence supply of early childhood education and care

Kindergarten Enrolment Trends in Knox

Historically, the Knox community has demonstrated a strong preference for sessional kindergarten programs, particularly for 4-year-old children. Sessional services—typically provided by standalone kindergartens—have long been valued by local families for their educational quality, community orientation, and strong connections to neighbourhood identity. Consultations and ongoing feedback continue to affirm the high regard in which these services are held.

However, over the past decade, the proportion of kindergarten enrolments in sessional settings has steadily declined, as more families opt for integrated kindergarten programs delivered within Long Day Care (LDC) services. These shifts reflect changes both in demand and in the structure of service provision. While sessional kindergartens continue to play a vital role, LDC settings offer extended hours and greater flexibility—features that increasingly appeal to working families navigating complex routines and care arrangements.

In 2016, 79% of children enrolled in a funded kindergarten program in Knox were attending sessional services. By 2021, this figure had dropped to 62%, and by 2023 it had fallen further to 51%. Disaggregated by age group, 60% of 4-year-olds were still enrolled in sessional kindergarten in 2023, compared to just 42% of 3-year-olds.

This age-based difference reflects the staged rollout of funded kindergarten for 3-year-olds, which reached the full 15-hour entitlement in 2023. In line with this, enrolment in sessional kindergarten for 3-year-olds has steadily increased—from 35% in 2021 to 40% in 2022, and 42% in 2023—indicating growing awareness and uptake among families as the reforms continue to embed and expand. As awareness increases and access stabilises, it is reasonable to expect that enrolments for 3-year-olds in sessional settings could approach levels similar to those of 4-year-olds, particularly if sessional services remain responsive to family needs.

Despite the decline in proportional enrolment, sessional services have consistently operated at around 60% utilisation, indicating that the shift is driven more by changing preferences and expanded LDC options than by capacity constraints. Since 2023, efforts to improve viability and efficiency have included reducing the number of sessional groups, capping enrolment numbers, and, in some cases, closing under-utilised programs to consolidate service delivery and ensure the viability of services.

Aging Facilities and Future Supply Challenges

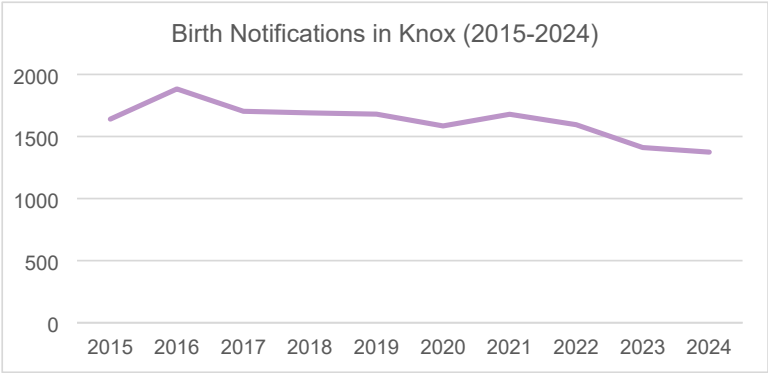
Much of Knox City Council's early years infrastructure is aging, with the majority of facilities built 50 to 70 years ago. Most are single-room buildings originally designed for 4-year-old kindergarten programs. As these facilities approach the end of their functional life, some of them might require replacement or upgrades in the medium to long term. This is necessary not only to maintain existing supply, but to ensure facilities are fit-for-purpose under the expanded requirements of the Best Start, Best Life reforms—particularly the inclusion of 3-year-old kindergarten.

While many of these facilities are not located in areas identified as experiencing high population growth or demand, their renewal might be required to maintaining equitable access across the municipality. Without targeted investment, supply could fall below the level required to accommodate all eligible children. These buildings also require reconfiguration to meet contemporary service standards, including adequate staff rooms, accessible toilets, change facilities, and indoor/outdoor learning spaces.

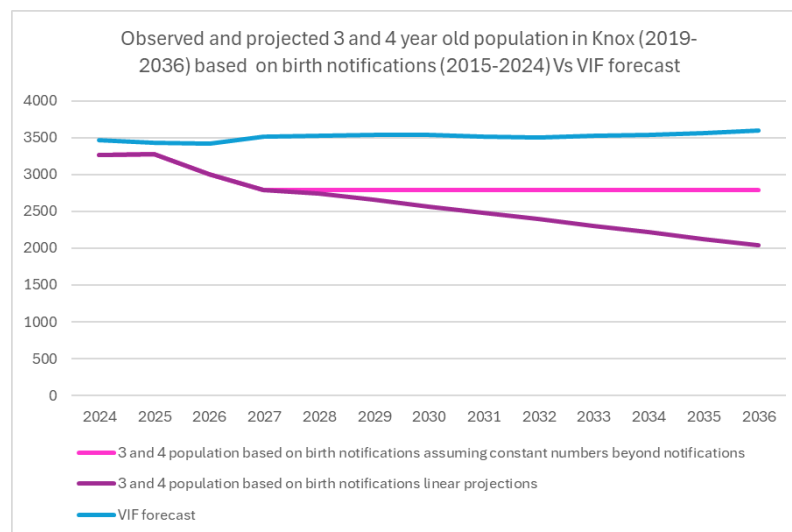
Future disruptions to supply caused by deteriorating infrastructure should be considered in all planning, funding, and prioritisation decisions. Maintaining consistent, quality access across Knox will require both ongoing maintenance and, in some cases, transformation of existing sites.

Key demographic trends that influence demand for kindergarten

The number of children born in Knox each year helps us understand how many families may need early years services in the future. When tracing birth notifications over the last 10 years, a clear trend becomes evident. After peaking in 2016, birth numbers remained relatively stable between 2017 and 2019, hovering around 1,690 births per year. From 2020 onwards, however, a steady decline has taken place, with 2024 recording just over 1,370 births—the lowest figure of the decade. While the reasons behind this decline are likely varied, the trend points to a shrinking birth cohort, highlighting the importance of ongoing monitoring to ensure early years services remain responsive to the changing needs of local families.



This decline also has implications for population forecasts, as estimates of 3- and 4-year-old populations based on recent birth data—whether through linear projection or by holding 2024 levels constant beyond 2025—begin to diverge from the population forecast. This divergence suggests that the population forecasts anticipate a level of growth that would require either a rebound in birth numbers or increased internal migration, neither of which has been observed in recent trends. As a result, 3- and 4-year-old projections may overstate the number of children in early childhood cohorts if current birth and migration patterns persist. This mismatch underscores the importance of grounding local planning in up-to-date birth trends to ensure early years infrastructure and services remain appropriately scaled and targeted.



Patterns internal migration post COVID in Knox

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Knox has experienced notable shifts in internal migration. Between July 2021 and June 2023, Knox recorded a net gain of 867 residents from the City of Monash, suggesting increased movement from inner and middle-ring suburbs. At the same time, Knox experienced a net loss of 1,204 residents to the City of Casey, reflecting broader regional trends of outward movement to more affordable, outer suburban areas (.id community profile – Knox).

Targeted Social Housing

Looking further ahead, however, significant population growth is anticipated as part of Victoria's broader housing strategy. The City of Knox has been allocated a target of approximately 43,000 new social and affordable housing dwellings by 2051. This represents a substantial increase in housing stock—far beyond what is projected under current growth scenarios—and would reshape the municipality's demographic and spatial profile. The scale and timing of this housing rollout extends beyond the 2036 implementation horizon of the Best Start, Best Life reform, raising important questions about how and when new early childhood infrastructure will be needed.

While the specific locations and rollout stages of this housing growth are still being defined, it is clear that planning for early years services must remain responsive to both short-term birth trends and

longer-term shifts in housing density, affordability, and community need. Ensuring alignment between residential growth and early years infrastructure will be critical to maintaining equitable access for all families across Knox.

Aboriginal Self Determination in Early Childhood Education and Care

The City of Knox is committed to supporting Aboriginal self-determination in early childhood education and care by working in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), local agencies, and families to ensure culturally safe, inclusive, and accessible services.

Kindergarten participation among Aboriginal children in Knox has shown a modest but positive increase in recent years, with 18 children enrolled in 2021, rising to 23 in 2022, and 32 in 2023. While these numbers remain relatively small, the upward trend reflects growing engagement and ongoing efforts to support access and participation.

Council continues to strengthen its partnerships with key agencies, including the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA), which delivers a weekly playgroup at one of the Council managed Early Years hubs. This playgroup remains well-attended and provides a culturally supportive environment that fosters connection and confidence for children and families.

In collaboration with service providers and community organisations, Council is working to improve transition pathways from playgroup to kindergarten, recognising that early engagement and culturally safe relationships are central to building trust and supporting sustained participation.

Disclaimer: Knox City Council has reviewed and endorses this document in so far as it is an indicator of future unmet demand as predicted by currently available forecast data and a planning tool for potential future investment by various parties at their own discretion. Council's endorsement is not, and should not be interpreted as an indication that Council accepts responsibility for meeting that unmet demand, or that Council is capable of, or committed to meeting that demand, through either service provision or infrastructure expansion. Neither should Council's endorsement be interpreted as a commitment to impose change management activities and practices upon independent service providers, as a means to resolve unmet demand.

4. Unmet demand estimates between 2025 - 2036 for Knox City

4.1 Purpose

As the BSBL reforms are rolled out and Victoria's population grows, demand for kindergarten and Pre-Prep places will increase significantly. While additional capacity will be needed to meet this demand, this will vary across the State and over time, due to differences in the capacity of existing services, growth trends and sector composition.

To identify where, when and how many additional kindergarten places are expected to be required over the roll-out in Knox City, Knox City Council and the department have developed:

1. a summary of the current provision of kindergarten within Knox City (**Section 4.3**).
2. an estimate of kindergarten places that cannot be met through existing services for the 2025 - 2036 period, taking into account the additional demand that can be accommodated by optimising utilisation of existing services and infrastructure (**Section 4.4**).

Local governments and providers can use these published estimates to inform reform implementation activities such as service planning, kindergarten program expansion, infrastructure investments and Building Blocks funding applications in alignment with future demand over the roll-out.

4.2 Methodology

The estimated kindergarten places used in the following sections have been agreed between Knox City Council and the department, and were informed by:

- demand projections developed by the department which draw on a range of inputs, including population forecasts and current enrolments
- the estimated capacity of existing and planned services in the LGA (Section 2)
- where applicable, modelling undertaken by Knox City and service level information; and
- local knowledge and context provided by the local government (Section 3) that explains particular issues and trends in their area.

Kindergarten places explainer

The KISP measures a service's capacity to deliver funded kindergarten in terms of the number of **15-hour places** (referred to as "kindergarten places") available for Three-Year-Old kindergarten and Pre-Prep (noting that, by 2036, two kindergarten places will be required for one Pre-Prep enrolment). The number of kindergarten places is different from a service's licensed or approved places, which count the number of children permitted to attend the service at any one time under the license. Many services can enrol more children in their funded kindergarten program(s) than they have licensed places for because they can run more than one kindergarten program per week. Kindergarten places are therefore a more accurate measure of service kindergarten capacity than licensed places.

Kindergarten places have been presented as 15-hour places so that new Three-Year-Old Kindergarten places and the additional 15-hour places required for Pre-Prep can be easily compared to existing 15-hour Four-Year-Old Kindergarten places. This is because, when Three-Year-Old Kindergarten is fully rolled out in 2029, three-year-old children will have access to 15-hours of kindergarten. When Pre-Prep is fully rolled out in 2036, four-year-old children will have access to up to 30-hours of kindergarten, an increase of the current offering of 15-hours per week.

It is important to note that enrolments are not equivalent to 15-hour places. One 15-hour place can support a total of 15 hours of delivery per week split between one or more children, including but not limited to the following examples:

One 15-hour place (15 hours of delivery)		
Example 1	1 child	1 x 3YO attending 15 hours per week
Example 2	1 child	1 x 4YO attending 15 hours per week
Example 3	2 children	2 x 3YOs attending 7.5 hours per week
Example 4	3 children	3 x 3YOs attending 5 hours per week

Two 15-hour places can support a total of 30 hours of delivery per week split between one or more children, including but not limited to the following examples:

Two 15-hour places (30 hours of delivery)		
Example 1	1 child	1 x 4YO attending 30 hours per week
Example 2	2 children	2 x 3YOs attending 15 hours per week
Example 3	2 children	1 x 3YO, and 1 x 4YO both attending 15 hours per week
Example 4	3 children	2 x 3YOs attending 7.5 hours per week, and 1 x 4YO attending 15 hours per week

Geographic boundaries used in the KISP

These estimates have been developed at an LGA and community level to show the overall forecast and variation within an area. The KISP defines community at the Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2), which is a medium-sized area which represents a community that interacts socially and economically, with an approximate population range of 3,000 to 25,000 people, and an average population of about 10,000 people. The KISP uses 2021 SA2 boundaries. More information is available at the [Australian Bureau of Statistics website](#).

Supply contributed by pipeline projects

Knox City Council and the department have added any new places that will be made available through planned expansions of existing services or new services into estimates of existing supply,

where this information is available. This may include projects being delivered by not-for-profit providers (including non-government schools) with support from the Victorian Government, planned Kindergartens on School Sites, and government-owned and operated early learning and childcare centres.

The KISP does not estimate how and when the broader sector will expand to meet the additional demand for kindergarten places that are estimated over the roll-out period.

4.3 Summary of current kindergarten provision

The figures below provide a summary of current kindergarten provision within the LGA and provide relevant context for the estimates of demand for funded kindergarten places included in Section 4.5. The data included in this section are largely drawn from:

- the department's Kindergarten Information Management System (KIMS), as at 2023
- the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQAITS), as at April 2025.

Number of services by service type (NQAITS)	
Stand-alone kindergartens	28
Long day care centres (including services not currently delivering funded kindergarten)	53

Percentage of services by management type, LGA level (NQAITS)	
Type	Percentage
Local Government	2%
Private not for profit	44%
Private for profit	49%
Other	4%

Current kindergarten offering in Knox City	
Three-Year-Old Kindergarten participation rate (KIMS):	86%
Four-Year-Old Kindergarten participation rate (KIMS):	91%
Number of services that offer a funded kindergarten program (KIMS):	78

4.4 Agreed estimates of demand for kindergarten places

The below estimates (**Table 1** onwards) have been developed by Knox City Council and the department to illustrate the estimated:

- Demand – the total number of kindergarten places expected to be required over the roll-out period to support the current provision of Four-Year-Old Kindergarten, the BSBL reforms, and population growth

2. Supply – the total number of kindergarten places that can be accommodated by existing services and infrastructure, and planned, State-supported services which are yet to open.
3. Unmet demand – kindergarten places that cannot be accommodated by optimising existing services and infrastructure (i.e. the shortfall between demand and supply).

Interpreting the estimates

Infrastructure need in the LGA and its local communities is indicated by the bottom rows of the tables in this section (**Table 1** onwards): *Unmet demand*. If the number of kindergarten places in this row is above zero, it means that the area is estimated to need additional infrastructure capacity. Any type of provider – state government, local government, not-for-profit (including non-government schools) or for-profit – can build this additional infrastructure.

Sub-SA2 factors may need to be considered to give a holistic picture of unmet demand. For example, in rural communities, one SA2 may contain several small towns, some with excess supply and some with unmet demand. At the SA2-level, demand may appear to be met because all supply and demand is considered in aggregate; however, it is not feasible to for families to drive long distances to access kindergarten capacity in another town. Sub-SA2 factors are covered in **Section 3: Local context**.

Table 1: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2025 - 2036 in Knox City

Knox City estimates	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten places	2,970	3,104	3,178	3,433	3,469	3,573	3,575	3,571	3,564	3,911	4,253	4,870
Unmet demand	68	13	14	20	20	23	23	24	24	77	217	612

Community estimates

Table 2-A: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2025 - 2036 in Bayswater

SA2 estimates	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	201	217	226	249	254	264	266	267	268	300	333	389
Kindergarten supply	317	317	317	317	317	317	317	317	317	317	317	317
Unmet demand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	72

Table 2-B: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2025 - 2036 in Boronia

SA2 estimates	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	494	516	531	576	587	609	614	619	623	685	748	855
Kindergarten supply	865	865	865	865	865	865	865	865	865	865	865	865
Unmet demand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 2-C: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2025 - 2036 in Ferntree Gully (South) – Upper Ferntree Gully

SA2 estimates	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	280	294	302	328	331	342	342	341	339	375	410	473
Kindergarten supply	342	342	342	342	342	342	342	342	342	342	342	342
Unmet demand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	68	132

Table 2-D: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2025 - 2036 in Ferntree Gully - North

SA2 estimates	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	240	251	255	275	276	283	281	278	276	306	337	392
Kindergarten supply	325	325	325	325	325	325	325	325	325	325	325	325
Unmet demand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	67

Table 2-E: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2025 - 2036 in Knoxfield - Scoresby

SA2 estimates	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	246	258	265	291	295	305	306	306	305	343	381	446
Kindergarten supply	392	392	392	392	392	392	392	392	392	392	392	392
Unmet demand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	54

Table 2-F: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2025 - 2036 in Lysterfield

SA2 estimates	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	57	68	77	92	96	102	104	106	106	123	139	168
Kindergarten supply	0	119	119	119	119	119	119	119	119	119	119	119
Unmet demand	57	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	20	49

Table 2-G: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2025 - 2036 in Rowville - Central

SA2 estimates	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	282	292	296	316	317	324	321	317	312	335	356	402
Kindergarten supply	462	462	462	462	462	462	462	462	462	462	462	462
Unmet demand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 2-H: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2025 - 2036 in Rowville - North

SA2 estimates	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	152	159	163	176	178	184	184	185	185	202	218	248
Kindergarten supply	209	209	209	209	209	209	209	209	209	209	209	209
Unmet demand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	39

Table 2-I: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2025 - 2036 in Rowville - South

SA2 estimates	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	192	198	201	216	218	225	227	229	231	254	276	315
Kindergarten supply	262	262	262	262	262	262	262	262	262	262	262	262
Unmet demand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	53

Table 2-J: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2025 - 2036 in The Basin

SA2 estimates	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	65	67	68	74	74	77	77	78	78	87	97	113
Kindergarten supply	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54
Unmet demand	11	13	14	20	20	23	23	24	24	33	43	59

Table 2-K: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2025 - 2036 in Wantirna

SA2 estimates	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	255	261	262	280	280	286	284	281	279	308	336	388
Kindergarten supply	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301
Unmet demand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	35	87

Table 2-L: Estimated kindergarten places required between 2025 - 2036 in Wantirna South

SA2 estimates	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Demand for kindergarten	505	523	533	560	563	571	568	565	562	593	624	681
Kindergarten supply	980	980	980	980	980	980	980	980	980	980	980	980
Unmet demand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

5. Authorisation

Clayton Sturzaker, the Outer Eastern Melbourne Area Executive Director of the Department of Education, and [name and title of local government executive] of Knox City endorse this Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan (KISP) for Knox City Council by signing on / /

This KISP is not intended to create legal relations or constitute a legally binding contractual agreement between the parties. The parties may review this KISP in 2028 to publish a new version that will replace the previous version.

Signed for and on behalf and with the authority of Knox City Council.

.....
Signature

Name:

Title:

Signed for and on behalf and with the authority of the Department of Education

.....
Signature

Name:

Title:

4.6 Response to Notice of Motion No.185 - Christmas Decorations

Final Report Destination:	Mid Month
Paper Type:	For Decision
Author:	Head of 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 No.185 adopted by Council at its meeting of 25 August 2025 (Attachment 1) which resolved:

That Council, as part of recognising the importance of enhancing civic pride and the role our local retail traders play in Knox, request that a report be presented to the Mid-Month Council Meeting in September 2025 that:

- 1. Draws upon the work already undertaken as part of the report responding to Notice of Motion 177 at the 28 July 2025 Council Meeting;*
- 2. Presents an option for the installation of red bows across Knox's Major, Large and Medium Activity Centres (as defined by the previous report presented to Council) as part of a Christmas decoration pilot program to be rolled out for the festive period between 1 to 31 December 2025 at a maximum cost of \$15,000 (Exc. GST);*
- 3. Explores whether a more cost effective option for a contractor to supply, install and remove the red bows is available based on Council's Procurement Policy requirements to ensure as many of the Activity Centres listed at point 2 can be included; and*
- 4. Advises Council of the next steps required to deliver a pilot program for December 2025.*

The report in response to Notice of Motion 177 presented at the 28 July 2025 Council meeting (Attachment 2) has been used to inform this current report. This report focuses solely on the installation of red bows as part of a Christmas decoration pilot program to be delivered between 1 December and 31 December 2025.

Three options are presented for Council's consideration in response to Notice of Motion 185.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note, in response to Notice of Motion No.185:

1. The three options in this report for a one-off pilot Christmas Decoration pilot program.
2. That budget is not allocated to deliver the one-off pilot program and the required budget funding, depending on any option selected, will need to be allocated by Council in the 2025/26 budget for the Christmas decoration pilot program to be delivered.

1. DISCUSSION

This report responds to Notice of Motion (NOM) No.185 for a pilot Christmas decoration program for December 2025 for Knox's retail activity centres. This report provides three options in

response to the NOM. This report should be read in conjunction with the previous report in response to Notice of Motion 177, provided at Attachment 2.

A Christmas decoration program responding to Notice of Motion 185 focusses on the engagement of a contractor to supply, install, remove and store the red bows. Further market testing has been undertaken to determine both the number of red bows that can be sourced and the number of activity centres within the NOM parameters that can be decorated within the maximum budget allocation of \$15,000 (Exc. GST).

Based on advice through further market testing, the indicative unit cost per red bow is \$40 (including installation and removal) plus \$360 for 12 months storage. The contractor consulted has since advised they are now able to remove bows, and a separate contractor would no longer be required for this purpose. Storage for red bows is based on an indicative price of \$30 per pallet per month, or approximately \$360 annually. Based on this, a maximum budget of \$15,000 would fund up to 362 red bows across Major, Large and Medium Activity Centres (noting this does not provide full coverage of all activity centres), along with storage and a small amount of budget available for replacements. If Council wishes to proceed with a program, time is limited and the September mid-month meeting is the final opportunity to resolve to proceed, as procurement needs to be undertaken and orders need to be lodged by 1 October.

Options

Three options have been prepared for Council's consideration in the tables below. The following tables illustrate the number of red bows per activity centre and estimated total cost to supply, install, remove and store.

It should be noted that:

- Option 1 presents indicative costs to decorate all Major, Large and Medium activity centres with full coverage based on the estimated number of trees located within each centre. This option exceeds the maximum \$15,000 (excl. GST) budget.
- Option 2 presents indicative costs to decorate Large, Medium and One Major activity centre within the maximum \$15,000 (excl. GST) budget.
- Option 3 presents an option to decorate all Major, Large and Medium activity centres within the maximum \$15,000 (excl. GST) budget. This option allows all activity centres to be decorated but may not provide full coverage of trees, particularly within the Major activity centres where only 32 to 33 bows per centre are allocated.

As a further disclaimer, the number of trees estimated in the tables below are indicative only and based on a desktop assessment of the number of trees per activity centre. It is expected that the total allocation of red bows per activity centre will be finalised at the time of the installation. Further to this, trees along major arterial roads managed by the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) may require DTP's prior approval for the installation of the red bows. As such, timing for the approval to decorate these trees may not meet the deadlines for a 1 December 2025 pilot program.

OPTION 1: Includes MAJOR, LARGE AND MEDIUM CENTRES (Full Coverage)**COST:** \$23,200 (includes \$360 for storage)**TOTAL No. Of Red Bows required:** 571

**Activity centre adjoins major roads and may require Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) approval for installation of red bows that front these major roads. This may result in a reduced number of bows in that activity centre or inability to provide bows for December 2025 pilot program.

* Red Bows estimated based on tree coverage using data from Council's GIS and Google Maps. Some trees identified in activity centres may not be suitable for bow installation due to their size or location.

MAJOR CENTRES**ACTIVITY CENTRES****NUMBER OF RED BOWS ***

Boronia**

111

Mountain Gate**

98

Bayswater**

98

Major Centres No. of Bows Total:**307****LARGE CENTRES****ACTIVITY CENTRES****NUMBER OF RED BOWS ***

Scoresby**

31

Studfield**

15

Wantirna Mall**

33

Large Centres No. of Bows Total:**79****MEDIUM CENTRES****ACTIVITY CENTRES****NUMBER OF RED BOWS ***

Alchester Village**

26

Ferntree Gully**

36

Knox Gardens**

13

Knoxfield**

28

Rowville

12

The Basin**

33

Upper Ferntree Gully**

37

Medium Centres No. of Bows Total:**185**

OPTION 2: Includes LARGE, MEDIUM AND ONE MAJOR CENTRE**COST:** \$14,840 (includes \$360 for storage)**TOTAL No. of Red Bows required:** 362

** Activity centre adjoins major roads and may require Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) approval for installation of red bows that front these major roads. This may result in a reduced number of bows in that activity centre or inability to provide bows for December 2025 pilot program.

* Red Bows estimated based on tree coverage using data from Council's GIS and Google Maps. Some trees identified in activity centres may not be suitable for bow installation due to their size or location.

LARGE CENTRES**ACTIVITY CENTRES****NUMBER OF RED BOWS ***

Scoresby **

31

Studfield**

15

Wantirna Mall**

33

Large Centres No. of Bows Total:**79****MEDIUM CENTRES****ACTIVITY CENTRES****NUMBER OF RED BOWS ***

Alchester Village**

26

Ferntree Gully**

36

Knox Gardens**

13

Knoxfield**

28

Rowville

12

The Basin**

33

Upper Ferntree Gully**

37

Medium Centres No. of Bows Total:**185****MAJOR CENTRE – Include ONE of the following**

Mountain Gate**

98

Bayswater**

98

OPTION 3: Includes MAJOR, LARGE, MEDIUM CENTRES (Limited Coverage for Major Centres)	
COST: \$14,840 (includes \$360 for storage)	
TOTAL No. of Red Bows required: 362	
** Activity centre adjoins major roads and may require Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) approval for installation of red bows that front these major roads. This may result in a reduced number of bows in that activity centre or inability to provide bows for December 2025 pilot program.	* Red Bows estimated based on tree coverage using data from Council's GIS and Google Maps. Some trees identified in activity centres may not be suitable for bow installation due to their size or location.
MAJOR CENTRES (focus on high retail activity areas rather than full coverage the Major centres)	
ACTIVITY CENTRES	NUMBER OF RED BOWS *
Boronia**	33
Mountain Gate**	32
Bayswater**	33
Major Centres No. of Bows Total:	98
LARGE CENTRES	
ACTIVITY CENTRES	NUMBER OF RED BOWS *
Scoresby **	31
Studfield**	15
Wantirna Mall**	33
Large Centres No. of Bows Total:	79
MEDIUM CENTRES	
ACTIVITY CENTRES	NUMBER OF RED BOWS *
Alchester Village**	26
Ferntree Gully**	36
Knox Gardens**	13
Knoxfield**	28
Rowville	12
The Basin**	33
Upper Ferntree Gully**	37
Medium Centres No. of Bows Total:	185

The red bows would be made from durable materials that meet global recycling standards and are Oeko Tex Standard 100 approved. It is anticipated based on market research by officers that the expected lifespan of each bow is approximately four to five years, and they are reusable after one season, provided they are properly maintained and stored. This doesn't take into account damage, vandalism or theft.

The installation process undertaken by a supplier is expected to span two weeks, commencing in mid-November ready for 1 December 2025. To meet the proposed timeline, orders should be placed no later than 1 October 2025.

The removal process is expected to span two weeks, commencing in early January 2026.

The number of red bows across the retail precincts has been estimated based on tree coverage using data from Council's GIS and Google Maps. It should be noted this was a desktop survey and therefore an approximation of number of trees to be decorated. Officers have also not determined the size or suitability of red bows being placed on the trees.

While Council's GIS provides a useful overview, it also identifies vegetation such as bushes and smaller trees that are not suitable for bow installation. In such cases, the estimated bow allocation may be adjusted and redistributed to more appropriate trees in other centres. If a more accurate count of suitable trees is required, a full tree audit involving physical inspection of each site would be required and will take some time.

Next Steps

If Council resolves to proceed with the Christmas decoration pilot program and allocates budget, the following steps are to be followed:

- Commence procurement of red bows by sourcing 3 quotes as per Council's procurement policy.
- Order will need to be placed with supplier no later than 1 October 2025 to meet 1 December 2025 deadline for installation completion.
- Officers to determine the tree suitability for installation of red bows with contractor.
- Officers to map the location of trees identified for installation of red bows within the retail precincts with contractor.
- Officers to prepare and disseminate communications collateral to local businesses and community to inform local traders and community of the red bows program and timing for installation and removal.
- Contractor commences installation of red bows mid-November to 1 December 2025
- Contractor to remove red bows from early January.
- Contractor/officers to provide red bows to storage company for 12 months or until mid-November 2026 should Christmas decoration program continue for 2026.

2. ENGAGEMENT

In preparation of this report, officers undertook further market testing to inform the costs for contractors/suppliers to supply, install, remove and store the red bows. More extensive internal and external engagement was undertaken by officers to inform the previous report for NOM177.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Delivering a Christmas decoration program has the potential to foster civic pride, strengthen community bonds, and encourage families to participate in festive activities. By attracting visitors to retail centres, it also supports local traders by increasing foot traffic, boosting visibility, and generating economic opportunities.

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. The program should consider materials used, such as ensuring decorations are reusable to minimise waste noting that decorations also need to be weather resistant.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

As part of the pilot trial, red bows will be introduced to evaluate their effectiveness and potential for reuse in future programs.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

While the pilot program has been designed to align with a maximum budget of \$15,000, it does not allow for replacement of bows due to damage, vandalism, theft or weather exposure. The budget doesn't consider storage of the red bows beyond 2025/26.

The pilot program is currently unfunded within the 2025/26 budget. Funding and delivery of this program may require other priorities within the Economic Development work program and Service Plan may need to be delayed or offset particularly with respect to the next steps outlined in this report. Considerable officer time is required to deliver the program that has not been planned for, including engagement with DTP, additional trader communications and work with any contractor as oversight of the pilot program.

7. RISKS

Operational Risks

- Decorations such as red bows are vulnerable to damage from adverse weather, vandalism, or theft; potentially diminishing visual impact
- Variations in street tree size and conditions across activity centres may affect the visual consistency and impact of the red bow program
- Red Bows cannot be reinstalled by the supplier in subsequent years unless newly purchased, which may impact long-term cost efficiency and require alternative installation arrangements.
- Supplier lead times require orders to be placed by 1 October 2025. Delays in procurement processes or decision-making may impact delivery and installation timelines.
- Some trees may require Department of Transport approval and traffic management plans for red bows, which could delay installation, reduce coverage, and increase costs.

8. COUNCIL AND HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN 2025-2029

Enhancing community connection to vital services and resources

Strategy 1.3 - Local businesses and our economy are strong and resilient and there are increased employment opportunities through development, attracting investment, embracing technology and innovation, and advocacy.

Embracing connection, inclusion and diversity

Strategy 2.1 - Our community's diverse needs are addressed by ensuring equity and inclusion are considered in decision making and strategic planning.

Strategy 2.2 - Cultural diversity is celebrated through assisting, participating in, facilitating and delivering accessible programs, initiatives and events in partnership with our community, community groups and service providers.

Leading, listening and governing responsibly

Strategy 4.1 - Council demonstrates its accountability through transparent and responsible decision-making and working together productively.

Strategy 4.5 - Council is financially sustainable through long-term strategic, financial and asset planning, and the responsible prioritisation, allocation and use of resources.

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 - 2025-08-25 - Notice of Motion 185 - Christmas Decorations - Cr Williams [4.6.1 - 1 page]
2. Attachment 2 - Response to NoM 177 Christmas Decorations - full report with attachments - Council Meeting - 2025-0 [4.6.2 - 19 pages]

The logo for Knox City Council, featuring the word "knox" in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font.

Council Meeting

25/Aug/2025

Notice of Motion No.185

Christmas Decorations

That Council, as part of recognising the importance of enhancing civic pride and the role our local retail traders play in Knox, request that a report be presented to the Mid-Month Council Meeting in September 2025 that:

1. Draws upon the work already undertaken as part of the report responding to Notice of Motion 177 at the 28 July 2025 Council Meeting;
2. Presents an option for the installation of red bows across Knox's Major, Large and Medium Activity Centres (as defined by the previous report presented to Council) as part of a Christmas decoration pilot program to be rolled out for the festive period between 1 to 31 December 2025 at a maximum cost of \$15,000 (Exc. GST);
3. Explores whether a more cost effective option for a contractor to supply, install and remove the red bows is available based on Council's Procurement Policy requirements to ensure as many of the Activity Centres listed at point 2 can be included; and
4. Advises Council of the next steps required to deliver a pilot program for December 2025.

Cr Robert Williams

Dinsdale Ward

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8.9 Response to NoM.177 - Christmas Decorations

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Noting
Author:	Project Manager, Economic Development, Binh Luong; 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 No. 177 adopted by Council at its meeting of 24 March 2025 (**Attachment 1**) which resolved:

That Council, as part of recognising the importance of enhancing civic pride and 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 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.*

In accordance with Notice of Motion No.177, options have been developed and quotes obtained for decorations, based on the notional budget of \$50,000 indicated. These quotes explore a range of options that offer varying levels of festive coverage including Festive Bin Wraps, Festive Red Bows and a Festive Trader Window Decorating Initiative. The options are noted within the discussion section of the report.

In addition to the proposed options, in a meeting between Council officers and Cr Williams (who raised the NOM) on 31 March 2025, Cr Williams highlighted an opportunity of allowing traders to display their own Christmas trees on footpaths during business hours without permit fees, which would require processing through the existing Local Law Permit system. While this approach could support the Festive Decoration Program, it would significantly increase administrative and compliance workloads, potentially requiring additional staffing and impacting service delivery as outlined in the discussion section of this report.

This report has been prepared in response to the Notice of Motion No.177 and does not include a formal officer recommendation. It is provided to assist Council in understanding the potential costs and considerations associated with implementing a Festive Decoration program.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note, in response to Notice of Motion No. 177:

1. The five options within this report for a one-off pilot Festive Decoration Program with a notional budget of \$50,000, plus staff resource costs.

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2. That budget is not allocated to deliver the one-off pilot program and \$50,000 will need to be allocated by Council in the 2025/26 Council budget for the pilot program to be delivered.
3. An ongoing Festive Decoration Program would need to be considered and identified in the 2026/27 budget process if it were to be ongoing program.
4. A Festive Decoration Program has not been factored into Service Planning for any Council Services involved, particularly the Economic Development service, and delivery of existing programs will be impacted and prioritisation will be required.

1. DISCUSSION

This report responds to Notice of Motion (NOM) No. 177 for a pilot Christmas decoration program ("Festive Decoration Program") for Knox's retail activity centres. This report provides five options that offer varying levels of festive coverage for the notional budget of \$50,000. Options have been developed in response to the NOM and the following itemises the various components.

The options focus on three core components:

- festive bin wraps (based on a 4 sided printed corflute subject to bin door accessibility) to be affixed to bins by Velcro, cable ties or similar);
- red bows on Council managed trees; and
- a festive window decorating initiative for local traders.

Bin wraps

Bin wrap pricing was sourced from a Form A Sign, a supplier experienced in custom signage including corflute material with printed designs, that has experience in working with another municipality on Christmas decorations and associated logistics. Unit costs varying by quantity due to production efficiencies:

- Package 1 (96 bin wraps): \$132 excluding GST per wrap.
- Package 2 (68 bin wraps): \$155 excluding GST per wrap.
- Package 3 (63 bin wraps): \$155 excluding GST per wrap.

Installation and removal for all bin wraps were quoted at \$65 excluding GST per unit and storage was quoted at \$30 per pallet per month, equating to \$360 per year.

The number of bins across selected activity centres was determined using Council's GIS system to inform quantity estimates.

Red bows

Red bow pricing was obtained from Big Red Bows:

- \$20 including GST per bow.
- \$10 including GST per bow for installation.
- \$65 excluding GST per bow for removal (quoted separately by Form A Sign, as Red Bows does not offer removal services).

Storage for red bows was quoted at \$30 per pallet per month, or \$360 annually.

Big Red Bows are a community and family driven business that supports the Salvation Army through the donation of \$5 for every online sale. Their bows meet the global recycling standard,

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and they are Oeko-Tex Standard 100 approved. The bows are made from reusable and durable materials. Big Red Bows have confirmed that the expected lifespan of each bow is approximately four to five years, and they are reusable after one season, provided they are properly maintained.

Advanced notice is required to deliver 500 bows for the upcoming season. To meet the proposed timeline, orders should be placed no later than 1 October 2025. The installation process is expected to span two weeks, commencing in mid-November ready for 1 December, with a dedicated team organised to carry out the work.

It is important to note that red bows cannot be reinstalled by Big Red Bows in subsequent years unless newly purchased, which may have implications for future planning and budgeting as installation would need to be outsourced. Big Red Bows has also advised that red bows can be secured by wrapping the bow around trees however nails can also be used to secure the bows for aesthetic purposes.

An additional quote for supplying red bows was obtained from House of Adorn, priced at \$20 per bow. However, they do not offer installation services.

The number of red bows has been estimated based on tree coverage using data from Council's GIS and Google Maps. Please note that this is an approximation, as the available data is from 2016 and 2020 respectively. To ensure greater consistency across locations, the number of trees within each centre have been averaged. Some smaller activity centres were excluded from the tree count due to a lack of suitable trees to support red bows.

While Council's GIS provides a useful overview, it also identifies vegetation such as bushes and smaller trees that are not suitable for bow installation. In such cases, the estimated bow allocation may be adjusted and redistributed to more appropriate trees in other centres. If a more accurate count of suitable trees is required, a full tree audit involving physical inspection of each site would be required and will take some time.

Additionally, some trees identified in activity centres may not be suitable for bow installation as they would be subject to Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) approval and may result in reduced number of bows in that activity centre. Some locations may also require traffic management plans to ensure safe installation, which could impact costs, number of bows within the precinct and scheduling. Determining which locations that require DTP approval requires further investigation but generally relate to DTP managed arterial roads. These locations could be removed from the pilot program.

Festive Window Decorating Program

The Festive Window Decorating Program is a potential seasonal initiative to involve retail businesses in decorating their shopfronts and windows during the festive period. The program would run from mid-November to mid-December and be open to retail businesses across selected Knox shopping precincts (excluding privately owned hardtop shopping centres). Businesses would register online, and a photographer would be engaged to take pictures of the displays, typically in the evening. These photographs would be published on Experience Knox social media platforms, where members of the public could vote by liking their preferred displays. The ten most-liked entries from each precinct would be shortlisted and reviewed by a judging panel. Final winners would be selected based on this review.

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The program would require a budget of approximately \$15,000–\$17,000, covering photography, prizes, festive themed window stickers/decals and promotional content. The themed window stickers/decals would be explored as part of an information pack for participating traders to provide a starting point for displays but also assist in providing visitors a way of recognising participation in the program. Costings for the Festive Window Decorating Program were informed through discussions with an officer from Bayside City Council, who have delivered a similar initiative for many years. The initiative is expected to increase visibility for participating businesses and contribute to the festive presentation of local shopping areas.

Christmas Decoration Options

It is assumed that bin wrap designs can be produced in-house. However, if internal capacity is limited, an external design cost of \$2,000 (excluding GST) will need to be included within the \$50,000 budget.

Given the notional budget of \$50,000, the proposed program would provide only a very modest or “light touch” level of festive decoration across Knox’s retail activity centres, reinforcing that it should be considered as a pilot if Council were to proceed. Further, the more activity centres that are to be decorated, the further the limited decorations need to be spread. The implementation of any option will be resource-intensive, requiring coordination of internal resources, statutory approvals (as required) and contractors.

Additionally, engaging with local traders and gaining their participation will be a critical component of the Festive Window Decorating Program’s success. This process is expected to take a significant period of time and officer resources, particularly for the inaugural year, as traders will need encouragement, support, and time to come on board with the initiative.

Options

Five options have been prepared for Council’s consideration in the table below.

OPTIONS	SUMMARY	RISKS
1. Three Major Activity Centres Only* * major centres are listed in Attachment 2, which reflects the hierarchy of centres based on classifications outlined in the Knox Planning Scheme.	This package includes three major activity centres (MACs): Boronia, Mountain Gate & Bayswater. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major Activity Centres – 96 bins (3 centres): \$25,500 excluding GST 90 Red Bows: \$8,700 excluding GST Festive Window Decorating Program: \$15,000 excluding GST Total Cost: \$49,200* excluding GST <i>* This amount does not include staff resources, refer to financial and resource implications of the report for further detail.</i>	Reputational Risk to Council Lack of broad reach in Knox as not all activity centres can be included in the program. May be perceived as exclusive, focusing only on high-traffic or commercially significant areas. Smaller precincts and local traders might feel overlooked or undervalued, potentially leading to criticism from residents who don’t see festive investment in their neighbourhoods. Low participation from traders as

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OPTIONS	SUMMARY	RISKS
		<p>part of the window decorating program could reduce the overall impact and visibility of the initiative.</p> <p>Variations in street tree size and conditions across activity centres may affect the visual consistency and impact of the red bow program</p> <p>Red Bows and Bin Wraps may be subject to vandalism, theft, or damage from adverse weather conditions, which could generate negative feedback from the community and require additional officer resourcing to manage and maintain.</p> <p>Negative feedback from residents who perceive the \$50,000 expenditure on Christmas decorations as excessive or misaligned with community priorities, particularly with cost of living pressures.</p> <p>An investment of \$50,000 may result in a Christmas decoration program that appears visually limited and may fall short of community expectations.</p>

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OPTIONS	SUMMARY	RISKS
<p>2. Three Large Activity Centres & Three Medium Activity Centres *</p> <p>*large and medium centres are listed in Attachment 2, which reflects the hierarchy of centres based on classifications outlined in the Knox Planning Scheme.</p>	<p>Designed for broader reach, this package covers three large activity centres: Scoresby Village, Studfield & Wantirna Mall as well as three medium activity centres determined by Council (3rd grouping shown in Attachment 2).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three Large Activity Centres & three Medium Activity Centres – 68 bins (6 centres): \$19,740 excluding GST • 160 Red Bows: \$15,100 excluding GST • Festive Window Decorating Program: \$15,000 excluding GST • Total Cost: \$49,840* excluding GST <p><i>*This amount does not include staff resources, refer to financial and resource implications of the report for further detail.</i></p>	<p>Reputational Risk to Council</p> <p>Lack of broad reach in Knox as not all activity centres can be included in the program.</p> <p>May be perceived as exclusive, focusing only on high-traffic or commercially significant areas.</p> <p>Smaller precincts and local traders might feel overlooked or undervalued, potentially leading to criticism from residents who don't see festive investment in their neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Low participation from traders as part of the Window decorating program could reduce the overall impact and visibility of the initiative.</p> <p>Variations in street tree size and conditions across activity centres may affect the visual consistency and impact of the red bow program</p> <p>Red Bows and Bin Wraps may be subject to vandalism, theft, or damage from adverse weather conditions, which could generate negative feedback from the community.</p> <p>Negative feedback from residents who perceive the \$50,000 expenditure on Christmas decorations as excessive or misaligned with community priorities, particularly with cost of living pressures.</p> <p>An investment of \$50,000 may result in a Christmas decoration program that appears visually limited and may fall short of community expectations.</p>

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OPTIONS	SUMMARY	RISKS
<p>3. Seven Medium Centres *</p> <p>*medium centres are listed in Attachment 2, which reflects the hierarchy of centres based on classifications outlined in the Knox Planning Scheme.</p>	<p>This option focuses on medium-sized activity centres, offering broader coverage across all seven activity centres: Alchester Village, Ferntree Gully Village, Knox Gardens, Knoxfield, Rowville, The Basin & Upper Ferntree Gully (3rd grouping in Attachment 2).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Activity Centres – 67 bins (7 centres): \$19,455 excluding GST • 160 Red Bows: \$15,100 excluding GST • Festive Window Decorating Program: \$15,000 excluding GST • Total Cost: \$49,555* excluding GST <p><i>* This amount does not include staff resources, refer to financial and resource implications of the report for further detail.</i></p>	<p>Reputational Risk to Council</p> <p>Excluding major centres entirely may lead to push back from traders who feel overlooked or excluded from the program.</p> <p>Low participation from traders as part of the Window decorating program could reduce the overall impact and visibility of the initiative.</p> <p>Variations in street tree size and conditions across activity centres may affect the visual consistency and impact of the red bow program.</p> <p>Red Bows and Bin Wraps may be subject to vandalism, theft, or damage from adverse weather conditions, which could generate negative feedback from the community.</p> <p>Negative feedback from residents who perceive the \$50,000 expenditure on Christmas decorations as excessive or misaligned with community priorities, particularly with cost of living pressures.</p> <p>An investment of \$50,000 may result in a Christmas decoration program that appears visually limited and may fall short of community expectations.</p>

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OPTIONS	SUMMARY	RISKS
4. Red Bows Only - Large, Medium & Small Activity Centres + a Community Learning Centre * *activity centres are listed in Attachment 2, which reflects the hierarchy of centres based on classifications outlined in the Knox Planning Scheme.	<p>This option focuses on large, medium & small sized activity centres, offering broader coverage across all 21 activity centres (3rd grouping in Attachment 2).</p> <p>In addition to the activity centres, Rowville Community Learning Centre has also been identified for red bows, noting limited activity centres in the south of the municipality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 420 Red Bows in Large, Medium & Small Activity Centres • Up to 12 Red Bows at Rowville Community Learning Centre (and/or other location as resolved by Council) • Total bows 432 • Total Cost: \$40,420* excluding GST <p><i>* Red bows were allocated only to Large, Medium, and Small Activity Centres due to the scale of Major Activity Centres resulting in a budget constraint. Should Council wish to extend this to include Major Activity Centres, an estimated additional 300 red bows would need to be considered, resulting in an approximate cost of \$28,500.</i></p> <p><i>* This amount does not include staff resources, refer to financial and resource implications of the report for further detail.</i></p>	<p>Reputational Risk to Council</p> <p>Excluding major centres entirely may lead to pushback from traders who feel overlooked or excluded from the program.</p> <p>Variations in street tree size and conditions across activity centres may affect the visual consistency and impact of the red bow program.</p> <p>Red Bows may be subject to vandalism, theft, or damage from adverse weather conditions, which could generate negative feedback from the community.</p> <p>Negative feedback from residents who perceive the \$50,000 expenditure on Christmas decorations as excessive or misaligned with community priorities, particularly with cost of living pressures.</p> <p>An investment of \$50,000 may result in a Christmas decoration program that appears visually limited and may fall short of community expectations.</p>

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OPTIONS	SUMMARY	RISKS
<p>5. Large, Medium Activity Centres & Small Activity Centres *</p> <p>*activity centres are listed in Attachment 2, which reflects the hierarchy of centres based on classifications outlined in the Knox Planning Scheme.</p>	<p>This option focuses on large, medium & small sized activity centres offering broader coverage across all 21 activity centres (3rd grouping in Attachment 2).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Festive Window Decorating Program: \$17,000 excluding GST 350 Red Bows in Large, Medium & Small Activity Centres (21 centres): \$32,455 excluding GST Total Cost: \$49,455 * excluding GST <p><i>*To include Major Activity Centres, an additional \$3,000 would be required for window decorations, along with the cost of approximately 300 red bows which would be a further \$28,500 (approx.)</i></p> <p><i>* To stay within the \$50,000 budget, the number of red bows has been reduced from 400 to 350. If Council wishes to maintain coverage with 400 red bows, the budget will need to be increased to approximately \$56,000</i></p> <p><i>* Small activity centres were excluded from the Festive Window Decorating program. Given the already limited trader uptake expected for the Festive Window Decorating Program, particularly in its inaugural year, the low number of traders in these centres would likely result in minimal to no participation. To encourage engagement in future years, small centres may need to be grouped together and supported through shared prize incentives.</i></p> <p><i>* This amount does not include staff resources, refer to financial and resource implications of the report for further detail.</i></p>	<p>Reputational Risk to Council</p> <p>Excluding major centres entirely may lead to pushback from traders who feel overlooked or excluded from the program.</p> <p>Low participation from traders as part of the Window decorating program could reduce the overall impact and visibility of the initiative.</p> <p>Variations in street tree size and conditions across activity centres may affect the visual consistency and impact of the red bow program.</p> <p>Red Bows may be subject to vandalism, theft, or damage from adverse weather conditions, which could generate negative feedback from the community.</p> <p>Negative feedback from residents who perceive the \$50,000 expenditure on Christmas decorations as excessive or misaligned with community priorities, particularly with cost of living pressures.</p> <p>An investment of \$50,000 may result in a Christmas decoration program that appears visually limited and may fall short of community expectations.</p>

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It is very important to note that some trees identified in retail precincts may not be suitable for bow installation as they would be subject to Department of Transport approval and may result in a reduced number of bows in that activity centre. Further, there may be other trees that by virtue of their health or position or significance, may not be suitable to host a bow. Some locations may also require traffic management plans to ensure safe installation, which could impact costs, number of bows within the precinct and scheduling.

It should be noted that the cost per bin wrap increases as the quantity of bins wraps ordered decreases due to reduced production efficiencies. Fewer bin wraps result in a higher unit cost, so larger quantities offer better value overall.

Christmas Tree Footpath Display

A meeting between Council officers and Cr Williams was held on 31 March 2025, with Councillor Williams enquiring about a potential option for traders to display their own Christmas trees on the footpath outside their business during business hours, waiving respective permit fees.

This option would need to be managed through a Local Law Permit, with applications lodged online. Each submission would require processing and document verification by Council's Community Laws Support Team, followed by onsite inspections conducted by a Community Laws Officer. It is estimated that each application will take a minimum of 1–2 hours of combined staff time, placing additional requirements on existing resources and service delivery. Given the capacity of the teams responsible for assessing the Local Law Permit requirement, Councillors would need to consider what additional resourcing will be allocated to support footpath displays, noting the concerns raised by Community Laws officers below. It should also be noted that applications by businesses would need to be submitted before mid-November to allow for approval by 1 December each year. It is also unclear, after some trader engagement, how many traders in the short term would have an interest in, or be in a position to participate.

The current permit process would incur a fee of \$295. Waiving this fee would result in a loss of income for the Council whilst increasing the administrative and operational workload.

Community Laws Officers will be responsible for inspecting displays to ensure compliance with permit conditions, in particular tree placement and community safety. However, this increase in inspections will divert officers from their core responsibilities, such as responding to customer complaints and investigating high priority and/or statutory matters like dog attacks. Additional staffing is likely to be required depending on the number of applications received from traders for Christmas Tree displays, to ensure timely processing of the permits and to carry out compliance inspections.

Key considerations for supporting footpath Christmas tree displays include:

- **Inspection Criteria:** Inspections will assess placement in line with current local law requirements for street trading, including safety, amenity, and setbacks.
- **Temporary Displays:** Christmas trees must be removed daily and stored by the business, as current street trading conditions require items on Council land to be taken in at the end of trade.
- **Public Liability Insurance:** Applicants must provide proof of \$20 million public liability insurance, as required for all Local Law permits.

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- Duration of the Permit: It is assumed the display period will be for the month of December, with removal required by 31 December.
- Lights and Leads: Lights and power leads are not permitted due to safety risks, would need to be solar or battery powered.
- Aesthetics: Council should be aware that a wide variety of tree types and decoration styles may be used, which could impact the visual appeal of shopping strips due to a lack of uniformity.
- Non-Compliance: Breaches of permit conditions or complaints from residents will require further inspections and follow-up, increasing workload and potentially leading to enforcement actions such as removal of trees or issuing infringements.

Given the various statutory issues that needs to be addressed, further time would be required to implement this initiative. It has the potential to be an initiative that could be considered from Year 2 onwards of any ongoing Christmas decorating program, particularly if there were a small group of traders (2-3 for example) that were open to participate in a trial or pilot approach. This would help test the concept and establish a regulatory framework.

2. ENGAGEMENT

On 31 March 2025, the Director City Liveability, Manager City Futures, and Coordinator Economic Development met with Cr Williams to discuss the Festive Decoration initiative. Cr Williams expressed the desire to treat the proposed Festive Decoration Program as a pilot initiative, that Council could consider expanding in the future.

The Experience Knox Business Working Group was established in late 2024 comprising of local traders in Knox. The working group supports the promotion and operation of the Experience Knox digital platform developed by Council and has representatives from six activity centres across Knox. Initial discussions were held with the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Business Working Group to gather input on the Festive Decoration Program. Both members have expressed interest in fostering a welcoming and festive atmosphere to attract shoppers and enhance the overall retail experience with the above initiatives.

The Wantirna Mall Traders Association is currently the only formalised trader association within Knox and a phone discussion was held with the Association's Treasurer. During this conversation, they expressed support for the proposed Festive Decoration Program, indicating that such an initiative would be positively received by traders at Wantirna Mall.

As part of the Festive window decorating initiative, traders will need to be engaged by Economic Development officers to take part in the program. The initiative will explore the potential of prizes for both residents and traders to encourage participation. The program will be delivered through the Experience Knox platform to strengthen community and business connections.

Consultation with the Community Laws department have identified the necessary requirements to explore the possibility of permitting businesses to display Christmas trees on footpaths during business hours. This initiative will utilise existing Street and Footpath Trading Permit guidelines, rather than introducing a new permit framework. Resourcing considerations are outlined earlier in the report.

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Insights from the Boronia Autumn Window Program, delivered as part of the 2024 Boronia Activation and Placemaking initiative (and supported by State funding) highlighted the considerable staff time and coordination required in running such a program. Led by the Economic Development team, officers conducted direct outreach to traders, distributed promotional materials, and supported participants with guidance on display setup within the Boronia Major Activity Centre. This resulted in the engagement of 8–10 local businesses who then decorated their shopfronts with autumn-themed displays. The initiative also involved coordination with internal Council departments for communications, approvals, and logistics. This program was conducted at a time that Council was receiving place making funding and staff resources from the State Government as part of the Suburban Revitalisation Program, which has since concluded. These learnings underscore the importance of early planning, dedicated staff resources and cross-departmental collaboration. Similar resource and coordination challenges are anticipated for the Festive Window Decorating Program.

Discussions were held with an Officer from Bayside Council to discuss that Council's "Shops on Show" program, a festive window decorating initiative run across nine shopping strips. The program encourages traders to create festive window displays, supported by professional photography and a public voting system via social media. The initiative included prize hampers and promotional content for winners. Key learnings included the importance of early engagement, dedicated staffing, and streamlined communications, with the officer allocating 2 days per week to manage the program during its peak period.

To support the proposed Festive Window Decorating Program, a structured engagement process would be essential. The Economic Development team would lead the delivery of this program, with support from the Communications team to assist with the promotional activities. Initial outreach to traders would need to take place during August 2025, using direct communication methods such as email, phone calls, and in-person visits to assess interest and encourage participation. Officers would need to provide detailed program information, decoration guidelines, and promotional support throughout September and October. The decorating period will need to be scheduled for late November through December 2025, aligning with the broader Festive decoration program.

Discussions were also held with Maroondah City Council Economic Development officers to obtain advice on their Christmas Decoration Program. Maroondah currently funds an ongoing decoration program with an annual allocation of \$50,000 (following the initial investment). Four officer resources within Economic Development and Operations Centre teams have also been allocated at Maroondah towards their iterative program to manage the rollout, contractor oversight, monitoring and maintenance. Given the annual budget, Maroondah's program also involves a staged approach to activity centres being nominated for the decorations each year. A separate purpose built storage area had to be constructed to house the various decorations.

To inform the development of this report, Council officers engaged with a range of internal departments including Community Laws, Facilities Maintenance, Engineering Services and Operations, and the Communications team to assess project requirements, permit processes, and promotional support.

External engagement included discussions with contractors/suppliers such as Form A Sign and Red Bows to obtain quotes for decoration supply, installation, removal, and storage. Officers also

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consulted with Bayside and Maroondah councils to gain insights from their respective festive decoration programs, and initial feedback was sought from the Experience Knox Business Working Group and the Wantirna Mall Traders Association to understand trader interest and support.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Delivering a Festive decoration program has the potential to foster civic pride, strengthen community bonds, and encourage families to participate in festive activities. By attracting visitors to retail centres, it also supports local traders by increasing foot traffic, boosting visibility, and generating economic opportunities.

However, limited funding means that not all activity centres can be included in the program, necessitating the prioritisation of selected centres. As a result, traders, customers and visitors in the excluded precincts may miss out on the associated benefits, which could create a sense of disadvantage within the business communities.

Additionally, cultural diversity within Knox presents another consideration, as not all residents may celebrate or identify with Christmas. This could unintentionally lead to feelings of exclusion among those from diverse cultural or religious backgrounds – or expectations that Council may invest in celebrating other religious holidays throughout the year in an equivalently visual manner. Careful planning and inclusive messaging will be essential to ensure the program resonates positively with the broader community.

4. CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS

Implementation of the recommendation is considered to have no direct implications upon Council's Net Zero 2030 target, the Community Net Zero 2040, exposure to climate risks or climate change adaptation. The program should consider materials used, such as ensuring decorations are reusable to minimise waste noting that decorations also need to be weather resistant.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

As part of the pilot trial, reusable bin wraps and red bows will be introduced to evaluate their effectiveness and potential for reuse in future programs.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

All five proposed options include the full scope of decoration delivery including design, installation, removal, and storage and is an estimation only based on quotes obtained for the purpose of this report. While each option sits below the proposed \$50,000 budget, it is acknowledged that a contingency (notionally 10% or \$5,000) would be required to accommodate unforeseen costs. Officers suggest that any contingency be factored in addition to the \$50,000 budget as reducing the overall budget to absorb the contingency may lead to an increase in per unit cost for decorations or reduction in overall number of decorations which may undermine the visual appeal of the program. The budget also does not cost clean up vandalism or replacement of items due to theft. If items were expected to be replaced, this will require additional budget.

While the pilot program has been designed to align with a notional \$50,000 budget, this level of investment will only deliver a very modest or "light touch" festive coverage and will be increasingly spread thin the more centres that are included. Based on supplier quotes, a more comprehensive program covering all Major, Large, and Medium Activity Centres (13 centres) in Knox would be approximately \$105,000 ex GST. This would include bin wraps for 201 bins, along

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with installation, removal, and external storage. It also accounts for the installation of 350 red bows, one pallet for storage of red bows, and a \$20,000 allocation for the Festive Window Decorating Program with all 13 centres. Notably, this estimate excludes any decorations for small activity centres.

Further consideration will be required to determine whether the pilot program should be expanded to additional activity centres, including the potential need for further funding of \$50,000 or more, depending on the scale and scope of the rollout. An ongoing/longer term Festive Decorating Program would then need to be referred to the 2026/27 Budget process for future funding consideration.

Other considerations for an ongoing program include:

- Maintenance and replacement of decorations due to damage, vandalism, theft, or weather exposure.
- Ongoing storage of reusable items such as bin wraps and red bows beyond 2025/26.
- Offsets that may be required to the work program of Economic Development and other teams involved in the rollout of the program to absorb the project within existing operating budgets.

Staff Resources

The Economic Development team, comprising 3.8 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff, has limited capacity to deliver the pilot program without affecting the existing work program. Based on the proposed timeline:

- From August to October: a minimum of 1 day per week of officer time will be required.
- From November to December: a minimum of 2 days per week will be required.

This resource allocation will impact delivery of other key programs that form part of the Service Plan, including:

- Experience Knox Platform and project
- Bayswater Business Precinct (BBP) Program
- Business Permit Support Process (New and Growing Businesses)
- Business workshops and events
- Fortnightly KnoxBiz eNewsletter
- Outdoor Dining Parklet (further investigation)
- Any other unscheduled tasks, enquiries, programs or the like that may arise in the meantime.

The priority of staff resources across these initiatives will need to be reviewed if the Festive program proceeds. Other staff resources may be required from (but not limited to):

- Community Laws
- Facilities
- Communications and Engagement.

It is important to note that significant officer resources would also be required to deliver a Festive Window Decorating Program due to the extent of promotion and engagement officers would need to undertake to obtain trader buy-in, above and beyond current engagement activities. On that basis if Council were to support the extensive rollout of the Window Program, a review of the Economic Development work plan would be required.

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7. RISKS

Operational Risks

- Bin wraps may hinder access to bins, potentially delaying waste collection and emptying processes. This will need to be considered in the design of bin wraps and whether a cost effective wrap can be achieved.
- Decorations such as red bows and bin wraps are vulnerable to damage from adverse weather, vandalism, or theft; potentially diminishing visual impact.
- Variations in street tree size and conditions across activity centres may affect the visual consistency and impact of the red bow program.
- While a notional allocation of \$50,000 has been proposed for the Festive decoration program, this level of funding will result in a program with a modest visual impact, spread over a varying number of activity centres. As a result, the success of the initiative will rely heavily on trader participation through festive window displays. To deliver a meaningful and impactful festive experience across Knox's retail precincts, a more substantial financial commitment would be required.
- Red Bows cannot be reinstalled by the supplier in subsequent years unless newly purchased, which may impact long-term cost efficiency and require alternative installation arrangements.
- Supplier lead times require orders to be placed by 1 October 2025. Delays in procurement processes or decision-making may impact delivery and installation timelines.

Engagement Risks

- Community participation may be limited if engagement relies too heavily on digital platforms like Instagram, potentially excluding less tech-savvy demographics.
- Low trader participation in the Festival Window Decorating Program could reduce the overall visibility and success of the initiative.

Sustainability Risks

- Providing environmentally friendly decorative options may undermine cost effectiveness and will require further investigation.

Other Risks to Council

- Lack of broad reach across Knox as not all activity centres or Wards can be included in the program, based on the network of activity centres and their varying scale.
- The program may be perceived as exclusive if only select activity centres are included, leading to dissatisfaction among traders and residents in excluded areas.
- Smaller precincts and local businesses may feel overlooked or undervalued, potentially resulting in negative feedback and/or demand for greater resources.
- The visual impact of the program may fall short of community expectations, particularly if the decorations appear limited, underwhelming, or inconsistent.
- Residents may view the expenditure as excessive or misaligned with broader community priorities.
- A notional investment of \$50,000 may result in a Festive decoration program that appears visually limited and may fall short of community expectations.
- The Festive Window Decorating Program is reliant on the Experience Knox social media platform for promotion and community engagement. If the Experience Knox platform is

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transitioned away from Council management and handed over to the Business Working Group (as planned), Council will no longer have direct access to its social media channels. This poses a risk to the program's continuity. Council will need to either utilise its own corporate social media channels or seek approval for the Economic Development team to establish and manage a social media platform.

- Some trees may require Department of Transport approval and traffic management plans for red bows, which could delay installation, reduce coverage, and increase costs.

8. COUNCIL AND HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN 2025-2029

Enhancing community connection to vital services and resources

Strategy 1.3 - Local businesses and our economy are strong and resilient and there are increased employment opportunities through development, attracting investment, embracing technology and innovation, and advocacy.

Embracing connection, inclusion and diversity

Strategy 2.1 - Our community's diverse needs are addressed by ensuring equity and inclusion are considered in decision making and strategic planning.

Strategy 2.2 - Cultural diversity is celebrated through assisting, participating in, facilitating and delivering accessible programs, initiatives and events in partnership with our community, community groups and service providers.

Leading, listening and governing responsibly

Strategy 4.1 - Council demonstrates its accountability through transparent and responsible decision-making and working together productively.

Strategy 4.5 - Council is financially sustainable through long-term strategic, financial and asset planning, and the responsible prioritisation, allocation and use of resources.

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 - Notice of Motion 177 Christmas Decorations Cr Williams - 2025-03-24 [**8.9.1** - 1 page]
2. Attachment 2 - Knox City Council Activity Centres 2025 Christmas decorations [**8.9.2** - 2 pages]



24 March 2025

Notice of Motion No. 177

Christmas Decorations

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.

Cr Robert Williams
Dinsdale Ward



Knox Activity Centres - Christmas Decorations

ACTIVITY CENTRE NAME	ACTIVITY CENTRE HIERARCHY	WARD
Major activity centre	Bayswater	Dinsdale
	Boronia	Baird
	Mountain Gate	Friberg
Large neighbourhood activity centre	Scoresby Village	Tirhatuan
	Studfield, Wantirna South	Dinsdale
	Wantirna Mall, Wantirna	Collier
Medium neighbourhood activity centre	Alcester Village, Boronia	Chandler
	Ferntree Gully Village	Dobson
	Knox Gardens, Wantirna South	Scott
	Knoxfield	Friberg
	Rowville Lakes, Rowville	Taylor
	The Basin	Chandler
Small neighbourhood activity centres	Upper Ferntree Gully	Dobson
	Anne Road/Kathryn Road, Knoxfield	Friberg
	Boronia Road/ Scoresby Road, Boronia	Dinsdale
	Burwood Highway Corridor (east of Dorset Road between Newtown Street and Forest Oak Drive), Ferntree Gully and Upper Ferntree Gully	Dobson
	Burwood Highway Corridor (west of Dorset Road/east of Westley Street), Ferntree Gully	Baird
	Cavell Street/Armin Street, Scoresby	Tirhatuan
	Dorset Road/Landscape Drive, Boronia	Chandler



ACTIVITY CENTRE NAME	ACTIVITY CENTRE HIERARCHY	WARD
	Glenfern Road/Mason Street, Ferntree Gully	Dobson
	Lewis Road/Coleman Road, Boronia	Dinsdale
	Manuka Drive/Loretto Avenue, Ferntree Gully	Baird
	Mountain Highway/Kumala Road, Bayswater	Dinsdale
	Stud Bay (Stud Road, north of Leonard Street), Bayswater	Dinsdale

Note:

- Hardtop Shopping Centres have been removed.
- Small neighbourhood activity centres are less than 15 retail businesses and therefore have been excluded from the quote in the report.

Date 9 April 2025

5 Notices Of Motion

6 Supplementary Items

7 Urgent Business

8 Confidential Items