

MINUTES

Meeting of Council

Held at the
Civic Centre
511 Burwood Highway
Wantirna South
On
Monday 28 July 2025



The Agenda for the Meeting of Council, Monday 28 July 2025, forms part of these Minutes and is attached in full at the end of the Minutes.

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

The meeting commenced at 7:06 pm.

PRESENT:

Cr Lisa Cooper (Mayor)	Scott Ward
Cr Glen Atwell (Deputy Mayor)	Tirhatuan Ward
Cr Chris Duncan	Collier Ward
Cr Robert Williams	Dinsdale Ward
Cr Meagan Baker	Dobson Ward
Cr Parisa Considine	Friberg Ward
Cr Peter Lockwood	Baird Ward
Cr Susan Pearce	Taylor Ward
Cr Paige Kennett	Chandler Ward

Bruce Dobson	Chief Executive Officer
Grant Thorne	Director – Infrastructure
Matt Kelleher	Director - City Livability
Judy Chalkley	Director - Connected Communities
Greg Curcio	Director - Customer and Performance
Navec Lorkin	Chief Financial Officer
Andrew Dowling	Manager, Governance and Risk
Saskia Weerheim	Head of Governance

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

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

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1 Apologies And Requests For Leaves Of Absence

Nil.

2 Declarations Of Conflict Of Interest

Councillor Lockwood foreshadowed declaring a conflict of interest in Item 8.5, Minor Grants Program and Emergency Relief Fund 2025-26 Monthly Report and Individual Excellence Grants Update (Quarter 4).

Councillor Duncan foreshadowed making a transparency statement for Item 8.1, Leasing and Licensing Policy.

3 Confirmation Of Minutes

The Chairperson, Mayor Lisa Cooper invited Councillors to raise any opposition to the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on Monday 23 June 2025. There being none, the Chairperson declared the Minutes be confirmed.

4 Presentations, Petitions And Memorials

4.1 Memorial – David Rose

Councillor Pearce extended her condolences to the family of David Rose including his wife, Deb, daughter Isabelle and her partner Hamish and their granddaughter Scarlett as well as many students, colleagues and friends. She acknowledged he was a Principal at three government schools in Knox, one where her daughter attended.

David's teaching career started in 1986 at Croydon Community School, where he later became Principal. He then moved into the Primary School sector and became Assistant Principal at Eastwood Primary School. In 2004, he was appointed as Principal at Upper Ferntree Gully Primary School. Subsequently, he was appointed at Heany Park Primary School as Principal. Councillor Pearce reflected on working with him on the Heany Park Primary School Committee and noted he was enthusiastic and very helpful. She said he was dedicated, supportive and displayed a relentless commitment to young people. He was much loved in the education community.

In memorial, David's three friends are riding in the Tour de France in his memory, which he had planned to do.

4.2 Memorial – Robert Van Stockrom

Councillor Lockwood acknowledged the passing of former Scott Ward Councillor, Robert Van Stockrom. He was a Knox Councillor from 1997 to 2000 and was in the people placement business, working at Forstaff before setting up his own recruitment business which was very successful. He passed away at the age of 71.

Encouraged anyone struggling to connect with the Black Dog Institute or Lifeline for support.

5 Reports By Councillors

5.1 Councillor Baker

Councillor Baker reported attending the following:

- ALGA's National General Assembly of which she submitted a report to this Council Meeting
- Mandatory Councillor personal development session earlier this month
- Meeting with St Joseph's College in relation to My Town presentation
- Knox Active Ageing Advisory Committee

Councillor Baker also:

- Attended the Community National Tree Day at Koolamara Waters with the Deputy Mayor, Glen Atwell and planted 3,000 plants with about 150 volunteers. She acknowledged and extended her thanks to the Knox City Council Biodiversity Team and the volunteer groups who donated their time towards the event. Councillor Baker acknowledged there were volunteers who attended from Wangaratta and Broken Hill to participate in the event.
- Attended the Ferntree Gully CFA Awards Presentation evening.
- Upwey Tecoma Football Club NAIDOC Round that was located at Talaskia Reserve in Upper Ferntree Gully.
- Attended Pathway for Carers Knox walk.

5.2 Councillor Kennett

Councillor Kennett reported attending the following:

- A meeting with one of the Coordinators at St Joseph's College, with Cr Baker, Cr Atwell and Cr Duncan, who presented to Council on behalf of the Year 9 cohort. A Year 9 program at St Josephs is investigating the local area and interviewing locals. The students will then prepare solutions and recommendations for the issues they have identified in the area. This year the focus was on youth, and they presented 27 ideas across five different themes. She extended her thanks to St Joseph's College for bringing these ideas to Council.
- Early Years Advisory Committee with Councillor Considine. The committee provided feedback about the Domestic Animal Management Plan and the views of children regarding that plan. They discussed the impact of open space and dogs off-lead and the impact it can have on children.
- A neighbouring Council's winter program, Stable One. The program offers people a place to have a meal, hot shower and a place to sleep for people who are homeless. It is run by volunteers. Councillor Kennett noted that Knox has a lower homelessness rate than the metropolitan Melbourne, however higher than adjoining Councils. Councillor Kennett also noted that Council's emergency relief fund aims to support people in need.

Councillor Kennett also:

- Attended Chatham Reserve with the volunteers of Froggie, who did a tree planting event on the 28th of June where they planted 1,000 plants with 25 residents. She extended her thanks to the volunteers, Melbourne Water and Knox City Council for supporting the tree planting event.

- Met with residents who raised concerns about parking, streets and bike paths of which she is progressing through Council.

5.3 Councillor Atwell

Councillor Atwell reported attending the following:

- ERG Committee meeting at Maroondah City Council with members of the State Opposition and Knox City Council's CEO. He highlighted it was a good opportunity to talk to Opposition Leader, Brad Battin, and David Davis about Knox and ERG issues and contribute to some of the thinking that is going into State Election platforms for next year. Community safety, planning and housing were some of the issues discussed.
- The Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly.

Councillor Atwell also:

- Attended Koolamara Waters with the Councillor Baker and noted it there was a wonderful family friendly vibe. He highlighted that it was great to chat to the environmental and wildlife groups including Gardens for Wildlife, KES, Friends of Koolunga, Friends of Dandenong Creek and the Heany Park Scout group.
- Attended the Knox business National Tree Planting event where approximately 200 people attended including Cummins from Scoresby. Councillor Atwell noted it was wonderful to see the networking that happened during this event.
- Attended the State Basketball Centre in Knox to see the women's and men's Knox Raiders basketball competitions. The women played against the Dandenong Rangers and the men against the Eltham Wildcats and both won.
- Highlighted the Scoresby Football and Netball Club who will be celebrating their centenary event on 2 August 2025, encouraging people to attend the event they will have on the date. They will compete against the Donvale Magpies for their centenary celebrations
- Spoke to Warrick Long on ABC Radio Melbourne about Knox City Council's approach to EV charging infrastructure.

5.4 Councillor Considine

Councillor Considine reported attending the following :

- Knox Emergency Relief Network meeting with Councillor Kennett, noting it was wonderful to see all the agencies working together to better support the Knox community with food for emergency relief. Councillor Considine extended her gratitude to the hardworking members who help each other and work together to support our community.
- Early Years Advisory Committee with Councillor Kennett.
- Knox Active Advisory Aging Committee with Councillor Baker.

Councillor Considine also:

- Attended the Hands Off Foundation Annual Gala Dinner on behalf of Council, along with Councillor Kennett and Mary Doyle MP, Member for Aston. The inspiring guest speaker was Rosie Batty. Councillor Considine reflected that it was an amazing night to celebrate the non-for-profit organisation that supports victims of domestic and sexual violence and their

dedication to help people heal and find strength. She extended her thanks to the Foundation for their work and Donna Jordan and her wonderful team for all the hard work they

5.5 Councillor Duncan

Councillor Duncan reported attending the following:

- St Joseph's College *My Town* presentation. He reflected that it was great to see the work of budding film makers and see the courage of the young people who interviewed strangers at Boronia Mall to gain their feedback on the suburb and the interview they conducted at the Knox police station.
- Councillors Professional Development session with fellow Councillors.

Councillor Duncan also:

- Received several resident enquiries about parking issues and noted it was generally blatant disregard for road rules of which he will discuss with the officers.
- Received safety concerns about an issue at Milpera Reserve. This matter has been raised with officers.
- Wantirna South Football Club for the Mighty Mo Shave to raise awareness for suicide prevention. One of the members, Chris, arranged the night in memory of his brother, Tim, whom he lost two years ago. The event was supported by AFL legend Geoff Farmer. The event raised nearly \$9,000 for LifeLine.
- Noted there was a VCAT Compulsory Conference for 276 Wantirna Rd, with a secondary session being held on 31 July 2025.
- Highlighted the Victorian School of Student Leadership program where Year 9 students live and work with their peers for eight weeks. The program has been running for 16 years and is designed to foster connectedness and social awareness. Five young people have been selected to participate from Knox. Councillor Duncan encouraged young people in the Knox community to consider applying for this program.

5.6 Councillor Williams

Councillor Williams reported attending the following:

- Meeting with Fairpark Junior Football Club to discuss opportunities for growth of the club and changes with the President, Andrew Kennedy.
- Meeting with Jon from 1st 2nd 3rd Bayswater Scouts.
- National Business Tree Planting Day with Cr Atwell, Cr Pearce and Cr Lockwood,
- Chaired the Knox Community Gardens AGM. They had an election for the President and their team. He congratulated the successful appointees.
- Youth Forum

Councillor Williams also:

- Visited Stable One in Wandin with Councillor Kennett to explore strategies for supporting the homeless community in Knox.
- Highlighted he will attend the Youth Advisory Committee on 30 July 2025 and the Youth Advisory Forum on 13 August 2025.

- Attended the Bayswater Makers Market on the weekend and highlighted that it is an event that is run once a month at the Bayswater Senior Citizens and is a great opportunity to support local makers.
- Attended the Knox Brigade Group 60 year birthday party and extended his congratulations to them.
- Attended the Fairhills High School Hydrogen car challenge with Councillor Duncan.
- Attended the National Business tree day with Councillor Atwell, Councillor Pearce and Councillor Lockwood and noted that it was a great networking event while planting trees.
- Watched the Fairpark and Bayswater Junior Football Club play a game under the new lighting at the Bayswater Football Club.
- Attended the opening of the State Pickle Ball Stadium on behalf of Cr Lockwood. He noted that Council has funded this facility and it was great to see the new facilities.
- Expressed his condolences to the families of the persons who passed away at Coleman Parade recently. He also highlighted there have been several motor vehicle fatalities across the municipality and cautioned people to take care on the roads. He acknowledged the Knox SES attended the incident at Coleman Parade and passed on his thanks to them after attending the event.
- Raised awareness that there has been serious crime in Studfield over the past couple of weeks.
- Condemned the recent graffiti attacks at the Kingsland Chinese Restaurant and the Shree Swaminarayan Temple.

5.7 Councillor Lockwood

Councillor Lockwood reported attending the following:

- Night trail visit with Councillor Kennett to explore issues.
- Eastern Transportation Coalition met where they reviewed the rules for the meeting and reduced the meeting frequency. The coalition also developed lobbying plans for the next State Election.
- Business National Tree day where hundreds of trees were planted by dozens of enthusiastic planters.
- Your Library Board meeting

Councillor Lockwood also:

- Attended the Fairpark Presidents lunch where they played against the Knox Football club.
- Noted the Inquiry into Local Government Funding.
- Condemned the recent graffiti attacks at the Kingsland Chinese Restaurant and the Shree Swaminarayan Temple.
- Attended the MAV Regional Board Meeting, reporting on:
 - Update on the fire and volunteer levy- rates notices
 - State budget- \$20m in 2025-26 to deliver community sports infrastructure, including support for the Local Sports Infrastructure Fund; \$2m pilot program for councils to increase the speed of planning approvals for businesses; 976 million road maintenance blitz in 2025–26 to address resurfacing and potholes on state roads.
 - Reforming Victoria’s Planning System Sector submission
 - Homelessness in Victoria – summary report. It’s time to recognise local government’s efforts in ending homelessness. 30,000 people were homeless in the 2021 census.

Rough sleepers are 7% of the homeless; 25% aged 12-24; 86% of councils reported an increase; councils are left out of the policy and funding mix yet are at the front line of homelessness; capacity building needed. Solutions like: Several communities, in Australia and internationally, have seen real impact from specialist roles like library social workers, community connectors and public space liaison officers.

- Make Good Happen campaign. Federal campaign.
- Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Services –Government response in the context of MAV submission

5.8 Councillor Pearce

Councillor Pearce reported attending the following:

- ALGA's National General Assembly of which she submitted a report to this Council Meeting.
- National Tree Planting Day with Councillor Lockwood, Councillor Williams and Councillor Atwell.
- Waverley Retirement Village to discuss the space at the front of their retirement village of which they are seeking to renovate.
- A meeting with Scouts Victoria, Simon Gilford - Ministerial Advisor and Council officers.

Councillor Pearce also:

- Has been contacted by residents raising concerns about footpaths, trees, waste and birdlife of which she has raised with the relevant officers.

5.9 Councillor Cooper

Councillor Cooper reported attending the following:

- Australian Local Governance Association National General Assembly
- Knox ARC Member Recruitment Interview Candidates
- Councillor Professional Development session
- Mayor's Radio Eastern Segment
- GSEM Mayors - Manufacturing Briefing
- Parliamentary Inquiry into Fraud and Corruption Control in Local Government

Councillor Cooper also:

- Expressed deep gratitude for the support she has received after her father's passing. She specifically thanked the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Atwell and Councillor Baker for standing in for her at events and meetings.

6 Planning Matters

6.1 Report of Planning Applications Decided Under Delegation 1 June 2025 to 30 June 2025

SUMMARY

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

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the planning applications decided under delegation 1 June 2025 to 30 June 2025 as set out in the officers' report.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Williams

SECONDED: Councillor Baker

That Council note the planning applications decided under delegation 1 June 2025 to 30 June 2025 as set out in the officers' report.

CARRIED

7 Public Question Time

Question Time commenced at 7:44 pm.

The following questions were raised with Council:

7.1 Question One - Bernie Hoefler

Given we are experiencing much development whereby residents' cars are spilling onto the streets as permanent parking (even though planning ought to cater for enough parking) this is now on public land at no cost to the car owner (private parking in CBD can cost \$100k per park space. Has the Council considered permit parking and secondly will bylaws police respond to increasing illegal parking on corners and other dangerous blind spots where a solid white line is marked hence making it illegal to park there?

It is causing accidents as per recent incident on Western Rd we want our roads to be safe to navigate on.

The Director City Liveability, Matt Kelleher responded:

- There are a number of points that have been included in the question, so the response focusses on parking permit schemes, whether Council patrols Western Road and whether that leads to changes in line marking, and parking restrictions.
- As noted, the car parking requirements for new developments (including new residential developments) are statewide controls set by the State Government in the Planning Scheme. Knox Council (like all other councils) is not in a position to require more car parking than specified by the Planning Scheme.
- Residents can currently park on-street for free in Knox. Council is unlikely to introduce a fee or permit system to allow residents to park in their street where it is otherwise legal and safe.
- Council does patrol Western Road in Boronia, noting it has a crest and a further crest at a bend. Officers periodically patrol Western Road and also attend the area in response to complaints. For the previous financial year, Council received 9 service requests to attend to illegal parking. It has subsequently issued 20 infringements for a variety of offences.
- Western Road is on Council's Local Area Traffic Management Program for future traffic management devices. However, there are quite a few streets ahead of it on the priority list. The Traffic and Transport team will continue to monitor Western Road and if traffic circumstances change, its priority on that program will be reviewed.
- Council's Parking Enforcement and Traffic & Transport teams meet regularly and share feedback about what they encounter in delivering their services to continuously improve parking and traffic management across Knox.

7.2 Question Two - Lisa Crljenkovic

Will Knox please insist that the recent report to Animal Aid's Board, cited by the Herald Sun, be released to Council, and to the public?

Welfare concerns were reported by residents in the Herald Sun, July 6th, 2025. Also in the Ferntree Gully Star Mail, July 15th, 2025.

Animal Aid has reported \$322,774 (three hundred and twenty-two thousand, seven hundred and seventy-four dollars) current debt, with contracts to eight Councils.

If Knox accepts Animal Aid denials, I am very concerned - as a registered Knox dog and cat owner, and as an animal-lover.

The Director City Liveability, Matt Kelleher responded:

- Council is aware of the allegations that have been made against practices in the management of cats and kittens at the Animal Aid shelter in Coldstream.
- Council takes these allegations seriously and is engaged with the Animal Aid Board and Management to seek a satisfactory response. As part of its assurances, Animal Aid is currently completing an internal audit in response to the allegations and has advised they will act on any improvements that are identified. Council is awaiting the outcome of the audit and its next steps.
- Animal Aid have also requested Yarra Ranges Council to undertake an independent audit of their cattery operations, as they are the responsible regulator. As the issuer of Animal Aids Domestic Animal Business licences, it is appropriate that Yarra Ranges Council undertake this review. It should be noted however that an audit and renewal of the Domestic Animal Business licence occurred recently in April, with no issues raised at that time.
- Given that the allegations made were addressed to the Board of Directors at Animal Aid, requests for a copy of the allegations should be made to Animal Aid directly.

7.3 Question Three - Lisa Crljenkovic

In the last financial year, how much has Knox paid to Animal Aid, including separate itemised totals for euthanasia of cats; of dogs; and the cost charged per animal?

The Director City Liveability, Matt Kelleher responded:

- For the 2024 – 2025 Financial Year period, Knox paid Animal Aid \$173,600 (GST exclusive) for the pound services contract, which is the minimum annual value of the contract. This figure excludes animals held for seizure and our afterhours collection service.
- Animal Aid charged Knox \$186.50 per impounded animal (GST exclusive - cats and dogs). This fee is per incoming animal. There are no separate charges relating to euthanasia or other animal outcomes.

7.4 Question Four - Timothy Cincotta

How can the Council actively engage local community groups to get their feedback and thoughts on the topic of Christmas spirit and decorations this year?

The Director City Liveability, Matt Kelleher responded:

- Council will consider a report later this evening that has been prepared in response to a Notice of Motion adopted by Council. Council's Governance Rules set some limitations for how much officer time can be dedicated to responding to a Notice of Motion so engagement to date has needed to be targeted.
- As the focus of the Notice of Motion was to support Knox's local businesses and activity centres, officers have engaged with the Experience Knox Business Working Group Chairperson and Vice Chairperson to seek their views on a potential pilot initiative for 2025 in response to the Notice of Motion and to support Council's deliberations. The Experience Knox Business Working Group was established in late 2024 and represents local traders and activity centres in Knox. The Working Group has been established to support and lead promotion and activation of Knox's activity centres as part of an initiative of the Knox Retail Activation Strategy. Council officers have also engaged with some community groups and associations such as the Men's Sheds and Lions Clubs about their interest and capacity to support the rollout of any potential Christmas Decoration Program if that is what it resolves to do.
- The Notice of Motion is also intended to present options for a Christmas Decoration Program only. Council has not yet made a decision or allocated budget towards a program for this year or as an ongoing program. Further engagement may be something Council considers in the future.

Question Time Concluded at 7.58 pm.

8 Officer Reports

8.1 Leasing and Licensing Policy

SUMMARY

The Knox City Council Leasing and Licensing Policy (the Policy) was presented to Council for endorsement to progress to public consultation on 14 April 2025.

A revised Policy was endorsed by Council for the purposes of community consultation on 14 April 2025. Community engagement occurred from 23 April 2025 to 28 May 2025, with 2 late submissions received by 14 June 2025. A total of 12 submissions were received, however two of those submissions were wholly outside the scope of the engagement. This report summarises the feedback received and outlines minor adjustments made in response to the consultation and seeks endorsement of the Leasing and Licencing Policy. Verbatim community feedback is included in Attachment 1.

The revised Leasing and Licensing Policy provides a clearer, more consistent, equitable, and transparent approach to formal agreements with tenants occupying Council-owned facilities. The revised policy sets out guiding principles for the effective management, allocation, and use of Council land and buildings, aiming to maximise community benefit. It is designed to support current tenants, prospective tenants, and Council officers in navigating lease and licence agreements with confidence and clarity. This includes simplifying annual increases, clearer and more defined tenant categories and updating limits upon the CEO's delegation. This report presents the revised Leasing and Licencing Policy at Attachment 2 for adoption.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Note the feedback received on the draft Leasing and Licensing Policy (Attachment 1); and
2. Adopt the revised Leasing and Licencing Policy as set out in Attachment 2.

Councillor Duncan declared that he is a member of the Executive Management Team of a club who leases a building from Council. Councillor Duncan advised Council that on reviewing the report, he did not believe he has a conflict of interest but made a statement for the purpose of transparency.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Atwell

SECONDED: Councillor Pearce

That Council

- 1. Note the feedback received on the draft Leasing and Licensing Policy (Attachment 1); and**
- 2. Adopt the revised Leasing and Licencing Policy as set out in Attachment 2, subject to updating Section 7, Delegations, to require any agreements with a tenancy exceeding four years be referred to Council for decision.**
- 3. To receive a report to a Council meeting no later than 24 November 2025 (unless deferred to a later date in consultation with the Mayor) summarising the advantages and disadvantages of establishing ground leases where other parties own a building, what**

alternative approaches could be considered, including a review of other council approaches.

CARRIED

8.2 Stormwater Asset Management Plan (SWAMP)

SUMMARY

The Stormwater Asset Management Plan (SWAMP 2025) has been produced as an update to the Drainage Asset Management Plan 2010. The purpose of the Stormwater Asset Management Plan is to guide continuous improvement in Council's stormwater asset management practices and outcomes. The quality of these practices directly influences our ability to keep the city green, liveable, resilient and sustainable

The Stormwater Asset Management Plan once endorsed will be accompanied by online content, which will provide current stormwater asset information, enabling efficient future updates of the plan. This plan is the first to be developed under the Asset Management Plan Refresh Strategy (June 2023), which aimed to standardise and streamline Council's approach to asset management.

A positive reception of the SWAMP 2025 format will lead to its adoption as the standard template for all subsequent asset management plans, ensuring uniformity and efficiency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council resolve to:

1. Endorse the Stormwater Asset Management Plan (as set out in Attachment 1) for community consultation.
2. Note that following the community consultation the feedback will be assessed and the Stormwater Asset Management Plan modified, where appropriate, with the final draft Stormwater Asset Management Plan to be presented to at a future Council meeting for approval.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Baker

SECONDED: Councillor Pearce

That Council resolve to:

1. **Endorse the Stormwater Asset Management Plan (as set out in Attachment 1) for community consultation.**
2. **Note that following the community consultation the feedback will be assessed and the Stormwater Asset Management Plan modified, where appropriate, with the final draft Stormwater Asset Management Plan to be presented to at a future Council meeting for approval.**

CARRIED

8.3 Road Management Plan

SUMMARY

The Knox Road Management Plan (RMP) sets out Council's approach to the inspection, maintenance and repair of its public roads and road related assets. If complied with, the RMP provides Council with a policy defence against civil liability claims associated with its management of the road network.

Under the Road Management (General) Regulations 2016, Council is obligated, following the election of a new Council, to formally review its Road Management Plan by 31 October 2025. The regulations state that the purpose of the review is to assess the appropriateness of levels of service for inspection, maintenance and repair of Council's Road related assets. To achieve this purpose Council has:

- Benchmarked its levels of service against other Councils,
- Investigated its level of service performance for inspection, maintenance and repair of its public roads and road related assets during the past four years, and
- Considered recommendations from its insurers.

When endorsed by Council the Road Management Plan review report – 2025 will be made available for public consultation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council resolve to:

1. Endorse the Road Management Plan Review Report – 2025 (as set out in Attachment 1) as a draft for public consultation.
2. Note that following feedback from the community, the draft Road Management Plan Review Report – 2025 will be presented to a future meeting of Council for final approval.
3. Note that any amendment of the Road Management Plan will be managed in accordance with Road Management Act General Regulations.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Pearce

SECONDED: Councillor Williams

That Council resolve to:

1. **Endorse the Road Management Plan Review Report – 2025 (as set out in Attachment 1) as a draft for public consultation.**
2. **Note that following feedback from the community, the draft Road Management Plan Review Report – 2025 will be presented to a future meeting of Council for final approval.**
3. **Note that any amendment of the Road Management Plan will be managed in accordance with Road Management Act General Regulations.**

CARRIED

8.4 Draft Mobility and Access Action Plan

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report to seek endorsement of the Draft Knox Mobility and Access Action Plan (KMAAP) and its Background Report to be released for public exhibition. KMAAP represents a refresh of the 2012 Mobility Study, which highlighted the crucial role of the footpath and shared path networks for individuals facing mobility challenges, especially in the context of limited public transport and a high reliance on private vehicles in Knox. Over the past 13 years, most of the new works identified in the original 2012 Mobility study have been built/addressed. It is therefore timely that a revised plan be prepared, acknowledging the increasing mobility needs of an ageing population.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Endorses the Draft Knox Mobility and Access Action Plan (attachment 1) and Background Report (attachment 2) as final drafts for public consultation.
2. Note that following the public consultation period and review of feedback received, the Knox Mobility and Access Action Plan will be presented to Council for final endorsement at a future Council meeting.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Baker

SECONDED: Councillor Atwell

That Council:

1. **Endorses the Draft Knox Mobility and Access Action Plan (attachment 1) and Background Report (attachment 2) as final drafts for public consultation.**
2. **Note that following the public consultation period and review of feedback received, the Knox Mobility and Access Action Plan will be presented to Council for final endorsement at a future Council meeting.**

CARRIED

8.5 Minor Grants Program and Emergency Relief Fund 2025-26 Monthly Report and Individual Excellence Grants Update (Quarter 4)

SUMMARY

This report summarises the grant applications recommended for approval in July 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.

This report also summarises the Excellence Grants for Individuals awarded in Quarter 4 of the 2024-2025 financial year. Under the Excellence Grants for Individuals Program, applicants who are selected to represent either Victoria or Australia in a competitive endeavour or an elite performance may receive funding assistance of \$150.00 for events within Victoria, \$250.00 for interstate events and \$400.00 for international events.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to:

1. Approve nine applications under the Minor Grants Program for a total of \$15,539.83 (excluding GST) as detailed below:

Minor Grants Program			
Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested (inc. GST)	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
Wantirna South Cricket Club	Wet Weather Roller and Ground Marking Paint	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
One Hope Community Church	Coffee Plus - Art Sessions 2025-26	\$500.00	\$454.55 (lesser amount due to GST)
Fijian Indian Seniors Association Inc.	Purchase of Sound System	\$999.00	\$999.00
Waverley City Soccer Club Inc.	Cricket Pitch Cover Spindle Applicator	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
Wantirna South Football Club	Gazebos - portable	\$2,400.00	\$2,181.82 (lesser amount due to GST)
Boronia Road Uniting Church	ADT Security Duress Pendants	\$2,500.00	\$2,272.73 (lesser amount due to GST)
Life Activities Club Knox Inc.	Upgrade Laptop	\$1,297.00	\$1,297.00
St John the Baptist Parish	Defibrillator for Church Use	\$2,500.00	\$2,272.73 (lesser amount due to GST)

Minor Grants Program			
Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested (inc. GST)	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
Knox Obedience Dog Club Inc.	Loop for Leaps	\$1,062.00	\$1,062.00
Total		\$16,258.00	\$15,539.83

2. Defer one application under the Minor Grants Program requesting a total of \$2,500.00 as detailed below:

Minor Grants Program		
Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested
Knox Infolink Inc.	IT Equipment Upgrade	\$2,500.00
Total		\$2,500.00

3. Refuse three applications under the Minor Grants Program requesting a total of \$6,500.00 as detailed below:

Minor Grants Program			
Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested	Reason for ineligibility
Australian Nagarathar Cultural Education Foundation	Healthy Walk for Knox Community	\$3,000.00	This project is ineligible per the Community Grants Guidelines, which states funding will not be provided for retrospective payments or expenses for activities or expenses undertaken before Council approval.
Glengollan Village	Replacing Roof on Community BBQ Gazebo (fixed asset)	\$2,500.00	This project is ineligible as it relates to maintenance works on a fixed asset.
Guy Turner Reserve Tennis Club Inc.	Tennis Lighting Repairs	\$1,000.00	This project is ineligible as it relates to maintenance works and is the responsibility of the tenant as per their license agreement
Total		\$6,500.00	

4. Note that should the recommended Minor Grants be approved by Council, the remaining budget for 2025-26 will be \$141,156.17 after GST adjustments.
5. Approve one application under the Emergency Relief Fund for a total of \$18,181.82 (excluding GST) as detailed below:

Emergency Relief Fund			
Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended

		(inc. GST)	(excl. GST)
Foothills Community Care Inc.	Foothills Community Casserole	\$20,000.00	\$18,181.82 (lesser amount due to GST)
Total		\$20,000.00	\$18,181.82

6. Defer one application under the Emergency Relief Fund requesting a total of \$18,181.82 as detailed below:

Emergency Relief Fund			
Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested (inc. GST)	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
The Salvation Army	The Pantry (Extended Food Relief)	\$20,000.00	\$18,181.82 (lesser amount due to GST)
Total		\$20,000.00	\$18,181.82

7. Refuse one application under the Emergency Relief Fund requesting a total of \$20,000.00 as detailed below:

Emergency Relief Fund			
Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested	Reason for ineligibility
Our Village Network Inc.	Emergency Crisis Support for Vulnerable Families in Knox	\$20,000.00	This project is ineligible per the Community Grants Guidelines, which states grant funds cannot be used for organisations, projects or programs outside Knox unless they offer clear benefits to Knox residents. Benefit to Knox residents not sufficiently demonstrated.
Total		\$20,000.00	

7. Note that should the recommended grant be approved by Council, the remaining Emergency Relief Fund budget for 2025-26 will be \$81,818.18 after GST adjustments.
8. Note the Excellence Grants for Individuals awarded in Quarter 4 of the 2024-2025 financial year as set out in Attachment 3, with a total value of \$1,050.00.

The Chairperson, Mayor Cooper, with leave of Council and in accordance with Rule 34 of Council's Governance Rules, proposed Council consider separate motions as suggested by Councillor Lockwood to enable Council to debate and vote separately on:

- *The Minor Grants Program*
- *Emergency Relief Fund 2025-26 Monthly Report and Individual Excellence Grants Update (Quarter 4)*

Councillor Lockwood declared a material conflict of interest in relation to the Minor Grants aspect of this Item for reasons disclosed to the CEO.

Councillor Lockwood left the Council Chamber at 8.26pm prior to the consideration and vote on this item.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Baker

SECONDED: Councillor Pearce

That Council resolve to:

1. Approve eight applications under the Minor Grants Program for a total of \$13,039.83 (excluding GST) as detailed below:

Minor Grants Program			
Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested (inc. GST)	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
Wantirna South Cricket Club	Wet Weather Roller and Ground Marking Paint	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
One Hope Community Church	Coffee Plus - Art Sessions 2025-26	\$500.00	\$454.55 (lesser amount due to GST)
Fijian Indian Seniors Association Inc.	Purchase of Sound System	\$999.00	\$999.00
Wantirna South Football Club	Gazebos - portable	\$2,400.00	\$2,181.82 (lesser amount due to GST)
Boronia Road Uniting Church	ADT Security Duress Pendants	\$2,500.00	\$2,272.73 (lesser amount due to GST)
Life Activities Club Knox Inc.	Upgrade Laptop	\$1,297.00	\$1,297.00
St John the Baptist Parish	Defibrillator for Church Use	\$2,500.00	\$2,272.73 (lesser amount due to GST)
Knox Obedience Dog Club Inc.	Loop for Leaps	\$1,062.00	\$1,062.00
Total		\$13,758	\$13,039.83

2. Defer one application under the Minor Grants Program requesting a total of \$2,500.00 as detailed below:

Minor Grants Program		
Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested
Knox Infolink Inc.	IT Equipment Upgrade	\$2,500.00
Total		\$2,500.00

3. Refuse four applications under the Minor Grants Program requesting a total of \$9,000 as detailed below:

Minor Grants Program			
Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested	Reason for ineligibility
Australian Nagarathar Cultural Education Foundation	Healthy Walk for Knox Community	\$3,000.00	This project is ineligible per the Community Grants Guidelines, which states funding will not be provided for retrospective payments or expenses for activities or expenses undertaken before Council approval.
Glengollan Village	Replacing Roof on Community BBQ Gazebo (fixed asset)	\$2,500.00	This project is ineligible as it relates to maintenance works on a fixed asset.
Guy Turner Reserve Tennis Club Inc.	Tennis Lighting Repairs	\$1,000.00	This project is ineligible as it relates to maintenance works and is the responsibility of the tenant as per their license agreement
Waverley City Soccer Club Inc	Cricket Pitch Spindle Cover Applicator	\$2500	This project is ineligible as it is retrospective funding. It was purchased on 3rd July, therefore it is ineligible as per guidelines
Total		\$9,000	

4. Note that should the recommended Minor Grants be approved by Council, the remaining budget for 2025-26 will be \$ \$143,656.17 after GST adjustments.

CARRIED

Councillor Lockwood returned to the chamber at 8.38 pm in time for consideration of the second part of this item, relating to Emergency Relief Fund 2025-26 Monthly Report and Individual Excellence Grants Update (Quarter 4).

RESOLUTION**MOVED:** Councillor Lockwood**SECONDED:** Councillor Baker

That Council resolve to:

1. Approve one application under the Emergency Relief Fund for a total of \$18,181.82 (excluding GST) as detailed below:

Emergency Relief Fund			
Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested (inc. GST)	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
Foothills Community Care Inc.	Foothills Community Casserole	\$20,000.00	\$18,181.82 (lesser amount due to GST)
Total		\$20,000.00	\$18,181.82

2. Defer one application under the Emergency Relief Fund requesting a total of \$18,181.82 as detailed below:

Emergency Relief Fund			
Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested (inc. GST)	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
The Salvation Army	The Pantry (Extended Food Relief)	\$20,000.00	\$18,181.82 (lesser amount due to GST)
Total		\$20,000.00	\$18,181.82

3. Refuse one application under the Emergency Relief Fund requesting a total of \$20,000.00 as detailed below:

Emergency Relief Fund			
Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested	Reason for ineligibility
Our Village Network Inc.	Emergency Crisis Support for Vulnerable Families in Knox	\$20,000.00	This project is ineligible per the Community Grants Guidelines, which states grant funds cannot be used for organisations, projects or programs outside Knox unless they offer clear benefits to Knox residents. Benefit to Knox residents not sufficiently demonstrated.
Total		\$20,000.00	

5. Note that should the recommended grant be approved by Council, the remaining Emergency Relief Fund budget for 2025-26 will be \$81,818.18 after GST adjustments.

- 6. Note the Excellence Grants for Individuals awarded in Quarter 4 of the 2024-2025 financial year as set out in Attachment 3, with a total value of \$1,050.00.**

CARRIED

PROCEDURAL MOTION

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED: Councillor Cooper

SECONDED: Councillor Atwell

That Council resolve to take a 10 minute break from 8:40 pm to 8:50 pm.

CARRIED

The Meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm and resumed at 8:53 pm with all Councillors present except for Councillor Pearce.

Councillor Pearce returned to the Chamber at 8.54 pm during the discussion and before the vote for Item 8.6 Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme 2025-2026.

8.6 Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme 2025-2026

SUMMARY

This report presents the recommendations of the Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme (LMCWGS) Panel for Council's 2025-2026 program allocation for funding. The annual LMCWGS supports local community sporting and leisure organisations to undertake facility improvements on land owned or managed by Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to:

1. Approve a funding allocation of \$62,722.45 (including GST) from the 2025-2026 Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme Program to the applicant clubs nominated in Attachment 1.
2. Specify that additional grant conditions are required for the sporting organisations listed in Attachment 2.
3. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer (or such person as the Chief Executive Officer selects) to inform applicant Clubs of Council's decision.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Atwell

SECONDED: Councillor Williams

That Council resolve to:

1. **Approve a funding allocation of \$62,722.45 (including GST) from the 2025-2026 Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme Program to the applicant clubs nominated in Attachment 1.**
2. **Specify that additional grant conditions are required for the sporting organisations listed in Attachment 2.**
3. **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer (or such person as the Chief Executive Officer selects) to inform applicant Clubs of Council's decision.**

CARRIED

8.7 Knox City Council Attendance at the Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly 2025

SUMMARY

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly (NGA) was held in Canberra from 24-27 June 2025. Over 1,300 local government leaders from across Australia attended the NGA, including representation from Knox City Council.

This report provides an overview to Council of the activities, learnings and outcomes from the 2025 NGA and will be complemented by Councillors' verbal reports to be provided at the meeting (during Item 5, Reports By Councillors).

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note:

1. This report on the Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly 2025.
2. Reports provided by Councillors at the Meeting on 28 July 2025.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Atwell

SECONDED: Councillor Pearce

That Council receive and note:

1. **This report on the Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly 2025.**
2. **Reports provided by Councillors at the Meeting on 28 July 2025.**

PROCEDURAL MOTION

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

MOVED: Councillor Atwell

SECONDED: Councillor Cooper

That Council resolve to suspend standing orders.

CARRIED

STANDING ORDERS WERE SUSPENDED AT 8.58PM

8.7.1 Councillor Atwell

Cr Atwell reported the following:

- The diversity of perspectives among attendees, with each identifying different themes, priorities, and areas of interest.
- This year's NGA theme was *National Priorities Need Local Solutions*. The session reinforced that all Councils are facing significant challenges.

- The engagement with Councillors from both neighbouring and interstate Councils, noting that many of Knox's challenges and priorities are shared nationwide.
- That there is strong support for ALGA's advocacy to restore and increase Financial Assistance Grants, which is a primary source of Council funding, to at least 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue.
- The conference discussions which included:
 - Housing affordability and planning – emphasising the need for Local Government to have a more direct and responsive role in shaping housing growth that aligns with local context and respects community needs.
 - Climate action – calls for a dedicated Local Government Climate Fund to support investment in energy efficiency, disaster resilience, and environmental sustainability.
 - Digital transformation – focusing on cyber security and the emerging impacts of generative AI.
 - Community health and wellbeing – including emergency food relief initiatives.
- Attending Parliament House and meeting with a representative from the Office of the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, the Hon Katherine King MP. Discussed Knox's key infrastructure priorities, including roads and transport upgrades, the trackless tram proposal, and local sporting group facility needs.
- Councillor Atwell thanked Council and the Knox community for the opportunity to attend the conference on their behalf.

8.7.2 Councillor Pearce

Cr Pearce reported the following:

- Highlighted it was the largest gathering of Councillors they had seen in a long time.
- The theme of the event was *National Priorities, Local Solutions*.
- Reflected that Councils across the board are feeling significant financial pressures being to balance the delivery of community-expected services while managing budget constraints and noted it was encouraging to see practical, innovative solutions being developed to address complex challenges.
 - For example, Simco, a Scoresby-based business, provides communication equipment enabling field staff to remain in contact with their office. This is particularly valuable for staff who work alone, ensuring they can call for assistance in emergencies or other situations requiring immediate support.
- Councillor Pearce reflected the event was a valuable opportunity to network with other Councillors and exchange ideas on addressing challenges currently faced at Knox.
- Councillor Pearce expressed her appreciation to the community and advised that she took this as part of her Councillor training allowance.

8.7.3 Councillor Lockwood

Cr Lockwood reported the following:

- Attended networking events including NGA Welcome Reception, MAV reception, Knox Future Mayor's Dinner, and ERG Dinner with neighbouring councils.
- Day 1 highlights: Welcome to Country, addresses from ALGA President, Kristy McBain, Opposition representatives, Governor-General, and sessions on the geo-economic landscape and local action.

- Day 2 highlights: Climate leadership panel, concurrent sessions on housing and community infrastructure, and General Assembly Dinner.
- Day 3 highlights: Ministerial panel, final motions, and close of NGA.
- Exhibition provided valuable contacts (approx. 20 councillors) and insights, including pre-fab parklets, new banner options, and the “e-ferret” data search tool.
- Ideas generation session emphasised a four-step process: Identify idea - Plan - Assess risks - Act.
- Concurrent Sessions:
 - Debate on Motions- more illuminating debate.
 - General Assembly Dinner (APH). Sat with Griffith Regional Council and Darwin City Council. Great conversations. We all have similar but different challenges.
 - Housing and Community Infrastructure – key themes:
 - Need for increased funding for social housing, enabling works for development, improved awareness of funding programs, and better coordination between government levels.
 - Barriers discussed: material and trade shortages, inconsistent planning systems, infrastructure delays, and lack of funding certainty.
 - Opportunities and reforms proposed: co-housing, modular builds, increased medium-density housing, active transport integration, and more flexible, place-based funding models.

8.7.4 Councillor Duncan

Cr Duncan reported the following:

- Reflected on the value of the conference as an opportunity for personal development to ensure that as elected representatives, Councillors can make informed, strategic decisions on behalf of the Knox community that also accounts for best practice.
- Highlighted that professional development gives Councillors an opportunity to learn more about legislation, financial management, climate resilience, and social issues. With this information, Councillors are better able to make decisions that are well informed, grounded and reflective of current best practice. This translates to better outcomes for the Knox community.
- Noted that attending conferences not only allows attendees to hear from a vast array of professionals, but also to build relationships with other Councils, State and Federal representatives and other industry experts. Building relationships helps when advocating for funding, and responding to customers with practical and accurate advice.
- By attending professional development training, Councillors are better equipped to question and evaluate to ensure that ratepayers money is managed responsibly, efficiently and transparently. That Councillors are exposed to best practices that come from elsewhere around the country and fresh thinking.
- Noted that when Councillors show a commitment to learning, it builds community trust within the municipality. Residents can feel confident that their leaders are not only engaged, but are continually developing their knowledge and skills to ensure we are serving people effectively.

8.7.5 Councillor Baker

Cr Baker reported the following:

- Highlighted that in addition to her written report, with the exception of the regional forum that was on the morning of their arrival, she attended all the sessions throughout the day and the session about emergency management capability and capacity.
- Acknowledged the theme of funding and the challenges faced by many Councils in a rate capped environment.
- Expressed that while she found her attendance to be beneficial from a professional development perspective that she couldn't justify attending the conference every year.
- Noted she has communicated some of the information outlined in her report to the organisation.
- Councillor Baker also expressed her thanks to the community.

8.7.6 Councillor Cooper

Cr Cooper reported the following:

- This was her second attendance with her last being in 2015. Reflecting that in 2015, it was an eyeopener into the sector for her.
- Reflected that attending 10 years later, it was still an eye-opener and beneficial from a personal development experience.
- Although there were many motions that went through uncontested, the debate on remaining items was helpful and interesting. She reflected that hearing debate as an experienced Councillor was insightful.
- Councillor Cooper also agreed with some of the Councillors in relation to the comments about visiting the exhibitors in attendance promoting the products and services they have available.
- That while it may not be necessary for every Councillor to attend every year, there is value in attending at least once during their term.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

RESUMPTION OF STANDING ORDERS

MOVED: Councillor Cooper

SECONDED: Councillor Baker

That Council resolve to resume standing orders.

CARRIED

STANDING ORDERS WERE RESUMED AT 9.23PM

The Substantive Motion was put and CARRIED

8.8 Response to Notice of Motion 176 - Service Planning Information

SUMMARY

At the Council Meeting on 24 March 2025, the Council determined in response to Notice of Motion 176 - Service Planning Information:

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

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

This report provides the information requested in the Notice of Motion.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes this report in response to Notice of Motion 176 - Service Planning Information.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Lockwood

SECONDED: Councillor Pearce

That Council receives and notes this report in response to Notice of Motion 176 - Service Planning Information.

CARRIED

8.9 Response to NoM.177 - Christmas Decorations

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.
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.

MOTION

MOVED: Councillor Williams

SECONDED: Councillor Pearce

That Council:

1. Notes the officer report in response to Notice of Motion 177 – Christmas Decorations.
2. Acknowledge the support from the Experience Knox Working Group, Wantirna Mall Traders Association and other traders and community associations engaged to date that builds on the positivity that a Christmas Decorations program would bring to Knox and traders.
3. Acknowledges the importance of celebrating the festive season of Christmas, as an all-inclusive festival for everyone to enjoy, with a Christmas decoration program marking the season while enhancing civic pride and activity centre visitation, whilst being responsive to Council's budget constraints.
4. Endorses an amended Option 3 as contained in the Officers' report to focus only on the installation of red bows in the seven medium activity centres (Refer Attachment 2) as part of a Pilot Program to be rolled out for the 2025 Festive Period (i.e. 1 – 31 December 2025), at an estimated cost of \$15,000 (excl. GST).
5. Authorise officers to undertake a procurement activity to engage a suitable supplier(s)/contractor(s) to procure, install and remove the red bows as endorsed at Point 4 in time for the 2025 Festive Period.
6. Request officers to present a report to Council no later than end of February 2026 to enable consideration as part of the 2026/27 budget process outlining options for an ongoing Christmas Decorations Program, commencing from 2026/27 providing the following:
 - a) Learnings from the 2025 Pilot Program;
 - b) For the purpose of informing the 2026/27 budget planning process, indicative costs (from more than one supplier where possible) for the provision of red bows, corflute bin wraps and other Christmas decorations as required;
 - c) A more detailed overview of a potential Festive Shop Window Decorating program, including promotions and trader engagement, that could be included as part of the program for 2026/27;
 - d) A process to support community groups to assist in the installation and removal of red bows and other Christmas decorations as part of any ongoing program;
 - e) Consultation with the Knox Multicultural Advisory Committee on its feedback for the 2026/27 program; and
 - f) Recommendations for the rollout of an annual Christmas Decorations Program for all activity centres from 2026/27.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

MOVED: Councillor Williams

SECONDED: Councillor Pearce

That Council resolve to suspend Standing Orders.

CARRIED

STANDING ORDERS WERE SUSPENDED AT 9.34PM

PROCEDURAL MOTION

RESUMPTION OF STANDING ORDERS

MOVED: Councillor Cooper

SECONDED: Councillor Duncan

That Council resolve to resume Standing Orders.

CARRIED

STANDING ORDERS WERE RESUMED AT 9.54PM

PROCEDURAL MOTION

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED: Councillor Williams

SECONDED: Councillor Cooper

That Council adjourn the Meeting for 15 minutes.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

MOVED: Councillor Duncan

SECONDED: Councillor Cooper

That the Motion to adjourn the Meeting for 15 minutes be put.

CARRIED

The Procedural Motion to adjourn the Meeting was put and LOST

Councillor Williams requested that the alternate motion be withdrawn by leave of Council, in accordance with Rule 33.1 of Council's Governance Rules.

Leave of Council was not granted.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

MOVED: Councillor Lockwood

SECONDED: Councillor Duncan

That this matter be adjourned until the August 2025 mid-Month Council Meeting.

LOST

A Division was called by Councillor Williams

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

Against the motion: Councillor Baker, Councillor Cooper, Councillor Kennett, Councillor Williams, Councillor Considine, Councillor Atwell

Abstention: Nil

LOST 4:5

PROCEDURAL MOTION

MOVED: Councillor Cooper

SECONDED: Councillor Baker

That the meeting be extended until 11.30pm.

CARRIED

Debate resumed on the substantive Motion moved by Councillor Williams and seconded by Councillor Pearce.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

MOVED: Councillor Baker

SECONDED: Councillor Cooper

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

CARRIED

A Division was called by Councillor Atwell (for the Procedural Motion)

For the motion: Councillor Duncan, Councillor Baker, Councillor Cooper, Councillor Considine, Councillor Kennett and Councillor Atwell

Against the motion: Councillor Williams, Councillor Lockwood, and Councillor Pearce

Abstention: Nil

CARRIED 6:3

The substantive motion moved by Councillor Williams and seconded by Councillor Pearce was put and LOST

A Division was called by Councillor Williams

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

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

Abstention: Nil

LOST 3:6

Councillor Lockwood left the Council Chamber at 11.12 pm prior to the vote on the following resolution for Item 8.9 Response to NoM.177 - Christmas Decorations.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Cooper

SECONDED: Councillor Baker

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.**
- 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.**

CARRIED

9 Supplementary Items

Nil.

10 Notices Of Motion

Nil.

11 Urgent Business

Nil.

12 Questions Through the Chair

Nil.

13 Confidential Items

13.1 Knox Central Program Working Position Update

A confidential report was circulated under separate cover as it contains confidential information pursuant to Council's Governance Rules and Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2020, as it relates to:

- Land use planning information regarding property zoning or likely property sales that might encourage or enable speculation in land values if prematurely released.
- Private commercial information, that if released, would unreasonably expose a business to disadvantage because it would release information about the business that is not generally available to their competitors.
- Confidential meeting information, being the records of the Strategic Planning Committee held on 10 March 2015; along with the subsequent purchase price of land that was confidential information for the purposes of section 77 of the Local Government Act 1989.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Baker

SECONDED: Councillor Atwell

That Council resolve to close the meeting to the public in accordance with Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2020 and Council's Governance Rules to consider Item 13.1 Knox Central Program Working Position Update, as it relates to:

- **Land use planning information regarding property zoning or likely property sales that might encourage or enable speculation in land values if prematurely released.**
- **Private commercial information, that if released, would unreasonably expose a business to disadvantage because it would release information about the business that is not generally available to their competitors.**
- **Confidential meeting information, being the records of the Strategic Planning Committee held on 10 March 2015; along with the subsequent purchase price of land that was confidential information for the purposes of section 77 of the Local Government Act 1989.**

CARRIED

Cr Lockwood returned to the Council Chamber at 11:15 pm following the vote on the Motion to close the meeting, and prior to consideration of Item 13.1 Knox Central Program Working Position Update.

Cr Duncan left the Council Chamber at 11.15 pm prior to consideration of Item 13.1 Knox Central Program Working Position Update.

The meeting was closed to the public at 11:15 pm to consider Item 13.1 Knox Central Program Working Position Update.

The Officer's recommendation was adopted and as per the Council Resolution, is included in the public Minutes.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Lockwood

SECONDED: Councillor Williams

That Council:

- 1. Adopts a renewed 'working position' to enable Council's vision for the Heart of Knox project to continue to be developed, as follows:**
 - a. the location of a future civic/community/cultural precinct should be generally located within the Central Junction and/or Burwood Highway sub-precincts as shown in the adopted Central Precinct Land Use Plan (August 2024);**
 - b. the future services and facilities that Council may seek to deliver in the civic/community/cultural precinct are to be assessed;**
 - c. the infrastructure required for the site to be developed is to be assessed; and**
 - d. options for development of the balance of the site are to be assessed.**
- 2. Notes that development, planning and legal advisory services will be procured to support these assessments, and to support future Council decisions.**
- 3. Resolve to include these resolutions within the public minutes.**

CARRIED

MEETING CLOSED AT 11.18PM

Minutes of Meeting confirmed at the
Meeting of Council
held on Monday, 25 August 2025

.....

Chairperson

The Agenda for this meeting is attached in full at the end of the Minutes

AGENDA



Meeting of Council

To be held at the

Civic Centre

511 Burwood Highway

Wantirna South

On

Monday 28 July 2025 at 7:00 PM

This meeting will be conducted as a hybrid meeting

Order of Business

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Bruce Dobson
Chief Executive Officer

1 Apologies And Requests For Leaves Of Absence

2 Declarations Of Conflict Of Interest

3 Confirmation Of Minutes

Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting of Council held on Monday 23 June 2025.

4 Presentations, Petitions And Memorials

5 Reports By Councillors

6 Planning Matters

6.1 Report of Planning Applications Decided Under Delegation 1 June 2025 to 30 June 2025

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

SUMMARY

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

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the planning applications decided under delegation 1 June 2025 to 30 June 2025 as set out in the officers' report.

1. REPORT

Details of planning applications decided under delegation from 1 June 2025 to 30 June 2025 are attached. The applications are summarised as follows:

Application Type	No.
Building & Works: Residential	7
Other	2
Subdivision	14
Units	14
Tree Removal / Pruning	10
Single Dwelling	2
Change of Use	1
Signage	4
Removal of Restriction	1
TOTAL	55

2. CONFIDENTIALITY

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

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

Knox City Council

Report of Planning Applications Decided Under Delegation

1 June 2025 and 30 June 2025

Ward	No/ Type	Address	Description	Decision
Baird	2025/9069	53A & 53B Westley Street FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	Two Lot Subdivision (approved development site)	17/06/2025 Approved
Baird	2024/6435	49B Rankin Road BORONIA VIC 3155	Variation of restriction by removing restriction 1 and 2 on PS633651	20/06/2025 Notice of Decision
Baird	2025/6192	2/32 Rankin Road BORONIA VIC 3155	The removal of one (1) Eucalyptus melliodora (Yellow Box)	17/06/2025 Approved
Baird	2024/6590	3 Henry Street BORONIA VIC 3155	Construct nine (9) triple storey dwellings on the land	18/06/2025 Notice of Decision
Baird	2025/6173	7 Genista Avenue BORONIA VIC 3155	8 Lot subdivision (approved development site)	6/06/2025 Approved
Baird	2025/6164	200 Dorset Road BORONIA VIC 3155	Display of business identification signage and internally illuminated signage	12/06/2025 Approved
Baird	2025/6208	22 Wells Avenue BORONIA VIC 3155	The Habitat Pruning of one (1) Eucalyptus obliqua (Messmate)	13/06/2025 Approved
Chandler	2024/6507	87 Arcadia Avenue THE BASIN VIC 3154	Buildings and Works - Additions to existing dwelling and construction of a shed	10/06/2025 Approved
Chandler	2025/6203	10 Harewood Close BORONIA VIC 3155	The Pruning of one (1) Eucalyptus sideroxylon (Red Ironbark)	12/06/2025 Approved
Chandler	2025/6202	20 Goodwin Street THE BASIN VIC 3154	Removal of one (1) Melaleuca linariifolia (Narrow Leaved Paperbark)	27/06/2025 Approved
Chandler	2025/6214	1/34 Moroney Street BORONIA VIC 3155	Removal of one (1) Liquidambar styraciflua (Sweetgum)	30/06/2025 Approved
Chandler	2025/9063	11 Montana Avenue BORONIA VIC 3155	Removal of one (1) Eucalyptus radiata (Narrow Leaved Peppermint)	6/06/2025 Approved

Ward	No/ Type	Address	Description	Decision
Chandler	2025/6190	47 Landscape Drive BORONIA VIC 3155	The Habitat Pruning of four Eucalyptus obliqua (Messmate)	12/06/2025 Approved
Chandler	2025/9064	3 Karri Court BORONIA VIC 3155	Buildings and Works (construction of a shed)	5/06/2025 Approved
Collier	2025/6030	22 Cumberland Avenue BAYSWATER VIC 3153	Development of a double storey dwelling to the rear of the existing dwelling	18/06/2025 Approved
Collier	2024/6488	29 Jessica Close WANTIRNA SOUTH VIC 3152	Construction of four (4) double storey dwellings on a lot	20/06/2025 Notice of Decision
Collier	2025/9070	220 Burwood Highway WANTIRNA SOUTH VIC 3152	Buildings and Works (installation of a shade sail)	18/06/2025 Approved
Collier	2025/6186	1/10 Hibiscus Street WANTIRNA VIC 3152	Two Lot Subdivision (approved development site)	17/06/2025 Approved
Dinsdale	2025/6188	1/20 Victoria Road BAYSWATER VIC 3153	Three (3) lot subdivision (approved development site)	18/06/2025 Approved
Dinsdale	2025/6153	3 Elizabeth Street BAYSWATER VIC 3153	Construction of two (2) double storey dwellings and one (1) single storey dwelling	5/06/2025 Approved
Dinsdale	2024/6497	8 Allanfield Crescent WANTIRNA SOUTH VIC 3152	Construction of two (2) double storey dwellings	25/06/2025 Notice of Decision
Dinsdale	2025/6218	202 Scoresby Road BORONIA VIC 3155	Eight lot subdivision (approved development site)	19/06/2025 Approved
Dinsdale	2024/6506	1 Coolomon Close WANTIRNA SOUTH VIC 3152	The construction of two (2) double storey dwellings	12/06/2025 Notice of Decision
Dinsdale	2025/6009	13 Westham Crescent BAYSWATER VIC 3153	Construction of a single storey dwelling to the rear of the existing dwelling and construction of a carport to the existing dwelling	10/06/2025 Approved
Dinsdale	2024/6066	26-28 Lewis Road WANTIRNA SOUTH VIC 3152	Construct four (4) double storey and two (2) single storey dwellings	27/06/2025 Notice of Decision
Dinsdale	2025/6238	31 Susan Street BAYSWATER VIC 3153	Two lot subdivision (approved development site)	6/06/2025 Approved
Dinsdale	2025/9059	4 Dinsdale Road BORONIA VIC 3155	Two Lot Subdivision (approved development site)	3/06/2025 Approved

Ward	No/ Type	Address	Description	Decision
Dinsdale	2025/6041	2 Mingana Road WANTIRNA SOUTH VIC 3152	The construction of two (2) double storey dwellings and two (2) lot subdivision	30/06/2025 Approved
Dinsdale	2025/6231	74 Begonia Avenue BAYSWATER VIC 3153	Two Lot Subdivision (approved development site)	4/06/2025 Approved
Dobson	2025/6199	3 Austin Street FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	Pruning of one (1) Eucalyptus sideroxylon (Red Ironbark)	10/06/2025 Approved
Dobson	2025/6191	52 Forest Road FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	Display business identification signage (internally illuminated and non-illuminated)	4/06/2025 Approved
Dobson	2024/6333	350 Lysterfield Road LYSTERFIELD VIC 3156	Use and Development of a single dwelling	12/06/2025 Approved
Dobson	2024/6510	26 Forest Road FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	Buildings and works for a shed and carport, and associated removal/pruning of trees	4/06/2025 Approved
Dobson	2025/6211	2 Kenwyn Court FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	The removal of one (1) Hesperocyparis lusitanica (Mexican Cypress) and the pruning of one (1) Eucalyptus leucoxylon (Yellow Gum)	27/06/2025 Approved
Dobson	2024/6598	5A Bergner Court LYSTERFIELD VIC 3156	Construction of a double storey dwelling and associated works on a lot, including construction outside of the approved building envelope	18/06/2025 Approved
Dobson	2025/6212	17 The Crescent FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	Habitat Pruning of two (2) dead Eucalyptus macrorhyncha (Red Stringybark)	27/06/2025 Approved
Dobson	2025/9065	18 Logan Court LYSTERFIELD VIC 3156	Alterations and additions to an existing dwelling.	24/06/2025 Approved
Dobson	2024/6552	23 Parkview Drive FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	Buildings and works (construction of a dwelling) and the removal of vegetation	27/06/2025 Approved
Friberg	2024/6574	1634 Ferntree Gully Road KNOXFIELD VIC 3180	Change of use - Vehicle Sales	24/06/2025 Approved
Friberg	2024/6471	41 Gaydon Street FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	The construction of two (2) double storey dwellings on the land	25/06/2025 Approved
Friberg	2025/6235	Sh 60/1880 Ferntree Gully Road FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	Internally illuminated business identification signage	16/06/2025 Approved

Ward	No/ Type	Address	Description	Decision
Friberg	2025/6180	12 David Street KNOXFIELD VIC 3180	5 lot subdivision (approved development site)	10/06/2025 Approved
Scott	2025/9062	Waverley Christian School 1248 High Street Road WANTIRNA SOUTH VIC 3152	Buildings and Works (alterations to existing school building)	5/06/2025 Approved
Scott	2025/6243	30 Blind Creek Lane WANTIRNA SOUTH VIC 3152	Two Lot Subdivision (approved development site)	10/06/2025 Approved
Taylor	2024/6540	50 Armstrong Drive ROWVILLE VIC 3178	The construction of two (2) double storey dwellings on the land	13/06/2025 Notice of Decision
Taylor	2025/6182	8A & 8B Snowgum Close ROWVILLE VIC 3178	2 lot subdivision (approved development site)	13/06/2025 Approved
Taylor	2025/6183	1/28 Farview Drive ROWVILLE VIC 3178	Two lot Subdivision (approved development site)	13/06/2025 Approved
Taylor	2025/9073	63 Clausen Drive ROWVILLE VIC 3178	buildings and works (construction of a verandah over the front entrance)	26/06/2025 Approved
Tirhatuan	2025/6059	6 Zarro Street SCORESBY VIC 3179	Construction of two (2) double storey dwellings on the land	13/06/2025 Approved
Tirhatuan	2025/6253	3 Avalon Road ROWVILLE VIC 3178	Two Lot Subdivision (approved development site)	17/06/2025 Approved
Tirhatuan	2024/6324	5 Barry Court SCORESBY VIC 3179	Development of the land for two (2) double-storey dwellings	19/06/2025 Approved
Tirhatuan	2024/6526	30 Police Road ROWVILLE VIC 3178	The development of the land for two (2) double storey dwellings and removal of native vegetation	13/06/2025 Notice of Decision
Tirhatuan	2025/6257	PEPPERTREE HILL 193/15 Fulham Road ROWVILLE VIC 3178	Buildings and Works - Addition of a verandah to Unit 193	20/06/2025 Approved
Tirhatuan	2025/6230	956 Stud Road ROWVILLE VIC 3178	Display business identification signage	6/06/2025 Approved
Tirhatuan	2025/6162	10 Denver Crescent ROWVILLE VIC 3178	Three lot subdivision (approved development site)	4/06/2025 Approved

7 Public Question Time

8 Officer Reports

8.1 Leasing and Licensing Policy

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Discussion
Author:	Coordinator Property Management, Flora Westcott
Manager:	Manager Strategic Property & Procurement, Shelley Starrenburg
Executive:	Chief Financial Officer, Navec Lorkin

SUMMARY

The Knox City Council Leasing and Licensing Policy (the Policy) was presented to Council for endorsement to progress to public consultation on 14 April 2025.

A revised Policy was endorsed by Council for the purposes of community consultation on 14 April 2025. Community engagement occurred from 23 April 2025 to 28 May 2025, with 2 late submissions received by 14 June 2025. A total of 12 submissions were received, however two of those submissions were wholly outside the scope of the engagement. This report summarises the feedback received and outlines minor adjustments made in response to the consultation and seeks endorsement of the Leasing and Licencing Policy. Verbatim community feedback is included in Attachment 1.

The revised Leasing and Licensing Policy provides a clearer, more consistent, equitable, and transparent approach to formal agreements with tenants occupying Council-owned facilities. The revised policy sets out guiding principles for the effective management, allocation, and use of Council land and buildings, aiming to maximise community benefit. It is designed to support current tenants, prospective tenants, and Council officers in navigating lease and licence agreements with confidence and clarity. This includes simplifying annual increases, clearer and more defined tenant categories and updating limits upon the CEO's delegation. This report presents the revised Leasing and Licencing Policy at Attachment 2 for adoption.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Note the feedback received on the draft Leasing and Licensing Policy (Attachment 1); and
2. Adopt the revised Leasing and Licencing Policy as set out in Attachment 2.

1. DISCUSSION

Knox has land, buildings, and other property assets which are managed on behalf of the community. This includes around 244 facilities, with approximately 100 occupied under lease or licence agreements.

Facilities and spaces that support community services and initiatives are generally made available to eligible groups at subsidised rates to enhance accessibility and deliver local benefits. In contrast, commercially viable assets are leased at full market rates, ensuring fair and responsible management of public resources while generating revenue.

A lease grants exclusive use of a defined area in a Council facility, usually in exchange for rent, outgoings and maintenance obligations. A licence allows non-exclusive use, meaning the space may be shared with other users or the public, with similar financial and maintenance responsibilities (often on a pro-rata basis).

Whilst Licence agreements specify times of occupation to support shared use of facilities, this does not prevent tenants from requesting flexibility for special events such as fundraisers. Council remains open to accommodating such needs.

The existing Policy needed updating to reflect current practices, community needs, and the growing complexity of commercial tenancies. The revised Policy aims to provide clearer, more practical guidance for managing occupancy agreements.

Internal consultation also highlighted opportunities to improve clarity and consistency for both Council officers and prospective tenants, such as maintenance obligations. This new Leasing and Licencing policy is principles-based and does not specify fixed timelines for tenant maintenance obligations. This approach allows Council to work cooperatively with tenants, adapting to their structure and capacity for compliance, within reason. For example, volunteer-run organisations may require more support and flexibility. These arrangements are reflected in individual contracts.

The policy also requests utilisation and occupancy data from tenants, which will be used to support effective asset management, including planning for renewal, wear and tear, optimisation, and ensuring community benefit.

Council endorsed the draft policy to progress to community engagement at its meeting of 14 April 2025. The revised Policy that proceeded to consultation incorporated several improvements to the existing Lease and Licensing Policy, focusing on providing:

- Greater operational clarity and consistency for tenants and Council officers
- Stronger fee transparency across the life of agreements
- Clearer expectations on maintenance, reporting and lease compliance
- Modernisation to reflect emerging tenancy types.

Feedback received through the community consultation has informed minor refinements to the policy.

1.1 Key changes from existing Policy

The draft Policy released for public consultation in April 2025 included a number of key changes from the existing Policy. The overarching principles remain broadly similar from the existing Policy; this revised version was updated to include improved guidance for prospective tenants and Council officers. Further changes include:

1.1.1 Revised tenant categories with clearer criteria

Tenant categories and criteria have been renamed and updated to reflect the diversity of tenant types and new uses of Council facilities (see Attachment Appendix 1 – Tenant Category Schedule). The previous criteria no longer reflected the evolving nature of Council tenants. They have now been revised to ensure clarity, transparency, and consistency. Categories will now be based on the structure of the organisation entering into the agreement, rather than the services they provide, enabling more consistent policy application.

1.1.2 Rental and Administration Fees

The revised Policy introduces a simpler structure for determining rental fees. Council's Fees and Charges, reviewed annually as part of the budget process, will continue to determine the starting rental fees for Community Group tenants. Community Service Organisations will start from a market rate, with potential discounts based on factors such as community benefit, volunteer involvement and other contributions, negotiated on a case-by-case basis. This approach is consistent with the previous Policy's treatment of Community Group A and Community Group B, providing continuity while simplifying the framework.

Any fee changes for existing tenants will only apply at the end of their current agreement or upon renewal. Existing agreements will continue under their current terms and conditions.

The Policy also points to the administrative fee adopted in the annual Council Budget for New Tenancy Application. These apply to Commercial and Telecommunication and Utility tenants seeking to occupy land for specific purposes, as well as Adjoining Owners. These requests often require resource-intensive investigation involving multiple departments and the requirement for community engagement. The fee offsets officer time and must be paid prior to any internal work or community engagement and is not refundable should negotiations prove unsuccessful. It is separate from other charges such as permit or licence application fees. The quantum of the fee is set via Councils Annual Budget Process and contained in the Fees and Charges.

A separate category for ground leases has not been proposed under this Policy, as the peppercorn rental does not recover the administrative costs associated with managing the Occupancy Agreement, regardless of whether the lease relates to land, buildings, or both. Additionally, council provides Essential Safety Measures (ESM) for land only leases in accordance with its landlord and legal obligations.

1.1.3 Delegations to the CEO

Leases for Council facilities must comply with Section 115 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, which sets limits on lease value and duration. The Policy proposes delegation limits for the CEO within these requirements which aim to increase administrative and operational efficiency.

To reduce administrative burden, improve efficiency and maintain transparency, the updated Leasing and Licensing Policy proposes that only certain occupancy agreements be referred to a Council meeting. These are agreements where:

- the initial term is ten years or more;
- the total duration, including any extension options, exceeds twenty years;
- the market rental value exceeds \$100,000 per year (unless the agreement is for less than twelve months and the tenant has not occupied the premises within the past twelve months); or
- the agreement does not substantially align with the Policy's requirements.

All other occupancy agreements will be negotiated, approved and executed by the Chief Executive Officer or their delegate, in accordance with the Policy and Council's delegations.

A list of occupancy agreements under negotiation will be regularly provided to councillors. Any agreement can be brought to a Council meeting for decision ("called up") if requested by a

councillor in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer or Chief Financial Officer, or if the Chief Executive Officer determines it should be referred. Once an agreement has been called up, delegated authority cannot be exercised until Council has considered and made a decision on it.

Council officers considered a range of delegation thresholds and determined that a 10-year threshold would best support the objectives of the updated Policy. In accordance with the proposed Policy, the preference is for Lease agreement initial terms to be no less than 5 years. Setting the Chief Executive Officer's delegation threshold to under 10 years for lease and licence agreements will provide administrative efficiencies and enable more responsive and agile property management. This approach maintains Council's oversight through the ability to call matters into the chamber for decision.

1.2 Implementation

The updated Licensing Policy will take effect upon Council adoption, with all new occupancy agreements governed by this Policy. Exceptions may be made for negotiations that are already well advanced with in-principle agreement, particularly where agreements are proceeding to signature and execution.

1.3 Impacts to Existing Tenants

Existing leases and licences, including those with Council exemptions, will continue unchanged until they expire. New agreements after the Policy's adoption will follow the new Policy, unless Council grants a specific exemption.

Most tenants previously in Community Group A are now in the Community Group category, and most from Community Group B are now Community Service Organisations. Current tenants are expected to see little change as they move to new leases and licences under this Policy.

2. ENGAGEMENT

2.1 Community Engagement

Council conducted five weeks of community engagement on the draft policy from 23 April to 28 May 2025. The consultation was originally scheduled to end on 21 May but was later extended until 28 May to accommodate a drop-in session on 26 May, totalling 5 weeks. Two telecommunication providers reached out requesting to submit a late response to the consultation. This was granted to ensure Council could make a fully informed decision based on all available community and industry feedback. These two late submissions were received before 14 June 2025.

Community engagement was conducted at the 'consult' level, in line with Council's Community Engagement Policy. Stakeholders could provide feedback via:

- Council's Have Your Say website
- Email or post
- Phone
- In-person at the Civic Centre
- A drop-in session at Council offices in Wantirna South

To support participation in the process, Council officers implemented a proactive, multi-channel engagement strategy targeting existing tenants.

Existing tenants were initially contacted via direct email at the launch of the consultation. In addition, the eNewsletter featured the web news item, and an email was sent to 1,634 registered users of Councils Have Your Say page.

After the first two weeks, officers noted that the response rates were lower than anticipated – only three online submissions were received, two of which were outside the scope of the consultation.

In response, officers extended the submission period and scheduled an evening drop-in session to encourage further input. A second direct email was sent to all tenants to provide details of these changes. To ensure officers were meeting the communications needs of existing tenants, the Property team directly contacted three existing tenants via phone, identified by Property Advocates as potentially not overly comfortable with email or likely to be concerned about a potential new policy. These phone calls did not elicit feedback from the tenants; instead, officers explained the policy, how to find it, and guided tenants toward additional support options if needed. Property Advocates were encouraged to reach out to any additional tenants they considered reasonable.

The drop-in session was timed to coincide with a Council meeting and held in a prominent location in the Civic Centre foyer. It was scheduled in the evening to accommodate tenants unavailable during standard business hours. Two Council officers familiar with the revised Policy were available on-site to engage with attendees and answer questions. This session generated three additional submissions.

At the close of consultation, 10 submissions were received:

- 5 via online survey
- 3 from drop-in session attendees
- 2 via email

Following requests from telecommunications companies, Council accepted two late submissions by 14 June 2025, bringing the total to 12.

Refer to Table 1 for a summary of the feedback received.

Table 1: Community Consultation Summary

Supportive	2	20%
Supportive, with clarifications	5	50%
Unsupportive	3	30%
Total	10	100%
Not in scope to the engagement*	2	-

*Not included in establishing the % of impact to the feedback sought

Full comments are available in Attachment 1. Based on the feedback, seven respondents (70%) either supported or supported the policy with clarifications. Many submissions made more than one comment. The comments are summarised below, and themes are discussed in further detail within Table 2. Officers have considered the feedback from the consultation and made minor adjustments to the revised policy have been made where appropriate.

Supportive Comments:

- Clear tenant categories and objectives
- Reasonable clauses on maintenance, safety, insurance, and reporting
- Predictable fee increases aid budgeting
- Positive tenant experiences with Council
- Support for fair market rates for commercial tenants

Supportive with Requests for Clarity/Updates:

- Define safety responsibilities
- Specify reporting timelines and maintenance responsibilities
- Explain CPI-linked fee increases vs proposal for fixed percentage increases
- Consider referencing conflict management policies

Unsupportive Feedback:

- Telecommunications and utility providers should be treated like other commercial tenants
- Concerns about potential conflict with Clause 44, Schedule 3 of the *Telecommunications Act 1997*.

Additional, comments that are not in the scope of the proposed Leasing and Licencing Policy consulted:

- Concerns that future rental fees for sporting pavilion tenants will be too high.
- The administration fees charged to Telecommunications and Utility Service Providers are excessive.
- Concerns were raised about the condition and appearance of Boronia Mall.

Following the consultation period and review of submissions, minor updates were made to the Leasing and Licensing Policy.

Table 2: Comment analysis and officer responses

1. Specify tenant responsibilities for safety issues
<p>Officers have reviewed the draft policy and added a section, “Lease Compliance” (see Attachment 2, Item 6.10).</p> <p>The “Lease Compliance” section emphasises Councils right to inspect and issue notices to rectify if necessary. This clause makes the obligations on the tenant clearer to all members of the public, and any prospective tenants.</p> <p>Given the complexity of safety obligations and the range of relevant legislation, the Policy outlines Council’s role at a high level, with the operational responsibilities detailed in the individual agreements and defined by applicable laws.</p>

2. Specify reporting timelines and maintenance responsibilities

Under the existing Policy, community tenants were required to submit annual reports within four weeks of their Annual General Meeting. These meeting dates can vary significantly, which can make coordination and tracking more complex for all parties.

The revised Policy addresses this by allowing reporting dates to be specified in each Occupancy Agreement, providing clearer and more enforceable timeframes. To support flexibility, exemptions may be granted in special circumstances, recognising the demands often placed on volunteer-run groups.

Maintenance responsibilities are set out in the Occupancy Agreement, using a standard template schedule that is adapted during negotiations to reflect:

- site characteristics (e.g. land-only, building-only, or combined use);
- the form of tenure (e.g. lease or licence); and
- the nature of the tenant (e.g. community or commercial).

This approach balances consistency with the need to reflect the specific context of each occupancy.

No updates have been made to the policy in response to this feedback.

3. Provide more detail on the move to fixed fee increases rather than CPI-linked increases

The draft Policy as consulted with the community proposed replacing CPI-based adjustments with a fixed annual percentage increase to improve efficiency and provide greater certainty to tenants. Fixed increases will be clearly specified in the Occupancy Agreement, enabling tenants to plan for future costs with confidence.

While CPI is a widely used economic indicator, it presents practical challenges for both Council and tenants. The CPI is issued quarterly by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and includes multiple variants (e.g. annual vs quarterly, capital city vs regional). Applying CPI-based adjustments requires regular monitoring, interpretation, and complex calculations that often exceed the value of the rental fee increase. This method also increases the risk of administrative errors and disputes.

A fixed increase model significantly reduces administrative burden, simplifies implementation, and promotes transparency and predictability for both Council and tenants over the life of the agreement.

No updates have been made to the policy in response to this feedback.

4. Consider referencing conflict resolution and/or management policies

Effective conflict management arrangements are a key aspect of occupancy arrangements. These matters are most appropriately dealt with in the individual Occupancy Agreements, reflecting the unique operational and governance arrangements of each site and tenant. This approach allows Council to remain flexible and responsive to the diverse needs of its facilities and tenancy arrangements, ensuring conflict management processes are fit for purpose.

No updates have been made to the policy in response to this feedback.

5. The terms, conditions, rental charges and fees for Telecommunications and Utility Service Providers should align with commercial leasing principles and other commercial tenants.

Council uses the template telecommunications lease developed by LGPro and MAV, which provide standard terms and conditions for similar providers.

Officers consider that the revised Policy aligns with commercial leasing principles by ensuring a fair and reasonable return to ratepayers which reflects the strategic value of these agreements for the tenants.

The current Policy does not differentiate telecommunications infrastructure from other commercial uses, instead applying standard land-based market valuation to determine rent: traditional commercial property valuation typically applies a per-square-metre rate based on comparable sites, income potential and other physical attributes. However, this approach is often unsuitable for telecommunications and utility leases, which involve small land footprints but carry significant operational and strategic value for tenants. These leases are more appropriately driven by the infrastructure's location, function and broader network role.

The revised Policy proposes adopting a contemporary infrastructure valuation approach that better reflect the true market value and use of these assets. This includes consideration of:

- current market conditions;
- lessee type;
- equipment configuration;
- availability of comparable sites;
- potential for third-party co-location;
- usage type; and
- terms and conditions of the occupancy.

This market assessment approach, established by an independent authority on telecommunication leases, ensures lease pricing remains contemporary, transparent and consistent with commercial leasing principles, while also capturing the value of strategic infrastructure use.

The Policy does not mandate the exclusive use of a market rate card or valuation tool. Alternative market-driven approaches (such as expressions of interest or traditional property valuations) may be applied where appropriate to the specific circumstances.

Where multiple valuation methods are considered, the highest resulting value will be applied to ensure maximum return to Knox ratepayers from their property portfolio.

No updates have been made to the policy in response to this feedback.

6. Concerns were raised that the treatment of Telecommunications and Utility Service Providers under the proposed Policy may contravene Australian Government legislation, specifically Clause 44 of Schedule 3 of the *Telecommunications Act 1997*

Schedule 3, Clause 44 of the *Telecommunications Act 1997* (Cth) states:

“A law of a State or Territory has no effect to the extent that it discriminates against a carrier or a carriage service provider in relation to:

the inspection of land;

the installation of a facility;

the maintenance of a facility; or

access to land for these purposes.”

There is a note at the foot of the clause sets out examples of a law of a State or Territory as

a) a provision of a State or Territory Act

b) a provision of a legislative instrument made under a State or Territory Act.

This grants telecommunications carriers certain powers and immunities, including exemption from state or territory laws that may discriminate against them in relation to land access, facility installation, and maintenance.

Council officers have sought legal advice confirming that the proposed Policy is not a provision of a State Act, nor is it a legislative instrument made under a State Act. It is not appropriate for carriers to rely on Schedule 3, Clause 44 in this context as this clause does not apply to Councils policy or market-based fee structures.

The revised Policy applies consistent principles across comparable infrastructure uses. Lease fees reflect key factors such as infrastructure size, site configuration, and use type. A market-based rate card ensures alignment with current market values.

The administrative fee for this category reflects the level of work required by Council officers to assess and process requests. This typically involves reviewing technical and complex proposals, undertaking community engagement and preparing Council reports. The fee amount is consulted and determined through Council’s Annual Budget Process and published in the Fees and Charges section.

No updates have been made to the policy in response to this feedback.

7. Concerns that future rental fees for sporting pavilion tenants will be too high

This comment is out of scope of this consultation. Occupancy arrangements and associated fees for these sites are currently managed under Councils Sporting Reserve Facility Usage Policy. The feedback has been provided to the appropriate internal Council teams.

No updates have been made to the Policy in response to this feedback. Comments have been noted by relevant teams for future consideration.

8. The administration fees charged to Telecommunications and Utility Service Providers are excessive

This comment is out of scope of this consultation. These fees are set via Council’s annual budget process, rather than the Lease and Licencing Policy, and are subject to annual review. No updates have been made to the Policy in response to this feedback.

9. Concerns were raised about the condition and appearance of Boronia Mall

This comment is out of scope of this consultation. No updates have been made to the Policy in response to this feedback.

2.2 Additional internal feedback provided

Internal consultation was undertaken prior to Council endorsing the draft Policy for community consultation. However, during the public consultation period, a previously consulted internal team provided additional feedback relating to the relocation of tenants during works on Council properties. The Relocation section of the Policy (item 6.23) is subsequently updated to clarify that Council is not obligated to provide temporary facilities during works, subject to any conditions in the Occupancy Agreement.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Policy supports community health and wellbeing through supporting access to Council-owned land and buildings by organisations that facilitate social participation and active lifestyles, provide health services and/or lifelong learning; and utility providers and public bodies whose services are essential.

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 Policy will support the appropriate use of Council’s land and buildings by external organisations, with appropriate environmental and amenity issues considered within the tenant selection process and occupancy agreements.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Rental Fees

The proposed Policy changes will provide an improved approach for calculating appropriate rental fees, in consideration of the type of tenant and the benefit for the community. The proposal to move from CPI adjustments to a fixed 4% increase is administratively efficient and provides certainty of future costs to tenants.

The revised Policy acknowledges the differences in categories by establishing a new Telecommunication and Utility Service Provider tenant category with the ability to generate commercially competitive revenue for Council. The development of a rate card for

telecommunication providers, for example, considers more than just the ground lease for the rent; it considers factors such as the size of the base station compound, antenna, and risk.

6.2 Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF)

The Emergency Services and Volunteer Levy (ESVF) is a State Government charge, currently \$267 per year for Council properties used for municipal purposes. Historically, Council has paid this fee unless the facility was commercially leased.

Under the revised Policy, all tenants (except Community Group tenants) will be required to reimburse Council for the ESVF. While the current Policy technically requires Community Group tenants to pay the levy, it has rarely been enforced. Under the revised approach, Community Service Organisation tenants will be charged the levy, pro-rata where applicable (e.g. shared sites).

Requiring reimbursement from all tenants except the approximately 70 Community Groups is expected to equate to \$8,000 annually. Council currently pays about \$27,000 per year in ESVF charges for all tenant-occupied properties. The Victorian Government has announced the fixed charge will increase to \$275 for 2025–26.

6.3 Outgoings Responsibility

As with the previous Policy, tenants will be responsible for their own operational outgoings, including rates (where applicable), utilities, waste, cleaning, sanitary services and security.

Waste charges must align with Council's Eligibility for Use of Waste Collection Services Policy. While this has previously been applied inconsistently, the updated Policy and supporting processes will help standardise both service access and fee recovery for tenants.

7. RISKS

Updates to the Leasing and Licensing Policy will assist in mitigating the risk of managing an extensive property portfolio by ensuring that the Policy is more consistent and suitably relevant for current and evolving requirements for the Community and Council.

The updated Policy will enhance efficiency, clarity and consistency in managing Knox Council's property and facilities.

8. COUNCIL HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN 2025-2029

Embracing connection, inclusion and diversity

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 4.5 - 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 - Consultation engagement - feedback [**8.1.1** - 15 pages]
2. Attachment 2 - Leasing and Licensing Policy - June 2025 [**8.1.2** - 16 pages]

Managing New Leases And Licenses

Title/Question: Survey on the draft Leasing and Licensing Policy
 Report Date Range: 23 Apr 2025 - 28 May 2025

Contribution ID	Date Submitted	Method of feedback	Does the draft policy provide more transparency, equity and consistency for tenants?	Is there anything we should revise, or add in the policy?	Do you have other comments to share?
17125	May 28, 2025, 11:24 AM	HYS		- Asbestos management responsibilities - Public health and safety SUGGEST: Reference to proactive hazard identification, incident reporting, or risk assessments (i.e.: the occupier is responsible for actively monitoring and mitigating workplace hazards—consistent with proactive duty of care principles. (May also require extending this obligation to ensure public health and safety by adopting applicable asbestos management plans in alignment with Councils strategic management plan) SUGGEST: Specific provision requiring tenants to ensure safe and accessible entry/exit routes at all times SUGGEST: Requirement for tenants to maintain safety documentation (e.g., maintenance logs, compliance certificates) SUGGEST: Safety responsibilities in shared spaces are not clearly defined and could be included in Section 6.1.2 as an examples of where MoU's may be required (i.e. emergency management plans)	Is it required to include within a policy note around conflict management OR reference conflict management policies/MoU's?
17077	May 20, 2025, 02:57 PM	HYS	The draft policy uses clear language that outlines the logic of each tenant category in terms of definition and includes criteria that needs to be met. Objectives within the draft policy indicate an intention both to be transparent as to the purpose of the Council's approach as well as consideration of the specific needs of each tenancy category which differ.	The approach of using a fixed percentage annual rental and fee increase as opposed to CPI increase is appropriate if negotiable and reasonable noting that increases shouldn't vary too far away from CPI. In relation to the following specific clauses: •6.11 'Maintenance and Essential Safety Measures'- This clause appears standard, particularly given the rental paid for the premises, which includes obtaining approvals for any Capital Works undertaken on site. It is also reasonable to expect Council or their contractors to provide prior notice before attending the premises for inspections or works. •6.12 'Insurance'- This clause is standard and acceptable. •6.14 'Community Reporting Requirements' some further clarity as to how reporting is to take place and when would be beneficial i.e at the end of each calendar year or annually from date of lease agreement.	None

Contribution ID	Date Submitted	Method of feedback	Does the draft policy provide more transparency, equity and consistency for tenants?	Is there anything we should revise, or add in the policy?	Do you have other comments to share?
16896	May 07, 2025, 08:36 PM	HYS	This draft policy provides insufficient detail on what the actual annual increased costs are going to be. We have concerns - as one of the higher rate paying tennis clubs being provided with aging facilities -that this means that our club will end up paying more fees than we currently are.	Please provide concrete details of the annual fee and how it would compare to CPI based calculations.	
16736	Apr 23, 2025, 07:18 PM	HYS		Do something about the Boronia Mall.	Boronia Mall needs bull dozing.
16733	Apr 23, 2025, 06:10 PM	HYS			Ensure that commercial providers pay what they deserve to pay. They should not get a favourable ride to make a profit off public assets.
Nil	29/04/2025	Direct email			Happy for a flat increase to make budgeting easier Ensuring tenant categories are transparent to identify what is included in the lease, and who is responsible for certain maintenance payments [tenant] have inclusive language visible for all our community groups [tenant] is happy with the Venues team in responding to maintenance requests and making processes simple and user friendly
nil	26/05/2025	Drop in			Seems clear and straightforward; no questions
nil	26/05/2025	Drop in			Makes sense: glad won't impact recently signed renewed licence
nil	26/05/2025	Drop in			Seems clear and straightforward; no questions
Nil	23/05/2025	Email submission (see attached)			Do not consider the approach to rental fee for telecomms and utilities to be appropriate. Should be the same as Commercial users, based on unimproved land value and a minimum of 10 years to support investment. Full submission is attached.
Nil	13/06/2025	Email submission (see attached)			The Draft Policy risks discouraging investment in mobile infrastructure due to high fees, vague cost structures, and insecure lease terms AMTA consider that several policy elements (e.g. fees, subletting, termination rights) are inconsistent with industry standards and potentially discriminatory under federal telecommunications law (Telecommunications Act 1997, Schedule 3, Clause 44). AMTA calls for clearer, fairer terms, including fixed rents, inclusive lease costs, reasonable sub-letting rights, and longer lease holdovers, to ensure certainty, legal compliance, and support for essential mobile services.
Nil	13/06/2025	Email submission (see attached)			Council should use the standard lease for telecomms and utility providers developed by Optus, LGPro and Maddocks. Admin fee should reflect the actual cost to Council, seems discriminatory



1. Introduction

This submission is made by Amplitel Pty Ltd (**Amplitel**) in response to the draft Leasing and Licensing Policy released May 2025 (**draft policy**) by Knox City Council (**Council**).

2. About Amplitel

2.1 Amplitel was established on 1 September 2021 following the transfer of the towers business of Telstra Corporation Ltd to Amplitel and sale of a 49% interest in that business to a consortium of investors. This consortium includes the Future Fund, Australian Retirement Trust, Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation and Morrison & Co Infrastructure Partners. The Telstra group continues to hold 51% of Amplitel.

2.2 Amplitel is a mobile network infrastructure provider (**MNIP**) and provides most of the passive infrastructure assets at a communications site required to establish and operate a telecommunications tower. These include land, security fencing, access tracks, the tower and connection to the power network (where available). The active assets (those that require power to operate or can transmit data) are provided and operated by Amplitel's customers. In addition, some passive assets (such as equipment huts) which are unique to a customer's equipment will be provided by the customer.

2.3 Amplitel is not a mobile network operator (**MNO**) or a carrier and we do not supply carriage services. Our customers include MNOs, public emergency network and private radio and wireless network operators, major corporations, government and not-for-profits.

2.4 Amplitel is largest provider of towers infrastructure across Australia. We operate over 8,000 towers, masts, poles, and other structures¹. Amplitel also has access to Telstra's equipment building rooftops and street side poles.

3. The importance of telecommunications to the community

3.1 Communications and connectivity are critical drivers of growth, development and wellbeing across the Council area. They play an essential role in the delivery of health and education services, are critical in times of disasters and emergencies and enable residents and businesses to participate in the digital economy. We submit that it is critical that Council makes land available for telecommunications facilities at reasonable rates to ensure that all the residents and businesses of the Council area can benefit from the social and economic advantages that communications bring and we welcome Council's release of its draft policy for comment.

3.2 Rents charged by Council for telecommunications sites should encourage mobile infrastructure which supports connectivity and not disincentivise investment in communications solutions by way of excessive rents or uncertain rental calculation models. There are strong public benefits associated with a simple and easily implemented rent regime that promotes fair returns for the Council while ensuring the continued availability and expansion of communications (when required) for the residents and businesses.

¹ Amplitel's tower locations are available at <https://www.amplitel.com.au/tower-locations>

4. Benefits of co-location on telecommunications infrastructure

- 4.1 Amplitel is committed to maximising utilisation of its existing and future network infrastructure assets, in line with its mission to be Australia's leading provider of towers infrastructure, to support customers to deliver mobile communications. This means that Amplitel, where possible, builds new towers to support more than one customer and explores co-location options with its customers on new and existing towers.
- 4.2 Co-location through passive mobile infrastructure sharing can offer a number of benefits to MNIPs, mobile carriers and the public and as a result, it is critical that policy and rental fee structures encourage co-location. The benefits of mobile infrastructure co-location include a more efficient use of land and increased access to favourable locations, economic efficiencies which enable further investment in the sector, minimisation of visual impact and increased choice for end users, with the corresponding benefits that increased competition brings.

5. Comments on the draft policy

5.1 We note that the draft policy:

- (a) Includes **objectives** to provide a framework for a consistent, equitable and transparent approach to:
- *Ensure strong processes with clear and consistent agreements in place to protect all interested parties;*
 - *Apply a consistent and equitable approach for determining Tenant fees and charges including any Council subsidies identified; and*
 - *Ensure all Commercial and Telecommunication and Utility Service Provider Occupancy Agreements are on commercial terms and aligned with comparable market rates.*

(b) Creates a new tenant category for Telecommunication and Utility Service Providers; and

(c) States under Appendix 2 that the rental fee for Telecommunication and Utility Service Providers will be: *Market driven, the greater value of either a market rental valuation undertaken by an independent suitably qualified valuer or other market driven approach such as an expression of interest or similar process or market rate card or market rate tool where applicable.*

5.2 The approach to the rental fee for Telecommunication and Utility Service Providers under Appendix 2 does not meet the objectives of the policy listed above in a paragraph 5.1(a) for reasons outlined below:

- a) Ensure strong processes with clear and consistent agreements in place to protect all interested parties – ***the rental fee structure is not clear and consistent as it provides 3 different options for charging rent without any indication as to when such approaches would be applied and which could ultimately result in rents above market rates;***
- b) Apply a consistent and equitable approach for determining Tenant fees and charges including any Council subsidies identified - ***the rental fee structure is not consistent and equitable as it provides 3 different options for charging rent without any indication as to when such approaches would be applied and which could ultimately result in rents above market rates. In addition, the separate tenant category for Telecommunication and Utility Service Providers is inequitable as such category of tenant should be treated as per other Commercial Users. Standard valuation principles dictate that the investment of the tenant should not be considered in rental calculations;*** and
- c) Ensure all Commercial and Telecommunication and Utility Service Provider Occupancy Agreements are on commercial terms and aligned with comparable market rates – ***for the reasons set out above, the rental fee structure could result in rents not comparable with “comparable market rates”.***

- 5.3 By the rental fee structure for Telecommunication and Utility Service Providers not being consistently linked to market rates (depending on what rent assessment approach is used) and rents having the possibility of being greater than “a market rental valuation undertaken by an independent suitably qualified valuer”, such fee structure is inequitable and contrary to the draft policy objectives.
- 5.4 We note that Item 4.3 (Draft Leasing and Licencing Policy) of the Agenda for the Mid Month Meeting of Council on Monday 14 April 2025 at 7pm, paragraph 1.5.1 Telecommunication Rental Fee² states in relation to the draft policy:
- The current Policy does not differentiate telecommunication infrastructure from other commercial tenancies, using a standard market valuation approach for pricing. While this was best practice previously, methods for calculating infrastructure lease and license pricing have evolved to more sophisticated tools, considering the need to upgrade infrastructure with the phasing out of 3G technology. These new assessments require valuations that account for more factors, providing a fairer return to ratepayers. The Policy proposes adopting these innovative pricing models as part of a continuous improvement journey. This new approach enables consideration of the following factors: current market conditions, lessee type, site options and third-party use opportunities, equipment configuration, comparable site availability, type of usage and conditions of the occupancy agreement.*
- 5.5 The above commentary gives some insight into the factors to be considered by Council as part of the rental fee assessment and possible “market rate tool” adopted.
- 5.6 Under telecommunications leases, Council provides access to vacant land and Amplitel provides third parties with access to telecommunications infrastructure on this land. Communications tenants and infrastructure providers such as Amplitel invest millions of dollars in building, acquiring, operating and maintaining infrastructure and making it available for the deployment of communication services, providing the wide-ranging community benefits. We have accepted a myriad of risks associated with the infrastructure. A landlord such as Council makes no investment in the provision of this infrastructure and take on no risk associated with it.
- 5.7 On that basis, we would suggest that the use of a market tool to assess “lessee type, site options and third-party use opportunities, equipment configuration, comparable site availability, type of usage” is inappropriate and further, it is inequitable for Council as landlord to gain an economic benefit from investments made on site by a tenant such as Amplitel or our customers. This mechanism is not linked to appropriate market rates for the vacant land that is being leased. We again note that valuation principles dictate that the value of the tenant’s business and improvements should be ignored when assessing a fair market rent as appears to be Council’s intention when assessing rents for Commercial Users.
- 5.8 To ensure the realisation of the social, economic and community benefits of telecommunications, it is our view that rents should be based on the unimproved value of the freehold land, with a fair rate of return applied. We recommend a rate of return of 6%. Reference to the unimproved value of the freehold land for the purpose of rent assessment is in line with standard valuation principles and represents market rates. Any other approach not supported by a market rental valuation undertaken by an independent suitably qualified valuer does not meet the objectives of the policy and does not meet standard valuation principles.
- 5.9 To ensure a framework for a consistent, equitable and transparent approach to rents as intended under the draft policy objectives, the rental fee structure for Telecommunication and Utility Service Providers must:
- a) reflect the structure for other commercial users of Council land;
 - b) ensure rents that reflect market rates;

² [2025-04-14 - Mid Month Meeting of Council](#)

- c) not include excessive administrative fees – these are not common across the industry as proposed by Council;
- d) allow Telecommunication Providers to sub-licence to customers without additional fees – thus supporting co-location on telecommunications infrastructure bringing the benefits of co-location to the community; and
- e) allow licences of a minimum 10 year term to support investment into telecommunications services for the benefit of the community.

Submission lodged 23 May 2025



Submission to the Knox City Council Draft Leasing and
Licensing Policy

13 June 2025

General



About AMTA

The Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association (AMTA) is the peak national body representing Australia's mobile telecommunications industry. It aims to promote an environmentally, socially and economically responsible, successful and sustainable mobile telecommunications industry in Australia. Please see www.amta.org.au

This submission is made for the Mobile Carriers Forum (MCF), a division of AMTA representing the three mobile network operators deploying mobile networks in Australia, namely Telstra, Optus and TPG Telecom.



Introduction

AMTA welcomes the opportunity to provide this brief submission on behalf of the Mobile Carriers Forum (MCF) in response to the Knox City Council's proposed Draft Leasing and Licensing Policy (the Draft Policy).

AMTA understand that the objective of the Draft Policy is to enable better management and use of Council land and buildings when entities, such as Telstra, Optus and TPG Telecom, propose to use such land to deploy mobile phone base station infrastructure which enables the community to have access to mobile telecommunications.

The views expressed in this submission are those of the members of the MCF - Telstra, Optus and TPG Telecom, otherwise described as 'Mobile Network Operators' or 'MNOs'.

Background

AMTA appreciates that the Knox City Council Draft Policy aims to improve transparency, consistency, and equity for tenants to help ensure that agreements maximise community benefit for rate payers and visitors to the Knox local government area.

However, AMTA's observation is that such policies and the inherent fee structures pose a genuine risk of discouraging investment in mobile telecommunications infrastructure across the Knox City Council area for both installation of new facilities and upgrades to existing facilities.

Indeed, a significant portion of the Draft Policy appears to be misaligned with the Council's Draft Policy objectives and may not maximise community benefit by reducing network performance, resiliency and dependability of uninterrupted mobile services for the wider community.

To that end, AMTA has provided a response to various elements of the Draft Policy, impediments that would impact our members ability to deploy mobile infrastructure should the policy be adopted in its current form.

Response to the Draft Policy

Section 6.3 - Tenant Selection and Renewal

The multiple negotiation pathways introduce uncertainty and potential inconsistency. A clearer and more equitable approach may be to use a standard valuation process – preferably starting with the Valuer-General, with the option for either party to obtain an independent valuation.

AMTA suggests there's a need for consistency and fairness in the valuation process. By using a standard valuation process, the policy can ensure that all parties are treated equitably, reducing uncertainty and potential disputes.

Section 6.5 - Fees

The proposed administration fees – \$4,000 for new applications and \$2,000 for upgrades, rooftop and building site requests – are excessive and inconsistent with industry benchmarks and will directly disincentivise investment in uplifting the mobile network. Access fees for new facilities and upgrades made to mobile sites are factored into the executed lease agreement and, according to our members, are not seen in any other jurisdiction.

Further, the overall approach towards fees in the policy is vague and stated as being subject to amendment creating further uncertainty.

By aligning fees with industry benchmarks, the Draft Policy can ensure that fees are reasonable and predictable.

Section 6.6 - Rent and Fee Reviews

AMTA supports fixed annual rental increases (rather than based on CPI) which aligns with the draft policy. For the same reasons, rental values should remain fixed when lease options are exercised. Subjecting options to market reviews introduces uncertainty.

AMTA supports the need for predictability and stability in rental agreements. Fixed annual increases and rental values provide certainty for both parties, reducing the risk of unexpected changes.

Sections 6.7 - Rates, Taxes and Outgoings and 6.8 Fire Services Property Levy

AMTA preference is a rental arrangement which is inclusive of all outgoings including rates, taxes, and levies. Inclusive rentals simplify the administrative process and provide clear cost expectations for tenants.

Section 6.9 - Standard Terms and Conditions

The MNO's have standard lease templates, including for Crown Land, that are fit for purpose and used across Australia over multiple jurisdictions. However, MNOs could potentially negotiate a new template with Council, if necessary.

Section 6.10 - Occupancy Agreement Term

MNOs invest significantly in new facilities where they require secure, long term tenure. The MNOs are generally aligned with Council's preference for long-term agreements but with reasonable break clauses if circumstances change.

Section 6.18 - Tenant Sub-Letting

The MNOs may sub-lease or sub-licence space to other parties, typically with other MNOs or radio operators. While Council consent may be appropriate, consent should not be unreasonably withheld or delayed, nor should additional fees apply.

Indeed, co-location should be supported in the Draft Policy because:

1. the benefit to the community and businesses, not discouraged, and
2. MNO's have an obligation under Commonwealth legislation to take all reasonable steps to discover whether any other facilities can be used to accommodate a low-impact facility such as mobile phone base station equipment (refer to section 4.13 of [Telecommunications Code of Practice 2021 - Federal Register of Legislation](#)).

Any Draft Policy must not be inconsistent with Commonwealth legislation - supporting co-location and ensuring reasonable consent processes that delivers enhanced service and benefits to the community.

Section 6.22 - Relocation

This section states Council can terminate an agreement for a broad set of reasons. This creates risks for MNOs given the significant investment required to establish new facilities. A minimum period where council cannot terminate an agreement, and a minimum notice period must be considered.

Rent-free periods at a new location, should one be found, may offset an MNO's relocation costs. AMTA notes that relocating telecommunications infrastructure to another Council owned property may not always meet network coverage requirements.

The Draft Policy must highlight the need for security and fairness in termination clauses. Providing a minimum notice period and considering rent-free periods can mitigate risks for tenants and ensure fair, non-discriminatory treatment.

Section 6.23 - Renewal, Overholding and Termination

A month-to-month holding over period is impractical and adds administrative burden to MNOs. A 12-month holding over period with a 12-month notice period will provide greater certainty and reduce complexity for both parties.

General feedback

The draft policy at section 4 'Relevant Council Plans, Policies, Guidelines and Related Legislation' notes that Council is required to abide by Acts, Regulations and Policies, and the Telecommunications Act is listed under 4.3.

Central to the process of providing an essential utility service including mobile telecommunications is ensuring appropriate and fair access to public land. The appropriate basis for states, territories and councils to set rents for the mobile carriers are, for example, the rentals charged to all other users of that public land. To do otherwise would result in discrimination and inconsistency with the Telecommunications Act, Schedule 3 clause. 44. Specifically, this prevents state and territory laws from discriminating against a carrier, a class of carriers, or carriers generally. This protection extends to actions taken under state laws, including the imposition of discriminatory taxes, rents, and charges.

Closing comments

AMTA is pleased to work with the Council so it can better understand the productivity advances and community benefits enabled via improvements to our members' mobile telecommunications networks.

Should you wish to discuss, I can be reached by email on matt.evans@amta.org.au or on 0425 702 007. Thank you for this opportunity to provide a submission.



13 June 2025

Leasing & Licensing Policy Consultation
Property Management
Knox City Council
By Email propertymanagement@knox.vic.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Submission – Council’s Draft Leasing and Licencing Policy

Optus Mobile Pty Ltd, (Optus), is the Singtel Optus Pty Ltd company that deploys operates and maintains the Optus Mobile Network. We regularly deploy mobile telecommunications facilities, (mobile facilities), on land and structures owned by local Councils.

The ongoing and ever-expanding demands for mobile services and coverage means that we are continually building new mobile facilities. This includes new mobile facilities in localities that already have some Optus coverage. Frequently, these new facilities need to be built in established residential areas, (to be effective a mobile facility must be located in the centre of the locality it is intended to service), and often the only viable location is a Council owned Park, building or other established infrastructure such as a floodlighting tower.

Optus therefore welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on Council’s new draft Leasing and Licencing Policy.

In 2023 Optus worked with LGPro and Maddocks, (Lawyers), to develop a generic pro-forma lease that can be used by Victorian Councils in accommodating mobile facilities on their land, buildings and structures. I have attached a copy of this pro-forma lease to this submission. I would recommend Council adopt this pro-forma in dealing with proposals from Carriers seeking to install mobile facilities. It deals, most effectively, with many of the issues the draft Policy seeks to address.

Also, Council’s attention is drawn to Clause 44 to Schedule 3 of the Telecommunications Act 1997, (Commonwealth). This provision precludes State and Territory laws, (and therefore Council policies made under those laws), from discriminating against Licenced Carriers. Optus is a Licenced Carrier under the Telecommunications Act 1997, (Commonwealth).

It would seem that some of the provisions of Council’s draft Policy are contrary to the provisions of Clause 44. This is highlighted in the commentary on the specific provisions of the draft Policy below.

Optus’ comments on the specific provisions of the draft Policy are as follows:

- i) **Clause 6.1 - Types of Agreements** – Optus is strongly of the view that given the long-term nature of the facility and the act that it is critical infrastructure which supports an essential and emergency service, (i.e. mobile telecommunication services), a Lease is the appropriate form of tenure for a mobile facility. This is supported by the LGPro proforma Lease.

Singtel Optus Pty Ltd
ABN 90 052 833 208

1 Lyonpark Road, Macquarie Park,
NSW 2113 Australia

PO Box 888 North Ryde,
NSW 1670 Australia

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OPTUS

- ii) **Clause 6.3.1 - Direct Negotiation** – is the only viable approach that can be adopted if Optus applies to Council seeking to establish a mobile facility on Council’s land etc. The application would be to enable the establishment of a mobile facility to service Optus’ customers. A Market Approach would be a waste of time and resources as the only entity that can meet the demand for services from Optus’ customers is Optus.
- iii) **Clause 6.5.1 – Rental fee** – Optus has no issue with a rent that genuinely reflects the current market and which is open and transparent. However, any rent so determined needs to have regard for the discrimination provisions, (Clause 44 to Schedule 3 to the Telecommunications Act 1997, (Commonwealth)).
- iv) **Clause 6.5.2 – Administration Fee** – Appendix 2 indicates Optus, (and others) would be charged an administration fee of \$4000 for a macro base station site, whereas as another utility service would only incur an administration fee of \$2,000. Meanwhile, a Commercial tenant would only pay an administrative fee of \$1,000. This is discriminatory and contrary to the provisions of Clause 44 to Schedule 3 to the Telecommunications Act 1997, (Commonwealth). In addition, it seems arbitrary rather than reflecting the actual cost to Council. Any administration fee should reflect the actual cost to Council irrespective of the applicant. In addition, it should not seek to penalise the provider of an essential service.
- v) **Clause 6.6 – Rent and Fees Review** – Optus supports the adoption of a fixed escalation rate. However, a 4% pa escalation rate is unreasonable. It does not reflect the current market nor the long-term average inflation rate and will result, over time, in rents out of kilter with the current market. A 3 % pa escalation rate is more appropriate. Meanwhile the attached LGPro proforma lease, at Clause 5, provides an effective and reasonable methodology for accommodating a market review. Optus recommends this methodology be adopted by Council provided a market review takes place no more frequently than once every 5 years.
- vi) **Clause 6.9 – Standard Terms and Conditions** – Optus recommends that Council adopt the attached LGPro pro-forma Lease for mobile facilities.
- vii) **Clause 6.10 – Occupancy Agreement Term** – Given that mobile facilities provide an essential and often a critical emergency service, long-term secure tenure is critical. Accordingly, Optus considers a 20 year term should be the default position.
- viii) **Clause 6.18 – Tenant Sub-Letting** – Optus recommends Council adopt the provisions of Clause 14, Assignment and Sub-letting, in the LGPro pro forma lease in dealing with this issue for mobile facilities.
- ix) **Appendix 1 – Tenant Category Schedule** – the criteria for Telecommunications and Utility Service Providers appears to exclude Utilities that do not conduct their activities for the purposes of deriving a financial return for the proprietors or shareholders, i.e. Government owned Utilities. This is contrary to the provisions of 44 to Schedule 3 to the Telecommunications Act 1997, (Commonwealth). Licenced Carriers are entitled to same terms and conditions as any other user.

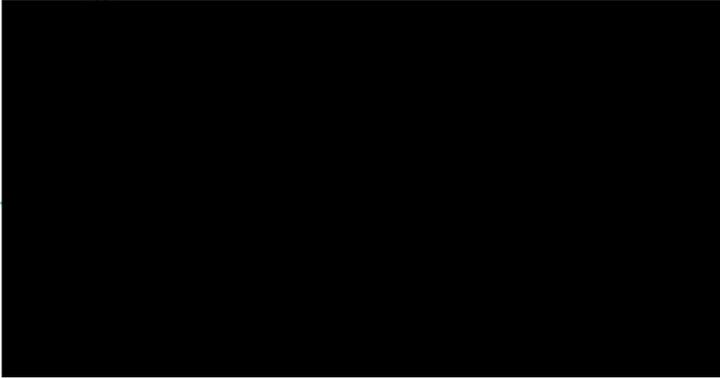
Overall, Optus recommends Council adopt the LGPro pro forma lease in establishing the terms and conditions for accommodating mobile facilities on Council owned land, buildings and infrastructure. Meanwhile, we endorse the application of open and transparent rent pricing that genuinely reflects the current market for mobile facilities. However, we also note that any such rents, and any



administration fees that Council seeks to charge, must be consistent with the ant-discrimination provisions of Clause 44 to Schedule 3 to the Telecommunications Act 1997, (Commonwealth).

Optus would be more than happy to discuss and expand on this submission, with Council, if required.

Yours sincerely



Attachment – LGPro - proforma – Council Telecommunications Lease

Singtel Optus Pty Ltd
ABN 90 052 833 208

1 Lyonpark Road, Macquarie Park,
NSW 2113 Australia

PO Box 888 North Ryde,
NSW 1670 Australia

1401025W_0414



Leasing and Licensing Policy

Policy Number:	2004/24	Directorate:	Chief Financial Officer
Approval by:	Council	Responsible Officer:	Property Management Coordinator
Approval Date:	TBC	Version Number:	1
Review Date:	TBD		

1. Purpose

Knox City Council is the owner or manager of land, buildings and other property assets on behalf of the Knox community.

The purpose of this leasing and licensing policy is to ensure that Knox has a consistent, equitable and transparent approach before entering into formal agreements with prospective tenants, including community groups and commercial operators, allowing them to occupy Council facilities.

Some Council facilities are leased for commercial purposes and generate market rents. Many are leased at subsidised rates for the community and not for profit purposes to deliver tangible community benefits.

This policy provides guiding principles to assist in the effective management and use of Council land and building facilities to maximise community benefits and returns to Council.

The following objectives provide a framework for a consistent, equitable and transparent approach:

- Ensure Council managed properties are used to meet demonstrated community needs consistent with the Knox Community and Council Plan, and any current or future needs analysis;
- Optimisation of Council managed properties to ensure fair, inclusive and diverse use that reflects a variety of community needs and Council's commitment to equity;
- Ensure Council managed properties are responsibly managed and maintained;
- Reduce risk to Council associated with the leasing and/or licensing of facilities and ensure reliable reporting and compliance with laws, regulations and standards;
- Ensure strong processes with clear and consistent agreements in place to protect all interested parties;
- Apply a consistent and equitable approach for determining Tenant fees and charges including any Council subsidies identified;
- Ensure all Commercial and Telecommunication and Utility Service Provider Occupancy Agreements are on commercial terms and aligned with comparable market rates;
- Ensure that no financial or commercial advantage is gained by Community Groups or Community Service Organisation Tenants over other organisations conducting similar activities; and
- Aim for equitable access to shared facilities and spaces where there are multiple occupancy agreements in place with different Tenants.

2. Context

The Council owns and manages many facilities that are available to the Knox community and governed by Occupancy Agreements. This includes land and buildings used for various purposes, including but not limited to community centers, sporting facilities, community halls, seniors' facilities, kindergartens, car parks, road reserves, Scout facilities,

Guide facilities and utility service provider infrastructure. These various uses deliver a range of activities and services to support the Knox community.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to Council facilities, that is land and/or buildings that are owned or managed by Council, including community owned buildings on Council land, occupied under a Lease or Licence, except for the below:

- Sites managed by a third party on behalf of Council under a contractual agreement;
- Leases or Licences where Council is the Tenant;
- Facilities that are occupied, operated and managed by Council staff;
- Seasonal club agreements and casual or school use agreements which are managed separately under Council's Sporting Reserve Facility Usage Policy; and
- Agreements which are typically used for an Informal Local Group or one-off event.

4. Relevant Council Plans, Policies, Guidelines and Related Legislation

Council is required to abide by Acts, Regulations and Policies. The key guiding requirements are listed below:

4.1. Council Plans

- Alignment with current Knox Community and Council Plans, Directions and Vision Statements, noting these are updated regularly to reflect evolving future key directions for Knox and the Community.

4.2. Council Policies and Guidelines

- Sporting Reserve Facility Usage Policy
- Community Engagement Policy
- Casual Hire of Community Facilities Policy
- Community Signage on Council Open Space Policy
- Electronic Gaming Machine Policy
- Visual Surveillance Devices Policy
- Procurement Policy
- Eligibility for Use of Waste Collection Services Provided by Council
- Property Management Toolkit (Guidelines)

4.3. Legislation

- Local Government Act 2020
- Local Government Act 1989
- Retail Leases Act 2003
- Crown Land (Reserve) Act 1978
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Building Act 1993
- Planning and Environment Act 1987
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- Telecommunications Act 1997
- Environment Protection Act 2017
- Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006
- Heritage Act 1995
- Liquor Control Reform Act 1998
- Gambling Legislation Amendment Act 2018
 - Tobacco Act 1987

4.4. Government Policy and Procedures

- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) Crown land Policies – Leasing Policy for

Victorian Crown Land 2023

- DEECA Committee of Management Guidelines
- National Competition Policy

5. Definitions

The following definitions apply within the Policy.

Term	Definition
Council	Knox City Council
Crown Land	Land owned by the Crown (Victorian or Federal Government) which may be unalienated or reserved. Unalienated Crown land is land under Crown title not yet set aside by the Crown for a public purpose, Crown Lease tenure or sold to the public. Reserved Crown land is land set aside from sale for a specific public purpose.
DEECA	The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (Crown land manager)
Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund (ESVF)	Annual State Government levy to support emergency services. Previously the "Fire Services Property Levy", the ESVF is collected by local councils and usually appears on the rate notice. The levy is collected from non-rateable properties via a separate notice.
Essential Safety Measures	Essential safety measures are the safety features required in a building to protect occupants in the event of an emergency, as defined in current Building Regulations 2018 (Vic) and Building Act 1993 (Vic)
Facility	Land and/or buildings that are owned or managed by Council.
Lease	An agreement where the Council grants the Tenant the right to exclusive occupancy of a defined area ("Leased Area") as set out in the Lease, which may include the whole or part of a Council Facility, usually in return for payment of rental, outgoings and agreed maintenance responsibilities by the Tenant.
Legal Entity	An organisation that is legally permitted to enter a contract and capable of holding assets in its own name.
LGA 2020	<i>Local Government Act 2020</i>
Licence	An agreement where the Council grants the Licensee the non-exclusive right to occupy a defined area ("Licensed Area"), which may include the whole or part of a Council Facility, usually in return for payment of a Licence fee, outgoings and agreed maintenance responsibilities. The Licensee does not have exclusive use of the Premises and Council can allow access by other user groups or the general public.
Market Approach	A transparent Tenant selection process where Council invites other parties to submit a proposal for tenancy and utilisation of a Facility.
Occupancy Agreement	Either a Lease or Licence agreement for a Facility.
Property Advocate	The Council Officer who acts as the liaison between Council and the Tenant occupying a Facility.
Premises	The area occupied under a Lease or Licence agreement.
Property Management Team	Knox City Council's Property Management Team

Real Estate Institute of Victoria	The Real Estate Institute of Victoria (REIV) is the peak body for real estate professionals.
Sporting Reserve Facility	Sports fields, pavilions, baseball and softball diamonds, tennis courts, athletics tracks and netball courts are some examples of facilities available to user groups for sport and recreation activities
Telecommunications Carrier	A mobile, fibre and wireless broadband communications Telecommunications Carrier(s) who have licences to deploy antenna installations and operate networks for mobile telephony and data services in Australia.
Tenant	A Legal Entity that has entered into - or is proposing to enter into - an Occupancy Agreement with Council for the use of a Facility.

6. Council Occupancy Agreements

6.1 Types of Agreements

Council aims to provide multi-use facilities that support complementary activities. The decision regarding which type of Occupancy Agreement is to be used will be made in conjunction with the Property Management Team.

6.1.1 Licence

Where appropriate, Council enters into Licence agreements to enable the multi-use of facilities and achieve the greatest community benefit from facilities.

6.1.2 Lease

The granting of exclusive rights to a single Tenant by way of a Lease will occur where:

- there is substantial community benefit, and
- the Tenant's purpose and activities are:
 - consistent with Council's objectives; or
 - of a commercial nature.

Where facilities have multiple Tenants, all Tenants may be required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding that outlines Facility rules and guiding principles (that may change over time). These will ensure Tenants work together and facilities are suitably maintained, with responsibilities clearly documented for equitable use of shared spaces.

6.2 Tenant Categories

Tenants will be placed into one of four categories which determines the fee structure and standard obligations which will apply to the Tenant when entering into an Occupancy Agreement.

- Community Group
- Community Service Organisation
- Commercial
- Telecommunication and Utility Service Providers

The description of each category is provided in **Appendix 1 – Tenant Category Schedule**. All Tenants will be assessed against this schedule to establish the appropriate category prior to entering into any Occupancy Agreement. The Property Management Team should be consulted if there is a circumstance in which a Tenant does not clearly fall within the defined categories.

Tenants must notify Council of any changes to their organisational status, goals or use of a facility that may affect the categorisation of a Tenant during the term of their occupancy. Any such changes may alter the rental subsidy provided, if applicable.

6.3 Tenant Selection and Renewal

When considering potential occupants, Council will favour Tenants whose purpose and activities align with Council

plans, policies and objectives for benefiting the Knox community. Tenants can be selected by direct negotiation or a Market Approach selection process.

Council may cease negotiations with a Tenant that fails to enter into a formal Occupancy Agreement within 6 months of a draft Occupancy Agreement being issued to them, or a Council resolution existing to enter into an agreement.

6.3.1 Direct Negotiation

Direct negotiation with an incumbent Tenant is often more appropriate than an open competitive process, or Market Approach. Direct negotiations will be considered in any of the following circumstances:

- the incumbent Tenant has an interest to remain in the Facility and their service, programs or activities align with the Council plans, policies and objectives for benefiting the Knox community;
- the cost to run a competitive process may be greater than the achievable return;
- an existing Tenant has offered capital investment that is of significant benefit to the community and would not be offered by another party.

A decision to proceed with a new Occupancy Agreement via direct negotiation must be made in conjunction with Council's Property Management Team. Furthermore, an Occupancy Agreement will not be offered to the incumbent Tenant until:

- a request is received in writing from the incumbent Tenant, identifying their goals and how they support the Knox community.
- an internal review is carried out by the relevant Property Advocate, in consultation with the Property Management Team, to ensure:
 - there is an ongoing demand by the community for the provision of such a service;
 - the Facility is suitably located within the community for the proposed use;
 - the incumbent Tenant has no unresolved debts with Council;
 - the incumbent Tenant provides the optimal use for the Facility;
 - the incumbent Tenant's use of the Facility does not interfere with other potential uses of the Facility;
 - the incumbent Tenant has completed any required maintenance works to ensure the Facility is safe, fit for purpose, compliant and well presented;
 - the incumbent Tenant is financially viable; and
 - the incumbent Tenant has satisfied the terms and conditions of any previous Occupancy Agreement.

6.3.2 Market Approach

An open Market Approach selection process will be undertaken to determine a suitable new Tenant, and is the preferred approach, unless a direct negotiation would achieve a better outcome for the community and Council. Council may choose to engage a third-party agent to support this process.

The relevant Property Advocate, in conjunction with the Property Management Team, will establish the objectives for a Facility and evaluation criteria for prospective Tenants before embarking on the process with consideration of the Procurement Policy. A competitive process ensures probity, addresses any conflicts of interest and will assist with decision making. It provides the opportunity for interested parties to compete for the right to occupy a Facility.

6.4 Community Engagement

Community engagement will be undertaken in-line with Councils responsibilities under the *LGA 2020* (Section 115) and the Knox Community Engagement Policy. Refer to these documents for detailed information on where community engagement is required.

Prior to commencement of a new lease a community engagement process will occur if:

- the length of term is 10 years or greater;
 - the rental value is \$100,000 per year or greater; or
 - where the proposed use may be considered to require community feedback.

6.5 Fees

A schedule of Tenant Categories and applicable fees is provided in **Appendix 2 – Occupancy Agreement Fees Schedule**. The *Occupancy Agreement Fees Schedule* will be used to establish the applicable fee for all Tenants.

These fees will be regularly updated in accordance with Council's Annual Budget adopted fees and charges schedule.

6.5.1 Rental Fee

Rental fees will be consistent and transparent to encourage use of facilities for the benefit of the community, and to maximise the return in line with market rates where facilities are used for commercial purposes.

Council is mindful of supporting Tenants whose purpose and activities are consistent with Council plans, policies and objectives, whilst also gaining contributions towards Council cost recovery for administration expenses, ongoing maintenance, operating costs of facilities and any foregone market rental potential.

6.5.2 Administration Fee

Commercial and Telecommunication and Utility Service Providers who approach Council seeking occupancy of a Facility will be charged an administration fee to cover activities undertaken by Council to investigate the feasibility of the request, administration process and to establish an Occupancy Agreement. The fee contributes to:

- Officer time spent on agreement enquiry, correspondence and investigation of the feasibility of the request;
- Document retrieval (where applicable such as title documents); and
- Preparation and execution of agreement documentation.

This administration fee is separate to other fees payable to Council in relation to a Tenant's proposed use of a Facility, such as permit, Lease or Licence application fees.

6.6 Rent and Fee Reviews

Community Group rental and other fees will be adjusted annually in line with the Council Annual Budget adopted Fees and Charges Schedule.

Occupancy Agreement rental and other fees for Community Service Organisations, Commercial and Telecommunication and Utility Service Providers will be subject to regular annual rent or fee increases and will also be subject to market reviews for an exercise of an option, agreement extension or agreement renewal.

Fixed percentage annual rental and fee increases, instead of annual CPI increases, are the preferred approach and will assist transparent forward budget planning for both Tenants and Council, whilst also reducing administration burden and complex CPI calculations.

6.7. Rates, Taxes and Outgoings

The Tenant is generally responsible for paying all rates, taxes and other charges and levies separately assessed in connection with the Premises (if applicable).

Where rates and taxes are not separately assessed, or the Premises are shared, the Tenant must pay or refund to Council a relevant proportion of the costs incurred based on the proportional area they occupy. This is allocated as percentage of the area that each Tenant occupies as a proportion of the total area that the cost applies to (or other calculation method as negotiated by mutual agreement). This must be paid within the required timeframe advised by Council. Refer to Appendix 2 for guidance.

The Tenant is responsible for utility and service charges including electricity, gas, telephone, water, additional waste, sanitary services and security in accordance with Appendix 2.

Tenant waste charges are to align with the Eligibility for Use of Waste Collection Services Provided by Council Policy to assist standardising the waste services available to Tenants and the relevant fees charged.

6.8. Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund

The Emergency Services Volunteer Fund is collected by Council on behalf of the Victorian State Government. This levy will be generally charged to occupants. Refer to Appendix 2 for guidance.

Where the Tenant is the sole occupant of the site that the ESVF is relevant to, then the full charge is applicable where no exemption has been granted. Community Group Tenants will not be charged this levy.

Where rates are not separately assessed, or the Premises are shared, the Tenant must pay or refund to Council the proportion that the area of the Premises bears to the total area assessed (or other such method of calculation as negotiated) within the required timeframe from receipt of a written notice from Council.

6.9. Standard Terms and Conditions

The Property Management Team must be consulted prior to choosing an Occupancy Agreement template and must review all agreements prior to them being sent to prospective Tenants.

Template Occupancy Agreements together with standard terms and conditions will reflect the contents of this policy and relevant legislation. These terms and conditions will form the basis of all Occupancy Agreements except for Commercial and Telecommunication and Utility Service Providers and occupancy arrangements on Crown land managed by Council which will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

Where required, standard documents from DEECA or REIV will be used and amended (where appropriate) to include Council-related clauses.

6.10 Lease Compliance

Council is committed to ensuring that all leased and licensed premises are maintained in a safe and compliant standard. All agreements will include provisions for Council officers to inspect facilities to verify adherence to maintenance and any other obligations. Where non-compliance is identified, Council may issue a notice to rectify and, where necessary, suspend access until the issue is resolved. Compliance with these obligations will be a condition for any lease or licence renewal.

6.11. Occupancy Agreement Term

The length of the term will be dependent on various considerations including if the Tenant is an existing occupant or a new or emerging group, lifecycle stage of the Facility, maintenance requirements, budget planning, Council planning and strategic direction, capital investment, proposed use, extent of community benefit, if the facility is identified as required in Council's long-term plans for future use, demolition, refurbishment or a major capital works.

The preference is for a minimum 5-year Licence, however shorter terms of 12 months to 5-years may be considered in some special circumstances.

The preference is for Lease agreement initial terms to be no less than 5 years; however, leases will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Longer terms may include an extension option of a similar term to the initial agreed term.

6.12. Maintenance and Essential Safety Measures

Tenants are required to maintain the facility in accordance with any maintenance schedules that may be attached to an Occupancy Agreement using the services of registered and qualified tradespeople to undertake the works and provide a certificate of compliance for works that require it (e.g. plumbing and electrical).

Schedules (where applicable) will specify the responsibilities of Council and the Tenant, including responsibility for maintaining the structure of the building, fixtures and fittings, grounds and any specialised equipment or playing surfaces.

Written approval is required from Council prior to the commencement of any building, renewal or improvement work to a Facility. In the first instance, Tenants should contact their Property Advocate for advice on the approval process and to submit plans for consideration.

Council reserves the right to inspect and gain access to a Facility for reviewing Tenant maintenance and Essential Safety Measures (ESM) requirements and for the undertaking of any maintenance or ESM works that Council may be responsible for.

6.13. Insurance

In relation to the Occupancy Agreement and Premises occupied, Tenants should hold the following insurance unless otherwise negotiated and approved by Council's Risk team:

- Public liability insurance to a minimum value of \$20 million and should note Council interest;
- Professional indemnity insurance; and
- Contents insurance for the lessee's or licensee's own property.
- In instances where a Tenant has a land only Occupancy Agreement, the Tenant must maintain building insurance for their building constructed on Council land.

Council will insure Council owned buildings and Council installed and authorised fixtures and fittings.

6.14. Child Safe Standards

Council has zero tolerance for child abuse. Tenants are responsible for understanding their obligations under the Child Safe Standards. In addition to the requirement to comply under the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*, the Tenant is also obliged under their Occupancy Agreement to ensure that Child Safe Standards requirements are complied with at all times. Council offers guidance to Tenants to support them in understanding their obligations.

6.15 Community Reporting Requirements

All Community Group and Community Service Organisation Tenants are required to report against community eligibility criteria upon request and must advise Council if their organisational status changes during their occupancy.

Community Group and Community Service Organisation Tenants are required to submit the following information to Council annually, as specified in the Occupancy Agreement. Council may grant a written exemption in exceptional circumstances, where the Tenant provides sufficient supporting documentation for consideration. Where applicable, annual reporting information is to include (but not limited to)

- the activities undertaken by the Tenant;
- occupancy and utilisation data for the Facility;
- the level and degree of public access to the Premises;
- details of any maintenance undertaken;
- copies of the most recent annual report and financial statement; and
 - a list of office bearers including President, Secretary and Treasurer.

6.16. Signage

Prior written consent must be obtained from Council before displaying or affixing any signs, advertisements, branding or notices to any part of the Premises. Signage must comply with Council's Community Signage on Council Open Space Policy or the Knox Planning Scheme. Early engagement with Council's Property Advocate prior to finalising proposals or lodging a required application is encouraged.

6.17. Permitted Use

The permitted use defines what the Tenant can or cannot do at the Premises. The permitted use should be clearly defined and avoid broad or vague statements which may be open to interpretation. Throughout the tenancy, the tenant is responsible for any compliance with regulatory framework, including obtaining any planning or building permits, required for the permitted use.

Tenants must obtain Council's prior written consent for any change in the permitted use or additional use of the Premises, including any planning or building permits or approvals that may be required. Consent may be granted or withheld at Council's absolute discretion and subject to other conditions.

Council will not permit a change in use of the Premises that is not compatible with the building permit for the Facility, without the appropriate approvals. This includes occupancy levels, and changes to the building classification. Council is permitted to determine and end any Occupancy Agreement under these circumstances.

6.18. Days and Times of Use

The days and times of use allowed in relation to a Premises are generally associated with the type of Occupancy Agreement that is offered.

As a Licence agreement offers non-exclusive use, the Tenant is permitted to occupy the Facility on agreed days and times of use, which allows Council the flexibility to offer the Facility to other community groups and thereby

maximise the use of the Facility. Where a Facility is shared between two or more tenants, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) may be negotiated and signed by all Tenants and the Council. Whilst the licence agreement specifies times of occupation to support shared use of facilities, this does not prevent tenants from requesting flexibility for special events such as fundraisers. Council is open to accommodating such needs.

A Lease agreement offers exclusive use to the Tenant and as such, the Tenant will be permitted to operate from the Premises at any time in accordance with any applicable planning permit requirements, Council's Local Laws and having regard to legislation relating to noise pollution.

6.19. Tenant Sub-Letting

Sub-letting is where the whole Facility, or part of the Facility, is leased or licensed out to another group by the Tenant. The Tenant remains responsible for all its obligations under the Occupancy Agreement.

The first Tenant is called the head-tenant, and the second Tenant is called the sub-tenant. The agreement between them is called a sub-lease. Head tenants must formally request in writing approval from Council for any sublease arrangement they wish to enter into including the proposed fees and any other relevant details.

For equitability purposes, it is important that during subletting of Facilities that no financial or commercial advantage is gained by Community Groups or Community Service Organisation Tenants, over other Community Groups or Community Service Organisation Tenants. Council will need to review the details of any formal Tenant sublease request to ensure that the proposed sub-tenant and their intended use is suitable as well as taking into consideration any Council Policy and legislative impacts such as the *Retail Leases Act 2003*. Council may also claim from the Tenant reasonable legal costs incurred in connection with a sub-lease.

If Council agrees to a sub-lease of the Premises, including use of the premises for advertising purposes in addition to the Head Tenant's purposes, Council may seek to revise the terms and conditions of the head agreement. This may also include a change to the rental fee, particularly where an additional income is being derived from the premises by the Head Tenant. Under a Licence Agreement, sub-letting of a Facility by a Tenant to another occupant is generally not permitted.

However, Council may give the Tenant the automatic right to hire out the Premises on a casual basis to a third party (under certain additional terms and conditions) using a hire agreement.

Community Groups or Community Service Organisations that hire out or sublet spaces within their facilities and subsequently generate a healthy revenue stream may be required to invest a suitable portion of this revenue back into the Facility towards key maintenance or capital upgrades.

6.20. Assignment of Council-managed Land and/or Buildings

Where Council leases land and/or buildings from another party (landlord) and enters into an Occupancy Agreement for same with a Council Tenant, the Occupancy Agreement must be in accordance with the head lease and with the consent of the landlord. Landlords may include government agencies, private owners or commercial enterprises.

Generally, a landlord must not unreasonably refuse an assignment of Lease but may refuse a sublease. However, this will ultimately depend on the wording of the Lease and if any legislation applies.

There are circumstances where Council manages land and/or buildings on behalf of others, such as Crown land of which Council is Committee of Management, or privately-owned Premises leased by Council. All Occupancy Agreements for land and/or buildings Council manages on behalf of others must adhere to the conditions set out in the head agreement between Council and the landowner and comply with section 115 and 116 of the LGA 2020.

6.21. Crown Land

When issuing Occupancy Agreements over Crown Land of which Council is Committee of Management, the DEECA, or other relevant Department where applicable, policy requirements must be met.

6.22. Gaming and Liquor

Council will not enter into a new Occupancy Agreement with any organisation that operates or intends to operate gaming machines on the Premises.

Proposals for new or amended liquor licenses require prior Council consent before an application is made to ensure alignment with local amenity and community objectives for the Facility. The Tenant is responsible for ensuring that any hirer, sub tenant or other permitted user complies with this requirement.

6.23. Relocation

Where Council proposes to dispose of, demolish, redevelop or otherwise carry out significant alterations, capital works or additions to a Facility during the term of an Occupancy Agreement, Council may terminate the agreement with due notice as per the agreement and make reasonable attempts to make available to the Tenant a suitable alternative Premises. If required and available, during works the tenant will be relocated to an alternate suitable premises. Council is not obligated to provide a temporary facility. The agreement for an alternative Premises will aim to achieve no less favourable terms for the duration of the unexpired portion of the current agreement where possible and if there is a rent or fee cost difference due to an alternative Facility relocation solution then this will be discussed with the Tenant with the view to minimising relevant relocation cost impacts for the Tenant.

6.24. Renewal, Overholding and Termination

At the end of the Occupancy Agreement (which is the end of the term or the earlier termination of a Lease or Licence) the Tenant shall vacate the Premises and ensure that it is in a condition consistent with the Tenant having complied with all obligations under their Occupancy Agreement.

Council may contact Tenants prior to the end of their Occupancy Agreement to commence negotiating a new agreement. Should these negotiations extend beyond a twelve-month period of overholding, without satisfactory progress and reasonable effort being made by a Tenant to finalise the agreement, Council may terminate the agreement with one month's notice (in accordance with terms and conditions).

Subject to agreement with Council, Tenants may continue into overholding on a month-to-month basis while a new Occupancy Agreement is negotiated. During the overholding period, Tenants must continue to pay all relevant rent or fees due and abide by all the terms of the Occupancy Agreement.

7. Delegation

Occupancy Agreements meeting one or more of the criteria below must be referred to a Council meeting for consideration and decision:

- The initial term is for 10 years or more;
 - The entire agreement period, encompassing both the initial term and further terms, exceeds 20 years;
 - The market value rental value assessment exceeds \$100,000 per annum (except where the Occupancy Agreement is for a maximum period of less than 12 months and the Tenant has not occupied the Premises within the preceding 12 months); or
- The agreement does not substantially conform to the requirements of this Policy.

Occupancy Agreements, including extension options, will otherwise be negotiated, approved and executed by the Chief Executive Officer, or their delegate, in accordance with this policy and the relevant instrument of delegation.

A list of Occupancy Agreements under consideration will be periodically circulated to Councillors and an Occupancy Agreement may be "called up" for consideration at a Council meeting under the following circumstances:

1. A Councillor, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or Chief Financial Officer (CFO), may request that an Occupancy Agreement be brought to a Council meeting for consideration and a decision.
2. The Chief Executive Officer may independently determine an Occupancy Agreement should be referred to a Council meeting for consideration and decision.

Delegated power to approve and execute an Occupancy Agreement must not be exercised after it has been validly "called up" for consideration at a Council meeting.

8. Implementation of Policy

The conditions within this policy will apply upon the commencement of any new Occupancy Agreement.

9. Administrative Updates

Sometimes circumstances may change, leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this policy. Where an update does not materially alter this policy, such a change may be made administratively following approval by the CEO. Examples of minor administrative changes include changes to names of Council departments or positions, change to names of Federal or State Government departments or a minor amendment to legislation that does not have material impact. Where any change or update may materially change the intent of this policy, it must be considered by Council.



APPENDIX 1 - Tenant Category Schedule

Category	Criteria to be met	Examples (for illustrative purposes only: please consult the criteria to accurately determine your category)
Community Group	All criteria below are to be met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circa 50% or greater of people working at the Premises are volunteers; and • The tenant is a Community-based group; and • The tenant is a Legal Entity governed by a committee or board; and • The tenant is a not-for-profit organisation; and • The purpose and activities of the tenant are consistent with Council’s objectives and services; and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are open and accessible to the general public or members of the Knox community. 	Scouts and Guides Neighbourhood / Community Houses Seniors’ groups Community gardens Not-for-profit Welfare services Incorporated playgroups Art and cultural groups Small sporting groups

Category	Criteria to be met	Examples (for illustrative purposes only: please consult the criteria to accurately determine your category)
Community Service Organisation	<p>All criteria directly below are to be met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tenant is a not-for-profit Legal Entity; • The tenant provides services, support or activities to the Knox community; • The purpose and activities of the tenant are consistent with Council’s objectives and services; and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are open and accessible to the general public or members of the Knox community. <p>Additional criteria considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to generate income higher than expenditure from use of the Facility or activities consistent with the organisation’s purpose; • May charge a market-based fee for service; • May offer services which are eligible for Government subsidy widely available to providers (e.g. Medicare rebate); • May offer services which are Government funded (e.g. Commonwealth Home Support Program or National Disability Insurance Scheme); • May be a local, regional, state or national organisation; and • May receive Government funding or grants. 	<p>Community health organisations</p> <p>Large sporting associations</p> <p>Large community organisations</p> <p>Community focused Government agencies</p> <p>Early year services (if not-for-profit entity)</p>

Category	Criteria to be met	Examples (for illustrative purposes only: please consult the criteria to accurately determine your category)
Commercial	All criteria directly below are to be met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Legal Entity; • Predominantly utilises paid staff; • Conducts activities for the purposes of deriving a financial return for the proprietors or shareholders; and • The use of the Facility does not interfere with, or complements, other uses of the Facility (if applicable). 	Allied health providers Storage or car parking for commercial business Early years services Adjoining owner Commercial business / retailer Events by commercial business (circus, carnival rides etc) Advertising or branding
Telecommunication and Utility Service Providers	All criteria directly below are to be met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Legal Entity; • Predominantly utilises paid staff; • Conducts activities for the purposes of deriving a financial return for the proprietors or shareholders; • Is an investment company that provides utility or similar type services; • Is a mobile Telecommunications Carrier or telecommunications infrastructure provider; or • Is an energy provider; or • Is an EV charging provider; or • Is a recycling provider for reverse vending machines; or • Is a weather or climate station to assist with weather or climate reporting; or • Is another type of Utility Service Provider. 	Mobile carriers such as Telstra, Optus and Vodaphone (TPG) Infrastructure Owners such as Amplitel, Axicom, Indara, Waveconn, Stilmark Electric vehicle charging stations Container deposit scheme reverse vending machines Electrical and water sub/stations that service non-Council owned facilities Neighbourhood batteries operated by Energy Retailers Air rights for service providers Weather and Climate Stations



APPENDIX 2 - Occupancy Agreement Fees Schedule

Category	Rental Fee	Rental Review	Administration Fee	Tenant Outgoings
Community Group	Refer to Council’s Annual Budget adopted Fees and Charges Schedule, budget: https://www.knox.vic.gov.au/our-council/about-council/annual-budget	Annual fixed increase for <u>new</u> agreements E.g. 4% (except Sporting Reserve Facility)	Not applicable for Community Groups.	All operational expenses such as utilities, phone, cleaning, sanitary services, security and waste. Tenant responsible for all maintenance if they own a building that sits on a Council ground Lease.
Community Service Organisation	Fees will be assessed individually by the Property Advocate, in consultation with the Property Management Team, to make a pricing recommendation.	Rent review dates and annual fixed percentage increase negotiated within market norms E.g. 4% pa. (except Sporting Reserve Facility) Also subject to a market review on exercise of an option and / or every five years.	Not applicable for Community Service Organisations.	All operational expenses such as utilities, phone, cleaning, sanitary services, security and waste. All applicable rates, taxes and State Government Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund. Maintenance responsibilities may vary between Facilities depending on negotiations however exclude: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council-owned structure (walls and roof) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council-owned fixtures, plant and equipment provided by the landlord under the agreement.

Category	Rental Fee	Rental Review	Administration Fee	Tenant Outgoings
Commercial	Market driven, determined by a market rental valuation undertaken by an independent suitably qualified valuer or the result of an expression of interest or similar process.	Rent review dates and annual fixed percentage increase to be negotiated within market norms. E.g. 4% pa Also subject to a market review on exercise of an option and / or every five years.	Yes, fees applicable when Tenants approach Council with specific property requirements. E.g. \$1,000 per Commercial application E.g. Adjoining Property Owner administration fee \$500 per application	All operational expenses such as utilities, phone, cleaning, sanitary services, security and waste. All applicable rates, taxes and State Government Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund Full maintenance responsibilities excluding: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council-owned structure (walls and roof)• Council-owned fixtures, plant and equipment provided by the landlord under the agreement
Telecommunication & Utility Service Providers	Market driven, the greater value of either a market rental valuation undertaken by an independent suitably qualified valuer or other market driven approach such as an expression of interest or similar process or market rate card or market rate tool where applicable.	Rent review dates and annual fixed percentage increase to be negotiated within market norms. E.g. 4% pa. Subject to a market review on exercise of an option and/or every five years.	Yes, fees applicable. E.g. Roof top and Building site \$2,000 E.g. Macro Base Station sites \$2,000 (upgrade application) E.g. Macro Base Station sites \$4,000 (new application) E.g Other Utility Service Providers minimum \$2,000	All operational expenses such as utilities, phone, cleaning, sanitary services, security and waste. All rates, taxes and State Government Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund (if applicable) Full maintenance responsibilities.

8.2 Stormwater Asset Management Plan (SWAMP)

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Decision
Author	Coordinator Asset Strategy, Robin Cassidy
Manager:	Manager Strategic Infrastructure, Matthew Hanrahan
Executive:	Director, Infrastructure, Grant Thorne

SUMMARY

The Stormwater Asset Management Plan (SWAMP 2025) has been produced as an update to the Drainage Asset Management Plan 2010. The purpose of the Stormwater Asset Management Plan is to guide continuous improvement in Council's stormwater asset management practices and outcomes. The quality of these practices directly influences our ability to keep the city green, liveable, resilient and sustainable

The Stormwater Asset Management Plan once endorsed will be accompanied by online content, which will provide current stormwater asset information, enabling efficient future updates of the plan. This plan is the first to be developed under the Asset Management Plan Refresh Strategy (June 2023), which aimed to standardise and streamline Council's approach to asset management.

A positive reception of the SWAMP 2025 format will lead to its adoption as the standard template for all subsequent asset management plans, ensuring uniformity and efficiency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council resolve to:

1. Endorse the Stormwater Asset Management Plan (as set out in Attachment 1) for community consultation.
2. Note that following the community consultation the feedback will be assessed and the Stormwater Asset Management Plan modified, where appropriate, with the final draft Stormwater Asset Management Plan to be presented to at a future Council meeting for approval.

1. DISCUSSION

Originally the Stormwater Asset Management Plan (SWAMP 2021) was draft in December 2021 for initial feedback. At that time, Council's Asset Management Framework consisted of the Asset Management Policy, The Strategic Asset Management Plan, and nine Asset Management Plans (five major and four minor).

Changes to the Local Government Act in 2020 introduced a new requirement for Council to adopt a ten-year Asset Plan by June 2022. Due to having limited resource capacity to deliver the ten-year Asset Plan and an impending dependency between the ten-year Asset Plan and the SWAMP, progression of the SWAMP to Council was postponed. In June 2022 the original Knox Asset Plan 2022-32 was endorsed by Council and a 2nd iteration is currently being developed.

Since the introduction of the ten-year Asset Plan, many Councils (including Knox) have started to consider amending their Asset Management Framework and strategic documents, to avoid content duplication and ensure consistency across content, terminology, format and style.

In June 2023, Knox completed an Asset Management Plan Refresh Strategy project having the following objectives:

- Investigate where other Councils were intending to head with their Asset Management Plans,
- Recommend a methodology to assist with the development of the next generation of Asset Management Plans, and
- Recommend a structure for the next generation of Asset Management Plans.

The draft 2026 Asset Plan defines Council’s Asset Management Framework to incorporate the key elements as outlined below and acknowledges the need to consolidate Asset Management Plans to ensure that outcomes identified are clearly articulated and achievable across the Asset Management cycle. The SWAMP presented as an attachment to this report represents the first of the four consolidated service based asset management plans.



Figure 1 – Asset Management Framework

Outcomes from the refresh strategy project recommended adopting standard templates, consolidating asset performance data and developing an accompanying portfolio of major asset plans, which would be more concise and support live data to be refreshed on an ongoing basis, noting that such data would sit as linked appendices to the Asset Plan, rather than be core content within the plan itself.

In March 2024, an internal audit of Council's Asset Management Methodology also delivered low and medium risk recommendations resulting from a review of Council's Asset Management Framework and documents. A number of these recommendations relate to the SWAMP.

In November 2024, a project refresh of the SWAMP commenced, having the objective of consolidating previously identified improvement recommendations identified by internal stakeholders with responsibility for delivering stormwater outcomes. The SWAMP has continued to be refined and is now presented for Council and incorporates updated key financial data, condition data, and supported recommendations.

The SWAMP reinforces Council's management approach with an emphasis on long term sustainability when managing its stormwater assets. Key challenges addressed in the document include analysis of the historical maintenance spend, drainage prioritisation being too reactive and lacking strategy and general Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) upkeep. The SWAMP gives focus to the review of service levels/standards, measuring asset performance, and optimising the lifecycle management of Council's stormwater assets within the financial capacities of Council.

The purpose of the refresh of the SWAMP is to respond to outcomes from previous projects, internal audit recommendations, and feedback from key stakeholders.

The refresh of the Stormwater Asset Management Plan aims to provide:

- A template that can be applied to other asset classes.
- A document that aligns with the driving principles below:
 - Council is seeking to consolidate existing asset plans into four major asset plans moving forward – Stormwater, Transport, Open Space and Buildings.
 - The SWAMP is considered a major asset plan.
 - All asset management documentation should be as concise as possible.
 - Asset Management Plans shall provide a snapshot of both the current and desired performance of Council assets.
 - Asset Management Plans shall be easy to read and understand when viewed by the Knox Community.
 - Asset Management Plans shall define the financial investment required by Council over a 10-year horizon, informed by measurable service levels and standards.
 - The methodology for presenting financial information should be established to support a consistent and repeatable process across all plans.
 - Asset Management Plans shall both inform and be informed by both Council's 10 Year Asset Plan and Financial Plan.
 - Asset Management Plans should align with IPWEA best practice and ISO 55000 standards.
 - Asset Management Plans shall provide information to support Service Planning.

2. ENGAGEMENT

In refreshing the SWAMP 2025, the Asset Strategy team have consulted with internal stakeholders and other Councils.

Following endorsement of the document as a draft by Council, the draft Stormwater Asset Management Plan document will be publicly exhibited for a four week period seeking community feedback. The document will be made available on Council's website and promoted through social media channels.

The final report will be presented back to Council for formal adoption following consideration and response as appropriate to comments received.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report does not have any direct social implications. The Knox community, will at times be directly impacted by flood events, noting that Council's stormwater network is sized to provide protection against 1 in 5 year flooding events in residential areas (1 in 10 year for industrial areas). Acknowledging this, there will be residents who are impacted at times by rain events, and who will incur duress during these events. Council does not have the financial capacities to mitigate all flood risk across Knox; however, it does seek to be responsive to major flood events and seeks to work closely with key partners (i.e. Melbourne Water) to ensure that flood risk is minimised.

4. CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS

The subject of this report has been considered in the context of climate change and its relevance to the Knox Climate Response Plan 2021 – 2031.

Implementation and the provision of funding to support the recommendations as presented in this report will create some opportunities for Council and its community to adapt to climate change, through the provision of stormwater management techniques which assist flood protection in response to more frequent and more intense rain events.

It is noted that this system capacity is negatively impacted by Council's ongoing need to support the life of existing infrastructure assets, many of which have been designed to respond to lesser stormwater events than currently experienced. Council's stormwater system includes undersized assets and while retrofitting is possible, it is likely that flooding events will continue to be experienced across Knox.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

We all benefit from effective flood protection strategies and from having access to healthy waterways and green spaces. COVID-19 and the need for lockdowns has brought to light the importance of having accessible green public spaces close to where we live.

Given the predicted changes in weather and rainfall patterns, we need good stormwater asset management to effectively retain our green leafy environment for future generations.

The quality of our stormwater asset management practices will define our ability to keep our city green, liveable, resilient and sustainable.

Water sensitive urban design elements (WSUDs) complement the traditional drainage pit and pipe network. They mimic nature and act to reduce both the volume and speed at which stormwater travels through the catchment.

They provide opportunity for:

- Improved landscape amenity by supporting sustainable greening of our neighbourhoods.
- Passive cooling of our suburbs.
- Removal of stormwater pollutants.
- Protection of our natural waterways from pollution and erosion.
- Stormwater harvesting and opportunity for conservation of potable water.
- Savings from using captured stormwater for irrigation and other grey water uses.
- Provision of natural habitat, micro ecosystems and improved biodiversity within urbanised regions.
- Provision of reliable habitat niche for wetland species in a drying environment due to climate change.

WSUDs have been installed throughout the city over many years. Some have been installed as part of major subdivisions, such as the Harcrest estate. The installation approach has been opportunistic, rather than a well-considered part of an overall stormwater management strategy. Council has included WSUDs as part of open space master plans and occasionally as part of carpark upgrades and road reconstruction projects.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Funding outlined within the Stormwater Asset Management Plan is in accordance with Council’s Financial Plan, noting that in recent years, there has been shift in the funding allocation for Stormwater projects towards asset renewal funding, and away from new and upgrade projects. This aligns with Council’s funding allocation policy, which prioritises Asset Renewal over New/Upgrade/Expansion investment. This approach also aligns with forthcoming asset handover agreements to be enacted between Council and Melbourne Water, noting that this will result in a redistribution of assets between the two entities.

7. RISKS

Risk	Accept/Transfer/Avoid	Risk Mitigation
Technology does not provide functionality required to enable “click through” live data to be associated with the suite of Council asset plans.	Avoid	Appendices will be provided as linked pdfs off the landing internet page, with updated content to be refreshed as it becomes available.

8. COUNCIL AND HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN 2025-2029

Caring for and enhancing our environment

Strategy 3.1 - Our environment is healthy and sustainable by considering environmental factors when planning for and making decisions.

Strategy 3.2 - Green spaces and waterways are protected, enhanced and enjoyed through planning, promotion and maintenance of our built and natural environment.

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 Refreshed SWAMP - version 12 June 2025 [8.2.1 - 28 pages]



DRAFT
STORMWATER ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN
2025 TO 2035



**“Our environment is greener,
healthier and sustainable
through Council’s
environmental protection and
enhancement, working in
collaboration with our
community**

Council and Health and Wellbeing Plan
2025-2029

Acknowledgement of Country

Knox City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation as Traditional Custodians of the land.

The Knox Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community come from a variety of different Nations within Australia and Torres Strait, including the Traditional Custodians and Stolen Generation. As such we pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past and present, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the region’s history.

Located at the foot of the Dandenong Ranges, Knox has many places of historic significance to the Kulin nation. Important cultural and historical sites within Knox hold both the traditional knowledge of the First Nations People and the traumatic stories of colonisation.

The journey ahead for Knox involves the land, the traditional custodians, the local Indigenous community, the wider community and the Council itself. Walking together and listening together to create a culturally safe and culturally rich community for all.

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Our Assets

Knox City Council manage approximately \$1.89 billion of infrastructure assets (excludes land value) on behalf of our community. These assets, which range from significant structures such as roads, drainage pipes, bridges and buildings, through to park furniture and play equipment, are fundamental to supporting services for the community.

What is Asset Management and why is it important?

Asset management allows Council to strategically, effectively and efficiently manage its assets across their life cycle, while meeting the service needs of the community. This requires balancing risk, cost, and performance criteria. Effective asset management answers the following fundamental questions:

- What assets do the community need now and in the future?
- How can we best manage our assets to serve the community?

The choices we make today can impact the quality of life for future generations. Sound asset management provides us with the ability to understand the immediate, medium, and long-term impacts of our decisions and provide solutions on how to mitigate risk. The benefits of sound asset management include:

- Improved cost efficiency by looking at the costs of assets over their entire lifecycle.
- Being able to target critical assets to ensure performance is maintained and risks are managed.
- Aligning levels of service for assets to meet community needs.
- Making sure infrastructure assets are appropriately funded for the long term.

Over the next 10 years we are budgeting investment of approximately \$700 million to renew, improve, and care for our infrastructure. Given this sizeable investment and the importance of these assets to supporting community outcomes, it is vital that we are good asset managers.

Lifecycle Management

Our approach to asset management is centred on asset life-cycle management decision making processes that are used to manage our infrastructure. Through careful and efficient lifecycle management, our goal is to meet our agreed levels of service in the most cost-effective manner over the life of assets. The management strategies we follow in each asset lifecycle phase are shown in the figure below.

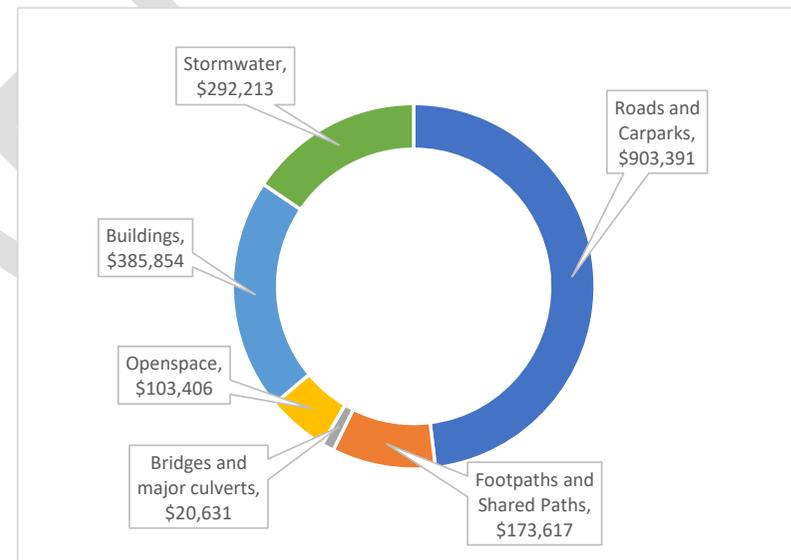


Figure 1 – Value(\$m) of Council Assets

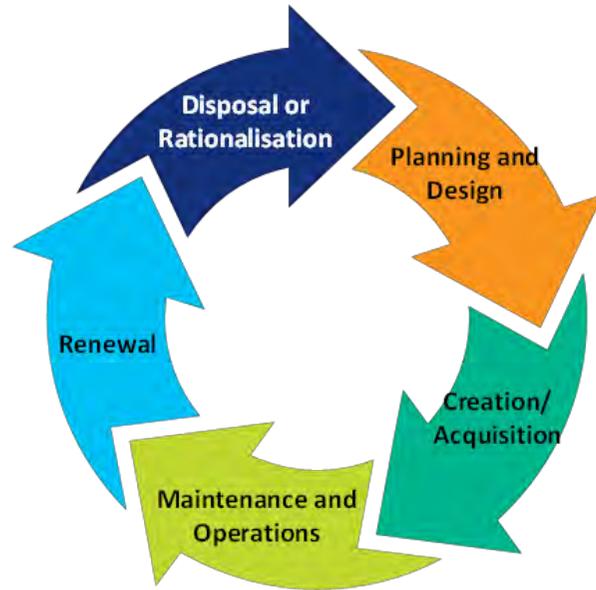


Figure2- Asset Lifecycle

Planning and Design

- Asset planning and analysis to meet long term service needs.
- Asset design balances affordability, equity, and environmental performance.
- Whole of life cost considerations

Creation/ Acquisition

- Before building or acquiring new assets non-asset service delivery solutions such as leasing, strategic partnerships, etc. are considered.
- Assets are constructed according to planning and design standards and documentation.
- Efficient procurement strategies are utilised.
- Asset performance standards are met when Council assets are delivered by Knox or others.

Maintenance and Operations

- Systems and processes record information about assets.
- Cyclic condition assessments are undertaken.
- Assets are operated and maintained to reduce risk/failure.
- Assets are available to meet/service community needs.
- Optimisation of works and timely intervention to minimise ongoing costs.

Renewal

- Optimisation of asset renewal to minimise cost and risk.
- Maximise the use of our assets through reuse or co-location of services, where possible.

Disposal or Rationalisation

- Where assets do not directly support service objectives they are considered for decommissioning, disposal or rationalisation to reduce lifecycle costs and financial burden.

Purpose of this Plan

The quality of our stormwater asset management practices determines our ability to keep our City green, liveable, resilient and sustainable. The aim of this plan is therefore to guide continuous improvement in our stormwater asset management practices and outcomes.

By improving our asset management practices, we can be confident that our investment in stormwater assets will deliver many important community benefits.

Community Benefits

- Improved flood protection.
- Resilience to the anticipated impacts of climate change.
- Increased biodiversity and improved habitat for our local fauna and flora.
- Improved ecological health of our streams and waterways.
- Healthier trees, vegetation and ecological systems.
- Attractive water landscapes and green spaces that encourage us to be more active and connected.
- A reduction in heat related stress due to the passive cooling effect of green-blue assets
- Reduced water utility bills as we increase our use of stormwater for irrigation.
- Preservation of potable water supplies for high value uses like drinking and food preparation.

How we developed this Plan

A stakeholder reference group was established, comprising Council staff involved in stormwater asset management. The participants:

- contributed to the setting of asset management objectives (service level targets).
- assisted in the identification of deliverable improvement recommendations.

Background to this plan

The following research/review of documents was undertaken to develop this Plan. Supporting documentation is linked to the Stormwater Asset Management Plan home page.

Related Knox City Council Documents	Internal Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities
Relevant Regulations and Industry Standards	Our progress implementing earlier versions of this plan
Asset Management Information Systems	Our Current Asset Management Practices
Asset Audit Program	Our Service Level Objectives
Asset Inventory, Condition and Valuation	Risks and Challenges
Asset Deterioration model results	Community Expectations
Our priority improvement initiatives	Future Demand and Demand Management Strategies

Implementation of this Plan

The Strategic Infrastructure department, as subject matter experts, will have responsibility for implementing this plan.

Establishment of an Integrated Stormwater Asset Management Group (chaired by the Coordinator Strategic Stormwater) is recommended to bring stakeholders together to collaborate and deliver this Plan.

Funding for the management and performance of stormwater assets will be allocated as part of Council's budget processes. This requires Council to balance stormwater asset management investment against all other Council priorities.

Plan monitoring and review

This plan has a life of 10 years. It will then be reviewed, in full, updated and replaced.

The responsibility for reviewing the progress of Asset Management Plans improvement actions is allocated to the Asset Management Steering Group (AMSG), with key support from the Strategic Infrastructure Department.

The relevance of recommended improvements and the predicted funding levels will be reviewed each year, as part of Council's budget and capital works planning processes to reflect new data and changes in Council and community priorities.

Our stormwater asset management objectives

Our stormwater asset management approach is guided by six objectives.

 Biodiversity, habitat and waterway protection	 Community satisfaction and participation in decision making
 Water conservation and reuse	 Financial sustainability and intergenerational equity
 Flood protection	 Transparent evidence-based decision making

To deliver on these objectives we need to be strategic, proactive and innovative.

Our stormwater assets

Our stormwater assets include grey assets and a range of green-blue assets (known as water sensitive urban design features or WSUDs). The grey assets primarily act to provide flood protection and downstream carriage of stormwater, whilst the green-blue assets are used to capture water for re-use or to improve the quality of water discharged to the natural environment and provide opportunity for biodiversity enhancement.

GREEN-BLUE STORMWATER ASSETS	QUANTITY	ESTIMATED REPLACEMENT COST	ESTIMATED USEFUL LIFE	GREY STORMWATER ASSETS
Raingardens	54	\$250 to \$2,000 per sq. m.	5 - 10 years	 <p>278 Endwalls Replacement value =\$ 0.44 M Average age = 38.0 years Est. Useful Life - 80 years</p>
Wetlands	20	\$150 to 250 per sq. m.	20 -25 years	
Permeable paving	4 sites	\$100-120 per sq. m. 1	25 years	
Tree pits	128	\$ 1,000 to \$8,000 per sq. m.	10 years	 <p>39,673 Pits Replacement value =\$ 60.87 M Average age = 41 years Est. Useful Life - 80 years</p>
Sedimentation ponds	13	\$150 to \$250 per sq. m. Plant and labour cost + \$260 / tonne for sediment disposal	5 - 10 years	
Gross pollutant traps	32	\$50,000 to \$250,000	25 years	 <p>1, 188.9km Pipes Replacement value =\$ 227.70 M Average age =42 years Est. Useful Life - 80 years</p>
Constructed swales	38	\$15 to \$150 per sq. m.	5 - 7 years	
Passive irrigation kerb cuts	26	\$30 per metre	80 years	
Above- ground stormwater tanks	75	\$5,000 for 10 KL tank + installation	20 - 30 years	
Below-ground stormwater tanks	5	\$5,000 for 10 KL tank + installation	30 years	

Table 1 – Our Stormwater Asset Inventory

The total replacement value of our green-blue assets has not been quantified. The estimated replacement value of our grey stormwater assets was \$292,213M on 30 June 2024

Demarcation of Roles and Responsibilities

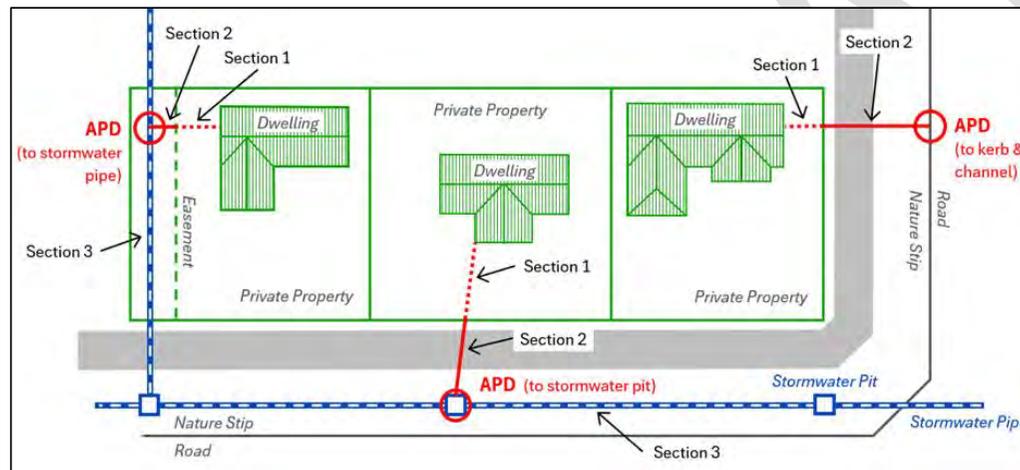
Not all stormwater assets are owned or managed by Council.

There is a clear demarcation of responsibilities.

Melbourne Water is the Regional Drainage and Floodplain Management Authority, with responsibility for all major drainage assets, creeks and waterways within Knox City Council.

Landowners (including private entities and public authorities such as Vic Track) are responsible for ensuring that stormwater runoff from their property does not cause nuisance to any neighbouring properties. Each landowner must connect to an approved point of discharge (APD) – ie the location at which private drainage is permitted to discharge into Council’s drainage network.

The functionality of each landowner’s private drainage network, as well as deficiencies in the capacity of Melbourne Water’s regional drains, creeks and waterways, impact on the performance of Council’s stormwater assets.



Pipe Section	Responsibility
Section 1	Landowner
Section 2	Landowner
Section 3	Council

Council has a duty to inspect, maintain and repair its stormwater assets (Section 3) as illustrated in the figure above. Section 3 will be inspected for hazards and maintained to specified service levels as articulated in the Knox Road Management Plan, when the drainage asset is located within a Council road reserve.

Stormwater pipes and pits located within drainage easements within private property are Council assets. Connection from a residential building to Council's stormwater system or kerbing is the responsibility of the resident to construct (to Council standards), alter and maintain at their cost

Council does not have a statutory duty to inspect, maintain and repair Sections 1 and 2. Household drainage (including tapings) is the responsibility of the resident to construct (to Council standards), alter and maintain. Council is not required to inspect Section 1 and 2 for hazards. These assets are not required to be maintained to specified service levels.

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Risks and challenges we face

Challenges

 <p>Adapting to Climate Change</p> <p>Extended dry periods with shorter duration and higher intensity rainfall events.</p>	 <p>Infill development</p> <p>The Victorian State Government has set a target of 43,000 additional homes in Knox by 2051. More impervious surfaces leading to more polluted, higher velocity stormwater runoff and increasingly difficult access to easements.</p>	 <p>Ageing Assets</p> <p>Many of our older pipes are small and damaged by intrusive tree roots; with some assets potentially asbestos lined.</p>	 <p>Unavoidable flooding risks</p> <p>Low lying areas within the municipality may be subject to riverine or flash flooding. This occurs when the intensity or duration of rainfall exceeds the capacity of Melbourne Water managed creeks and waterways or the local (Council) drainage network (1 in 5-year rainfall event for residential drainage systems and 1 in 10-year rainfall event for industrial drainage systems)..</p>
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Risks

Council’s financial position and priorities can change quickly. It is therefore important to acknowledge the potential impacts if Council is unable to provide adequate funding or resources for stormwater asset management, including:

Funding shortfalls, or poorly assigned capital upgrade investment, will mean that known localised flooding risks and the effects of urbanisation on our natural waterways will remain. An increased risk of failed/poor quality asset requiring increased maintenance and leading to a potential decline in the current level of service provided to the community.

Closing the gaps

Stakeholder consultation revealed several gaps in Council's current approach to stormwater asset management. Council is focused on closing the gaps by:

- Developing a strategic roadmap (whole of Council, or precinct-level catchment master plans) to guide investment in stormwater assets.
- Ensuring maintenance budgets keep pace with growth in the size and complexity of the asset portfolio.
- Considering in-house provision of CCTV investigations of Council's pipe networks.
- Revising renewal budgets to upgrade under capacity stormwater assets and accommodating the cost of traffic management and control.
- Working with capital works delivery managers to improve asset handover performance.
- Considering lifecycle costs and maintenance needs when designing (or allowing others to create) new or upgraded stormwater assets.
- Designing the stormwater network to respond to higher intensity rainfall events.

Six priority improvement initiatives are proposed to address key gaps in Council's stormwater asset management practices. The anticipated budget implications are outlined at the end of this document (and in our 10-year Asset Plan).

Through this engagement process, additional, lower priority improvement recommendations have been developed for consideration by internal stakeholders and will inform the Service Plan for stormwater.

Current asset performance

We need to audit our assets in order to monitor their performance

Green-blue stormwater assets

To date, our green-blue assets have not been audited, largely because the condition of these assets are unstable and affected by the weather. Although we have not audited the condition of our water sensitive urban design features, we know that many of these assets are reaching the end of their design life.

Grey stormwater assets

The most recent audit of pits was in 2017. The most recent audit of drainage pipes was in 2021. To date, only 61% of pits and 7% of pipes have been audited. The lack of pipe condition data is due to the high cost of auditing underground drainage pipes. Proactive CCTV investigations of reported blocked pipes, pipes in known flooding locations, and pipes beneath roads being renewed have identified faults and provided treatments. The internal audit of asset management in 2023 identified that Council set the extent and frequency of drainage condition audits, to improve its knowledge of the total drainage network. To address this, Council is currently investigating the feasibility of establishing an in-house CCTV pipe auditing crew so that a greater proportion of pipes can be audited each year. To be effective in improving Council’s knowledge of the condition of the pipe network, it will be important to audit a representative sample of the network each year. Taking into consideration pipe size, age, suburb and location within a road reserve or a property easement.

The graphs below summarise our condition audit results for pits and pipes. The table below explains how each condition rating should be interpreted.

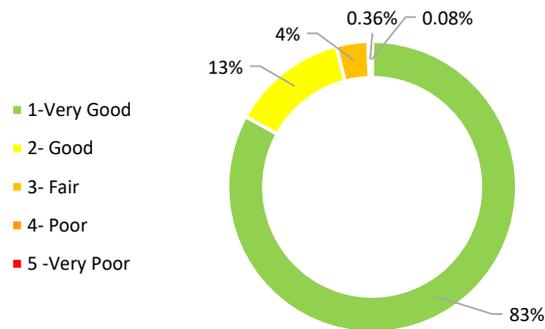


Figure 1 – Audited pit condition distribution

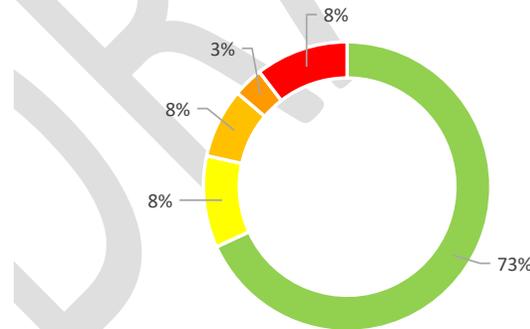


Figure 2 – Audited pipe condition distribution

Condition Rating	Description
1 - Very Good	Sound physical condition. Insignificant deterioration. Asset likely to perform adequately without major work for 25 years or more.
2 - Good	Acceptable physical condition; minor deterioration / minor defects evident. Negligible short-term failure risk but potential for deterioration in long-term (20 years plus). Only minor work required (if any).
3 - Fair	Moderate to significant deterioration evident; Minor components or isolated sections of the asset need replacement or repair now but not affecting short term structural integrity. Failure unlikely within the next 10 years but further deterioration likely and major replacement likely within next 10 to 20 years.
4 - Poor	Serious deterioration and significant defects evident affecting structural integrity. Failure likely in short to medium term. Likely need to replace most or all of asset within 10 years.
5 – Very Poor	Asset has failed or failure is imminent. Immediate need to replace most or all of the asset.

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Our level of service targets

We aim to provide high quality stormwater assets that meet our key objectives.

Technical service level objectives

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TARGET	CURRENT PERFORMANCE												
OBJECTIVE - FLOOD PROTECTION														
Capacity	<p>An annual reduction in the number of Commercial and Industrial properties at risk of inundation, during a once in ten-year rainfall event</p> <p>An annual reduction in the number of Residential properties at risk of inundation, during a once in five-year rainfall event</p>	<p>Properties potentially at risk of inundation based on flood modelling and mapping in 2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,998 residential properties (8%) • 810 commercial properties (29%) • 815 industrial properties (22%) 												
Risk	<p>Zero settled insurance claims attributable to poor condition stormwater assets that have deteriorated to an extent that reduces their original design capacity.</p>	<p>One under excess settled insurance claim in 2022.</p> <p>Cause categorised as flooding/storm/water</p>												
Maintenance	<p>Less than 1000 customer requests to clear blocked pits or pipes per year.</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Qty</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2023-2024</td> <td>852</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022-2023</td> <td>926</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021-2022</td> <td>867</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020-2021</td> <td>629</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019-2020</td> <td>1111</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Qty	2023-2024	852	2022-2023	926	2021-2022	867	2020-2021	629	2019-2020	1111
Year	Qty													
2023-2024	852													
2022-2023	926													
2021-2022	867													
2020-2021	629													
2019-2020	1111													

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TARGET	CURRENT PERFORMANCE
Condition	<p>By 2029 consolidate CCTV registers into a single repository and capture asset condition in the asset register.</p> <p>From 2026 onwards conduct targeted CCTV inspections of 3km of drainage pipes per year to improve Council’s understanding of condition across its entire network.</p>	<p>Only 7% pipes and 64% pits have been audited; WSUDs have not been audited. Based on asset age, it is predicted that 1.2% of pipes and 0.25% of pits not audited are also in Very Poor condition.</p>
Road Management Plan Compliance	<p>100% compliance with the target timeframes documented in Council’s Road Management Plan (RMP).</p>	<p>RMP compliance for the period 1 Jan 2021 until 31 Dec 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routine Inspections - 98% • Initial Assessment - 97% • Rectification Works - 99%
OBJECTIVE - BIODIVERSITY, HABITAT AND WATERWAY PROTECTION		
<p>Targets to be determined by the Stormwater team, taking into consideration targets set by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate in their Integrated Water Management Framework.</p>		
OBJECTIVE - WATER CONSERVATION		
<p>Targets to be determined by the Stormwater team, taking into consideration targets set by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate in their Integrated Water Management Framework.</p>		

Community service level objectives

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TARGET	CURRENT PERFORMANCE
OBJECTIVE - COMMUNITY SATISFACTION AND INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING		
Community Satisfaction	Knox community satisfaction performance is rated at least equal to the Melbourne Metropolitan average for participating Councils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2024, Knox community satisfaction with Council's overall performance rated 7.0 out of 10. This result is similar or a little higher than to the Metropolitan Council Group average.
Community Involvement	<p>A minimum of one event/ campaign held by the Stormwater team each year to involve the community in decision making.</p> <p>Deliberation on this Asset Plan in a manner consistent with principles of the Local Government Act 2020.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stormwater team community engagement data not available
OBJECTIVE - TRANSPARENT EVIDENCE BASED DECISION MAKING		
Strategic Master Planning	Catchment master plans presented to Council for endorsement for 20 to 25 minor catchments by December 2027.	<p>Masterplans developed for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0 out of 49 minor catchments
OBJECTIVE - LONG TERM FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND INTERGENERATIONAL EQUITY		
Renewal expenditure	<p>Average annual renewal expenditure, calculated as a percentage of the fair value of the asset category, is at least equal to annual average asset consumption rate (AAAC) based on pit and pipe life of 80 years and WSUD life of 25 years.</p> <p>AAAC (Pits and Pipes) >= 1.25% of fair value</p> <p>AAAC (WSUDs) >= 4% of fair value</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AAAC - Pits and Pipes = 0.67% (i.e., \$2.2 M pa spent on renewal of pits and pipes with a fair value of \$326 .7 M)

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TARGET	CURRENT PERFORMANCE
	<p>Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) asset renewal indicator is greater than 100%.</p> <p>(i.e. the rate of spending on existing assets through renewing, restoring, and replacing existing assets exceeds depreciation.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 165.68% - sourced from the 2023-2024 Annual Report

DRAFT

Financials

Based on the available information we have about our assets and the planning we have done to formulate our capital works program; we intend to spend a total of \$74.4M on stormwater assets over the next ten years. This includes a total budget of \$42.9M to renew deteriorated stormwater assets, and \$4.8M to improve the capacity of existing assets or create new stormwater assets. We also propose to allocate around \$ 26.6M to operate and maintain our stormwater assets.

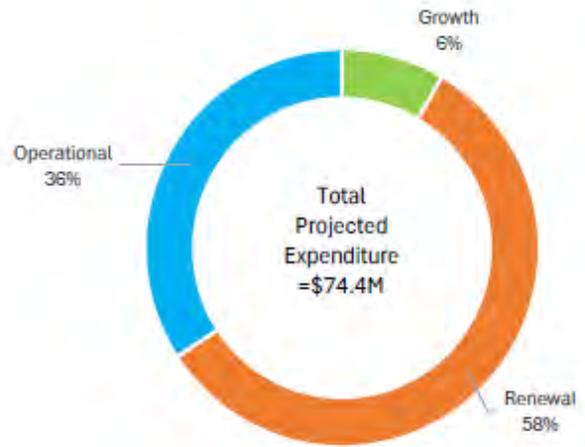
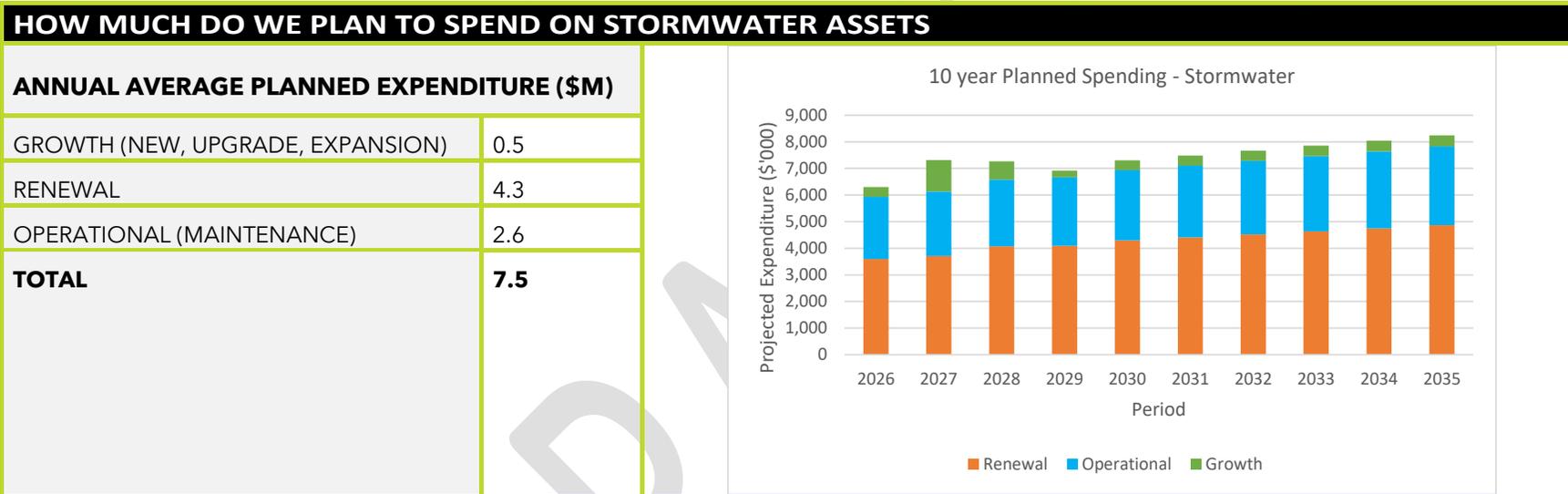


Figure 3- Projected 10 -year Expenditure by Expenditure Category

Expenditure Category	Activity	Description
Operational	Maintenance	Ongoing work required to keep an asset performing at the required level of service.
	Operations	Recurrent expenditure that is continuously required to provide a service.
Renewal	Renewal	Returns the service potential or the life of the asset up to that which it had originally.
Growth	Upgrade	Enhancements to an existing asset to provide a higher level of service.
	Expansion	Extends or expands an existing asset at the same standard as is currently enjoyed by residents, to a new group of users.
	New	Creates a new asset that provides a service that does not currently exist.

Our plan for the next 10 years

Our experienced staff will continue to manage our stormwater assets throughout each stage of the asset lifecycle



EXAMPLES OF THE TYPES OF ACTIVITIES WE HAVE PLANNED FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS

Renewal	Growth	Operational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replacement of failed drainage pits and pipes Refurbishment or retrofitting of non functional water sensitive urban design assets such as wetlands and raingardens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replacement of drainage pipes to a higher hydraulic capacity in line with the results of Council’s Flood Mapping and Modelling results. Installation of stormwater quality improvement devices (e.g., raingardens, litter traps, etc.) Stormwater harvesting initiatives (e.g. rainwater tanks) Transfer of maintenance responsibility for Melbourne Water assets within less than 60-hectare catchments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pit and pipe cleansing and removal of debris, sediment, etc. Removal of litter from Gross Pollutant Traps Repair or replacement of small sections of damaged pipes and damaged pit components Programmed inspections (including CCTV audits of underground assets)

PREDICTED ASSET CONDITION

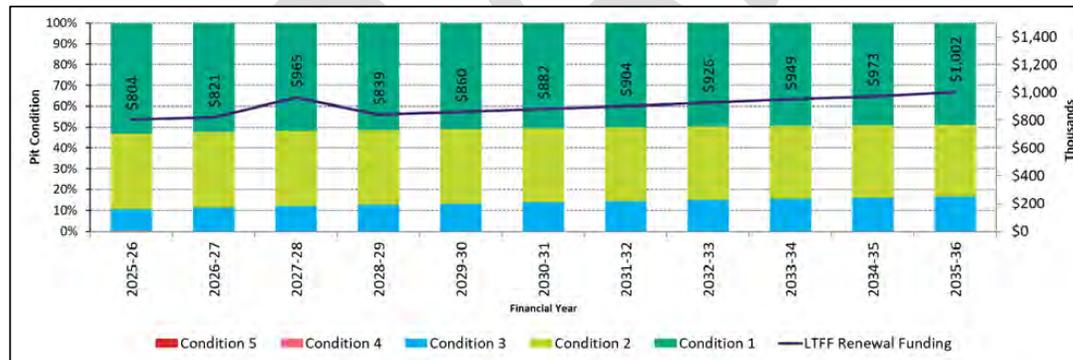
Green-blue stormwater assets

The predicted condition of our green-blue assets is unknown. Future condition audits will form the basis of future predictions.

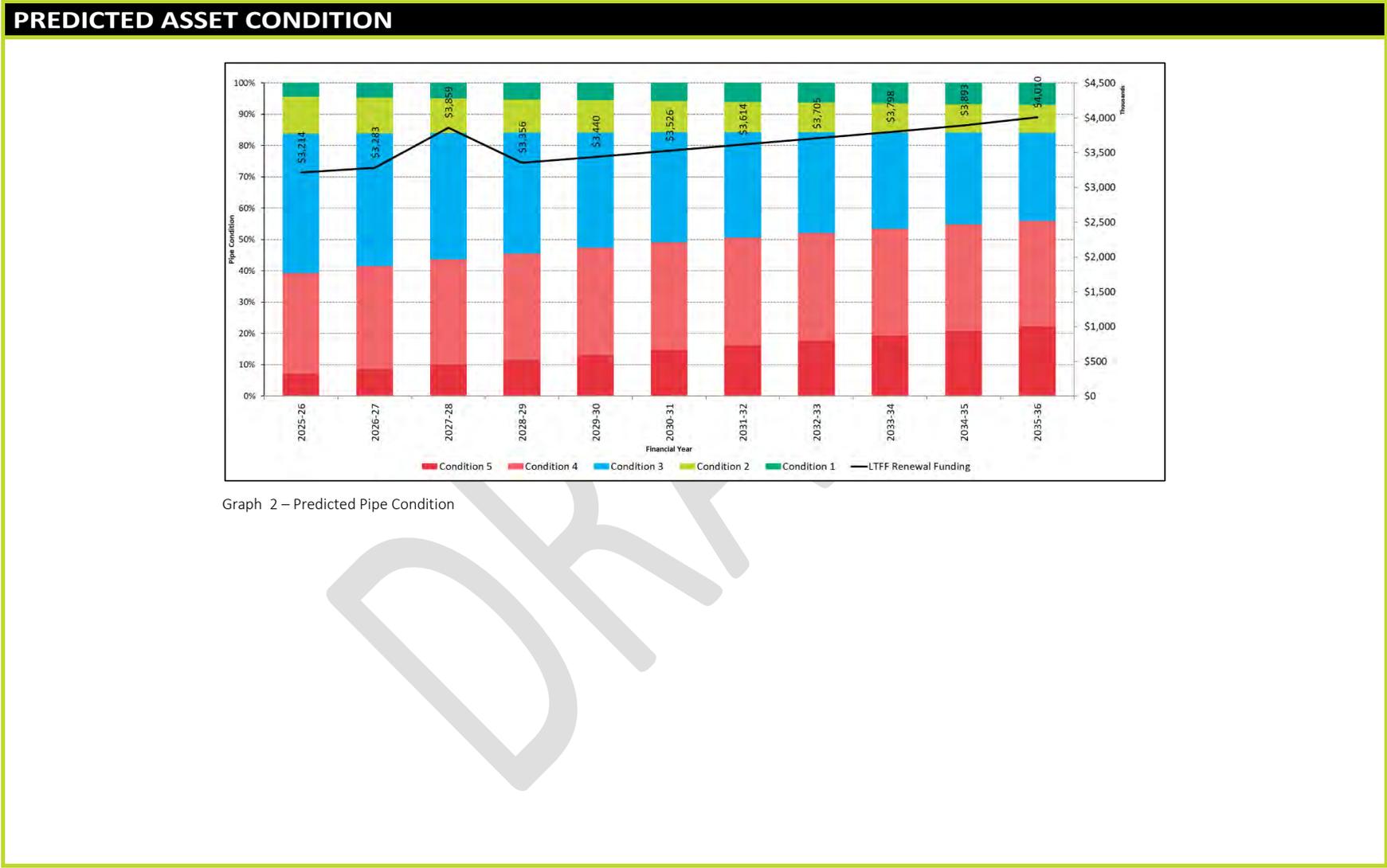
Grey stormwater assets

Predictive asset deterioration modelling results (illustrated in graphs 1 and 2 below) show that funding asset renewal in accordance with the current Long-Term Financial Forecast may not keep pace with the predicted rate of asset deterioration for pipes. 22% of pipes (259 km) are predicted to be in Very Poor condition (Condition 5) by 2035-36 and a further 34% of pipes are predicted to be in Condition 4 (Poor).

It must be noted however that we have a low level of confidence in the predicted condition because we do not yet have a complete inventory of current asset condition (only 7% of pipes and 64% of pits have been audited and in some cases, audit data will target known problem assets). In the absence of comprehensive condition data across the whole stormwater assets network, a conservative approach was used. The model was based on asset age and an estimated asset life of 80 years. Performance targets set for condition will gradually improve Councils knowledge of network condition. The predicted condition, and our level of confidence in the prediction will improve when Council has audited a representative sample of underground pipes.



Graph 1 – Predicted Pit Condition



Graph 2 – Predicted Pipe Condition

OUR LIFECYCLE MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS

CAPITAL WORKS PLAN

GROWTH (NEW- UPGRADE - EXPANSION - DISPOSAL)

We will continue to aim to upgrade our stormwater assets when their original design functionality no longer matches service expectations. Capital projects to create new assets, upgrade or expand existing assets will only go ahead if approved by Council as part of annual budget preparations.

To improve the capacity of our existing drainage network, additional funding is recommended to implement two improvement initiatives:

- **Strategic upgrade master planning (\$0.16 M pa (for three years) + cost to implement approved catchment master plans).**
 - Invest in catchment master planning to provide a road map for future upgrade investment. Including the development of innovative water sensitive solutions to replace small pipes that are often blocked by tree roots.
 - The aim is to identify and prioritise projects that provide multiple benefits: improved flood protection; protection of our waterways; and Increased opportunity for water conservation
 - Implement approved catchment master plans, starting with priority flood protection and water conservation projects, as soon as the first year of master planning is complete.
 - Improve efficiencies by aligning the delivery of drainage upgrades with other capital programs, such as road renewal.
- **Pilot proactive drainage easement replacement (\$0.15 M pa for two years)**
 - Introduce a proactive drainage replacement pilot program to upgrade damaged, undersized easement drains when small-scale private developments are approved, and demolition consents are provided.
 - This pilot could enable replacement of around 300 m of pipe each year.
 - At the end of the pilot, assess deliverability and consider opportunities to continue the program using funding from developer contributions.

RENEWAL

We will aim to renew our existing stormwater assets as they fail, so that the network functionality is retained. Council's Drainage Renewal Program will continue to be informed by independent condition audits and inspections undertaken by Council staff. Typically, the team only renew around 0.5% of the pit and pipe network each year. Due to capacity issues, most grey asset renewal work unavoidably includes asset upgrades to increase capacity.

To keep pace with asset deterioration additional renewal funding is recommended to fund the implementation of two initiatives:

➤ Shift toward more proactive renewal of green-blue assets (WSUD) - \$0.3M pa.

- Audit the quantity, replacement cost and condition of our WSUDs.
- Develop a proactive WSUD renewal program to restore the functionality of poorly performing assets.
- Review long-term recurrent WSUD renewal funding to reflect 2% of the replacement cost of these assets.

➤ Review assumed economic life of pits and pipes (currently 80 years),

- When assets are formally revalued, consider increasing the economic life
- Adjust Council's predictive asset deterioration modelling and renewal funding requirements accordingly.

➤ Maintain LTFF renewal funding above \$3M for next four years.

- When formal revaluation is complete, and proposed catchment master planning is well progressed, adjust the pit and pipe renewal funding to:
 - Keep pace with rising replacement costs and the anticipated rate of deterioration.
 - Efficiently and strategically address capacity constraints when assets are renewed.

MAINTENANCE PLAN

We will continue to maintain our stormwater assets so that they operate at their original design capacity for as long as possible. Maintenance includes reactive and proactive inspections, and a range of activities to repair defects and clear blockages as they arise. Our pit and pipe inspection and maintenance standards (including timeframes) are detailed in our Road Management Plan.

We recognise that more work is required to improve the maintenance of our green-blue stormwater assets (such as wetlands, raingardens and swales). Maintenance standards for our green-blue assets are reactive and not yet documented.

To improve our maintenance outcomes additional maintenance funding is recommended to implement the following improvements:

➤ Shift toward more proactive maintenance of green-blue assets (WSUD) - increase funding from \$0.045M to \$0.244M pa

- Re-establish a vacated role within the Stormwater team to lead a shift toward proactive management of all WSUDs.
- Develop inspection and maintenance service levels for all WSUD types including raingardens, water tanks and emerging WSUD assets such as filter screens and UV lights.
- Address the backlog of poorly functioning WSUDs, including plant and filter media management and the establishment of stable ecosystems.
- Deliver regular proactive inspection and maintenance programs for all WSUDs.

➤ Improve grey stormwater asset (pit and pipe) maintenance - increase funding from \$1.35M to \$1.78M pa

- Increase funding to match growth in the size and complexity of the service including:
 - Clearing waste from increased numbers of litter baskets and gross pollutant traps.
 - Open drain maintenance, to protect waterways from debris that runs off our unsealed roads.
 - CCTV investigation when pipes are found to block repeatedly and require renewal.
 - More regular cleaning of drains in areas that flood modelling has identified as flood prone.

-

What will happen next.

Community engagement will be undertaken to seek support for the draft plan before it is adopted by Council.

The level of capital investment in renewals, upgrades, new and expanded assets will be informed by Council's Financial Plan and Council's Forward Capital Works Program.

Subject to available funding, allocated during the annual budget process, staff and resources will be allocated to the delivery of recommended improvement initiatives.

Council's website will be updated with the revised Asset Plan and information relevant to the Stormwater Asset Management Plan including:

Council's Asset Policy	Relevant Legislation and Industry Standards	Relevant Asset Management Information System data	Council's Condition Audit Program
Stormwater assets deterioration modelling data	Priority Improvement Initiatives and their status	Internal Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities	Progress on Implementation of Asset Management Plans
Current Management Practices	Key Risk and Challenges	Community Expectations	Future Demand modelling

¹ Melbourne Water healthy waterways Raingardens- Instruction sheet Porous Paving



8.3 Road Management Plan

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Decision
Author	Coordinator Asset Strategy, Robin Cassidy
Manager:	Manager Strategic Infrastructure, Matthew Hanrahan
Executive:	Director, Infrastructure, Grant Thorne

SUMMARY

The Knox Road Management Plan (RMP) sets out Council's approach to the inspection, maintenance and repair of its public roads and road related assets. If complied with, the RMP provides Council with a policy defence against civil liability claims associated with its management of the road network.

Under the Road Management (General) Regulations 2016, Council is obligated, following the election of a new Council, to formally review its Road Management Plan by 31 October 2025. The regulations state that the purpose of the review is to assess the appropriateness of levels of service for inspection, maintenance and repair of Council's Road related assets. To achieve this purpose Council has:

- Benchmarked its levels of service against other Councils,
- Investigated its level of service performance for inspection, maintenance and repair of its public roads and road related assets during the past four years, and
- Considered recommendations from its insurers.

When endorsed by Council the Road Management Plan review report – 2025 will be made available for public consultation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council resolve to:

1. Endorse the Road Management Plan Review Report – 2025 (as set out in Attachment 1) as a draft for public consultation.
2. Note that following feedback from the community, the draft Road Management Plan Review Report – 2025 will be presented to a future meeting of Council for final approval.
3. Note that any amendment of the Road Management Plan will be managed in accordance with Road Management Act General Regulations.

1. DISCUSSION

The Knox Road Management Plan (RMP) sets out Council's service levels and approach to the inspection, maintenance and repair of its public roads and road related assets, in accordance with Section 25 of the Road Management Act. Section 39 of the Act enables Council to make a policy decision about the service standards that it will apply in managing its road network. The Road Management Plan is effectively a documentation of these standards in executing Council's Road Management responsibilities. If complied with, the RMP provides Council with a policy defence against civil liability claims associated with its management of the road network.

The first Knox Road Management Plan (RMP), was developed in 2004 in accordance with the Road Management Act (2004), supporting Regulations and Codes of Practice. Under the Road Management (General) Regulations 2016, Council is obligated, following the election of a new Council, to formally review its Road Management Plan by 31 October 2025. The regulations state that the purpose of the RMP review is to assess the appropriateness of levels of service for inspection, maintenance and repair of Council's Road related assets.

In accordance with the regulations, RMP reviews have occurred in 2006, 2009, 2013, 2017, and 2021. The RMP has been amended four times in 2006, 2010, 2015 and in November 2023. The 2023 RMP amendment involved a major rewrite and implemented recommendations from the 2021 RMP review, addressing internal audit actions and Council insurer recommendations.

The process for this current (2025) review has included:

- Benchmarking Knox's RMP levels of service for inspection, maintenance and repair of Council's Road related assets against other Councils,
- Analysing Council's RMP service performance between the 1 January 2021 until 31 December 2024 for inspection, maintenance and repair of Council's public roads and road related assets,
- Consideration of Council's insurer recommendations, and
- Benchmarking Council's performance indicators.

Sources of information for this review include:

- A RMP benchmarking template prepared by a peer group of South Eastern Metropolitan Councils.
- A release by the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) RMP Template, released in 2024.
- Output from Council's Asset Management System - Confirm.
- The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework.
- The Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey.
- Knox City Council internal annual audits on RMP performance/compliance.

The RMP review report – 2025 is attached to this report for reference and summarises the results for each activity.

This review's conclusion is that Council's standards are appropriate and that it's RMP operates in accordance with the purpose (a) of the Road Management Act (2004). The review has identified a small number of administrative changes for when the RMP is next amended.

The RMP review report – 2025 presents performance results for road management activity undertaken under the road management plan. The report includes:

- Benchmarking of Council's intervention levels for inspection and maintenance of roads assets against equivalent criteria by neighbouring/similar Councils.
- Performance against current levels of service for inspection, maintenance and repair of Council's Road related assets

Overall compliance in addressing identified articulated road management service standards across Council’s 729km of roads, 1249km of footpath and 14km of offroad shared paths shows that:

- **Proactive Hazards Inspections** achieved **98%** compliance against a targeted 100% compliance target.
- **Initial Response to reactive work orders** achieved **97%** compliance against a targeted 100% compliance target.
- **Rectification Time Response to reactive work orders** achieved **99%** compliance against a targeted 100% compliance target.

The table below shows that Councils performance across the past four RMP reviews is steadily improving.

Performance target	2013	2017	2021	2024
Proactive hazard inspection	95%	97%	Note 1	98%
Initial response performance	86%	95%	94%	97%
Rectification works	91%	96%	91%	99%

Note 1 – No measurement was reported in 2021.

The overall performance across each category is commendable noting that Council addressed 15,816 unique jobs across the year, however it is still short of the prescribed target, due to a number of factors including:

- Ensuring allocation of resources (including hazard inspectors) are actively managed through the year and that data in the system is updated in a timely manner.
- Transition from an existing to new asset management system which records and monitors RMP compliance.
- Rectification works being scheduled as a program, which can result in contracted service providers not being made aware of required work timelines.

Council’s Assets team and Civil Maintenance and Construction teams continue to review opportunities for improvement to ensure compliance with Council’s Road Management Plan and the review presents some specific recommendations to support overall compliance.

Noting that a significant review and rationalisation of service standards was completed in November 2023, this review concludes that in a broad sense Council’s standards are appropriate and that it’s RMP operates in accordance with the purpose (a) of the Road Management Act (2004). The review has identified a small number of administrative changes for when the RMP is next amended.

2. ENGAGEMENT

When approved by Council the RMP review report – 2025 will be made available for public consultation using the activities identified in the approved Community Engagement Plan including:

1. Councils Have Your Say web page for report download and feedback, and
2. A pop-up session prior to a Council meeting in August.

Following receipt of community feedback, Council will have the opportunity to review and determine whether there exists a compelling argument, to add, review or modify service standards currently provided.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no social implications identified for this report.

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 climate change considerations identified for this regulatory report.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Financial and resource estimates were obtained to implement the improved levels of service recommended by the Municipal Association of Victoria. At this stage the report recommendation is to leave Councils current levels of service unchanged.

7. RISKS

There exist a range of risks of Council not being able to maintain its asset base to current service levels into the future.

As an example,

Risk: Lack of funding to maintain assets to community standards

Incident: Unavailability of Assets/Reduced service level

Cause of Incident: Ongoing cost escalations associated with renewal of capital infrastructure

Risk Consequence: Loss of asset function/access for the community

Controls in place to mitigate risk: Availability of other assets, potential decommissioning of asset, reinstate asset with reduced service.

Council's Risk and Insurance team have provided advice regarding this report. No new risks have been identified.

8. COUNCIL AND HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN 2025-2029

Enhancing community connection to vital services and resources

Strategy 1.1 - A variety of transport options is available through the effective planning, advocacy and management of efficient, active, sustainable and accessible transport modes, particularly in growth locations.

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.

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 5.2 - 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.

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 - RMP Review Report 2025 20250618 DRAFT v1 2 [8.3.1 - 27 pages]



Knox City Council

Road Management Plan Review 2025

Date Updated:	19 June 2025
Reviewed & Prepared by:	Robin Cassidy
Knox Explorer Reference:	D25-187895

Road Management Plan Review 2025



April 2025

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Road Management Plan Review 2025



1. Introduction

1.1. Executive Summary

The Knox Road Management Plan (RMP) was developed to document Council's approach to the management of public roads within the municipality. If complied with, the RMP provides Council with a policy defence against civil liability claims associated with its inspection, maintenance and repair of roads and road related assets under its management.

The RMP was developed in accordance with the Road Management Act (2004), supporting regulations and codes of practice. The RMP is now subject to a formal review in accordance with the Road Management (General) Regulations 2016. This latest review is the sixth, with previous reviews being undertaken in 2006, 2009, 2013, 2017, and 2021. The RMP has been amended four times in 2006, 2010, 2015 and in November 2023.

The latest RMP amendment involved a major rewrite and implemented recommendations from the 2021 RMP review including internal audit actions and Council's insurer's recommendations. The amendment removed non RMP related assets, significantly reduced the number of RMP maintenance activities and clarified service level standards.

For this review, Council's inspection and maintenance performance data has been extracted from the Confirm asset management system for the period 1 Jan 2021 until 31 Dec 2024. The scope of maintenance activities included is consistent with the 2021 review. The decision to keep the scope the same is due to a delay implementing system changes resulting from the last amendment of the RMP and sporadic usage of new defect types. Summary results of the investigation are tabled in section 3. The results show that although Knox is performing well across most RMP asset classes, it falls short of achieving 100% compliance.

Council's RMP inspection cycles, intervention levels and reactive response times both initial and rectification have once again been benchmarked against similar Councils. For most measures, Council's service levels conform with the majority group, however there are a very small number of instances where Council's service level may be considered an outlier.

In February 2025 Council's insurer, Municipal Association of Victoria Insurance (MAV), provided an MAV - RMP Template (template) and a key differences spreadsheet, which highlighted possible exposure for a few standards within Council's RMP, when compared to their template. The insurer recommended that in due course, Council should either adopt the MAV template or amend their own RMP's to align with the MAV template. Cost estimates to implement the template's improved standards were provided by Operations and advice from the Risk and Insurance team sought. Other Councils, having the same insurer, were asked how they intended to respond.

The review recommendation is not to transition to the MAV template at this stage. The review has determined that Council's standards are appropriate and that it's RMP operates in accordance with the purpose (a) of the Road Management Act (2004) which states *to establish a management*

Road Management Plan Review 2025



system for the road management functions of a road authority which is based on policy and operational objectives and available resources.

This review has identified that some administrative changes are required. These are summarised below and detailed in Appendix 4.

- Remove or make current the work order process diagram.
- Clarify proactive inspection cycles and remove notation from the Hazard Inspection Frequency table.
- Remove non RMP related asset classes from the Hazard Inspection Frequency table for consistency.
- Fix typographic errors throughout the document.
- Insert or amend content from the MAV RMP template as appropriate.

The RMP review and subsequent amendment process are outlined within the Victorian Government's Road Management (General) Regulations (2016). Although the regulations do not strictly dictate the timing for implementation of proposed amendments, it is generally expected that the RMP will be amended between twelve and eighteen months following Council endorsement of the review report.

1.2. Purpose of the Report

Section 50 of the Road Management Act (2004) states that the purposes of a Road Management Plan are:

- a. to establish a management system for the road management functions of a road authority which is based on policy and operational objectives and available resources; and
- b. to set the relevant standard concerning the discharge of duties in the performance of those road management functions.

General functions of a road authority are set out in section 34 of the Act and are reproduced below:

- (1) A road authority has the following public functions:
 - a. to provide and maintain, as part of a network of roads, roads for use by the community served by the road authority.
 - b. to manage the use of roads having regard to the principle that the primary purpose of a road is to be used by members of the public and that other uses are to be managed in a manner which minimises any adverse effect on the safe and efficient operation of the road and the environment.
 - c. to manage traffic on roads in a manner that enhances the safe and efficient operation of roads.
 - c(a) to design, construct, inspect, repair, and maintain roads and road infrastructure.

Road Management Plan Review 2025



- d. to coordinate the installation of infrastructure on roads and the conduct of other works in such a way as to minimise, as far as is reasonably practicable, adverse impacts on the provision of utility or public transport services.
 - e. to undertake works and activities which promote the functions referred to in paragraphs (a), (b), (c), and (ca) and to undertake activities that promote the position in section (d).
- (2) The general functions conferred on a road authority under subsection (1) are not construed as limiting any other functions conferred on a road authority by or under this Act or any other Act.
- (3) In seeking to achieve its functions, a road authority should:
- a. consult with the community and disseminate information concerning the exercise of those functions.
 - b. take steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure the structural integrity and safety of public roads under this Act.

In essence, a Road Management Plan provides several benefits to Council including, but not limited to:

- Proactive management of road and road-related assets (asset management).
- Minimisation of public safety risk.
- Greater transparency in processes.
- Improved auditability of performance.
- Reduced insurance premiums; and
- A policy defence against civil liability claims.

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2. Defining the Scope of this Review

Road Management (General) Regulations 2016, Part 3 Division 1(9) states that:

In conducting a review of its road management plan, a road authority must ensure that the standards in relation to, and the priorities to be given to, the inspection, maintenance, and repair of the roads and classes of roads to which the Plan relates are appropriate.

Like the review undertaken in 2021, this review takes a fresh look at all aspects of the current RMP and assesses whether each element remains **appropriate, reasonable** and **deliverable**. All elements of Council's existing Road Management Plan (including all attachments) have been considered on this basis.

The assessment has considered changes to the Road Management Act and other relevant regulations and codes of practice enacted since the last Review in 2021.

The assessment of **appropriateness** and **reasonableness** was based on:

- Benchmarking of Road Management Plan inspection frequencies, intervention levels and repair timeframes made by neighbouring Councils.
- Consideration of the MAV Insurance – Knox – Current RMP vs MAV RMP Template recommendations.
- Benchmarking of Council's performance indicators through Local Government Victoria's Know my Council portal; and
- Customer satisfaction data and feedback from the Knox community, where available.

Assessment of **deliverability** was based on:

- Inspection, maintenance and repair performance, as recorded in Council's Work Order System (Confirm).
- Annual internal audits, as undertaken by the Asset Strategy team within Council.
- Recent audit report recommendations as reported by:
 - Council's Strategic Infrastructure Department.
 - Council's Insurer.

Feedback from Council staff responsible for the implementation of the Plan including the Director – Infrastructure, Manager - Operations, Manager - Strategic Infrastructure, Executive Engineer (Operations), Coordinator - Works, Coordinator – Asset Strategy, Asset Systems Development Officer and Asset Engineer.

Council's Instrument of Delegation, road and path hierarchies, and recommendations from relevant plans and strategies were also reviewed.

In addition to meeting the legislated review requirements, the review process has been used to recommend work practice improvements to improve ongoing compliance with the RMP.

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Where evidence suggests aspects of the RMP are unrealistic or unachievable, based on data analysis, changes to the RMP have been recommended. Care has been taken to ensure all proposed changes have a rational or plausible basis and are not unduly liberal so that the “policy defence” remains available.

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3. Assessment of Reasonableness and Deliverability

3.1. Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey

Council participates in the annual Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey (LGCSS), which is coordinated by the Department of Government Services.

The Victorian Community Satisfaction Survey (CSS) creates a vital interface between the Council and their community. Held annually, the CSS asks the opinions of local people about the place they live, work and play and provides confidence for councils in their efforts and abilities.

The CSS provides Council with feedback on community satisfaction each year. Council performance is benchmarked against the performance of seventy-seven other Victorian Councils. Although the survey is pitched at a relatively high level, it provides local government with information about how its performance is rated over time by the communities they represent.

The CSS seeks the community’s satisfaction with sealed local roads. Council’s score compared to the Similar Council Average and the All Council Average is displayed in Figure1. The results shows that the scores for Knox have been equal to the Similar Council Average, and favourable to the All Council Average benchmarks, for three of the past four years. The score for 2023/2024 has significantly improved in comparison to 2022/2023. This improvement is reflected in Councils asset management system with the total number of customer enquiries for road surface related issues reducing by 12% in 2023/2024 compared to 2022/2023. New community satisfaction data for 2024/2025 has just been provided to Council, with indicators showing a 1% improvement for sealed local roads. Satisfaction with VicRoads managed roads was 6% lower than Council managed roads

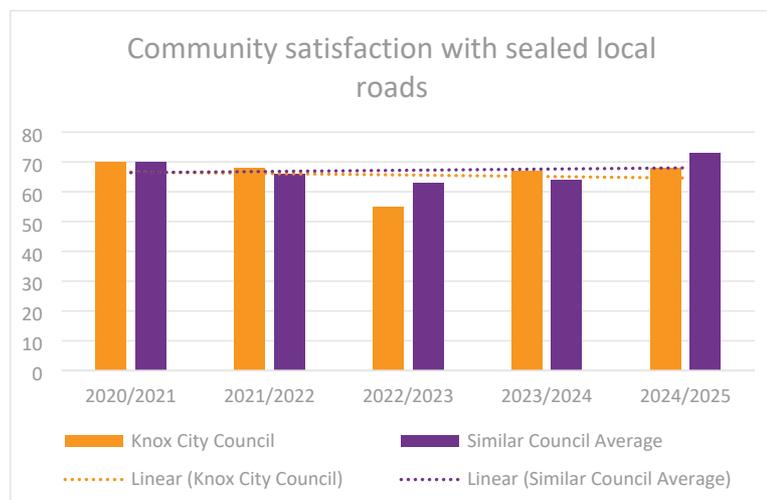


Figure 1 – Community Satisfaction with sealed local roads for the period 2020/2021 until 2024/2025

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3.2. Local Government Performance Reporting Framework: 2021 - 2024

3.2.1. Sealed local road requests per 100km of sealed local roads:

Council participates in the annual Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) coordinated by Department of Government Services. The framework ensures that all councils are measuring and reporting on their performance consistently. The LGPRF was introduced in 2012 with mandatory reporting commencing July 1, 2014. Two indicators contained within the LGPRF are relevant to the RMP Review:

An increase in rainfall in 2022/2023 resulted in a rise of pothole, edge repair and minor surface treatment requests. Apart from the unusual weather event in 2022/2023, the median value for Knox has remained consistent and favourable when compared to the Similar Council Average and All Council Average. The low number of requests suggests Councils proactive inspection programs are capturing issues and having repairs completed prior to the issues being reported by the community.

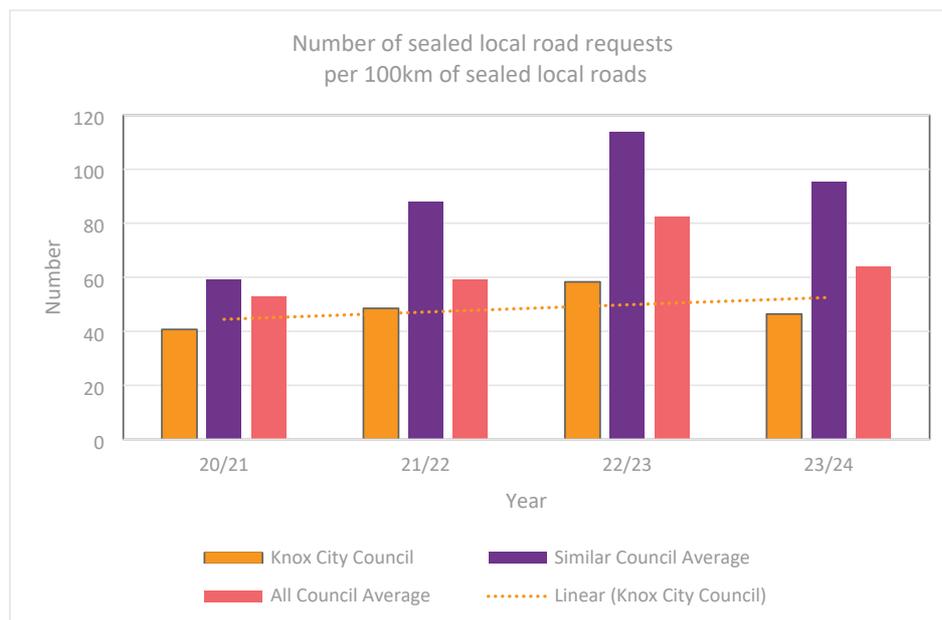


Figure 2 – Number of sealed local road requests per 100km of sealed local road – 2020/2021 to 2023/2024

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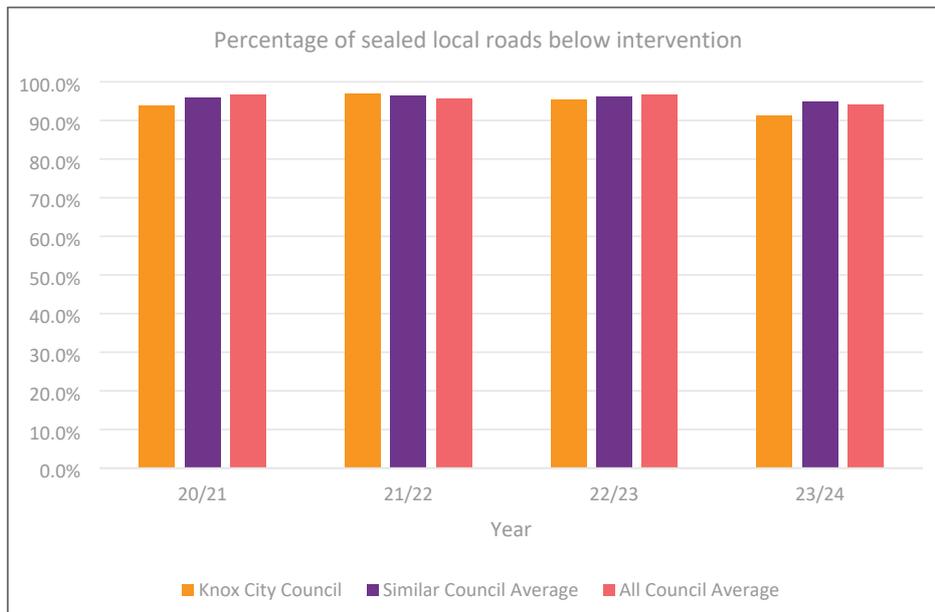


Figure 3 – Council comparison - Number of sealed local road requests per 100km of sealed local road – 2023/2024

3.2.2. Sealed local roads maintained to condition standards:

The second LGPRF indicator measures the percentage of sealed local roads below the renewal intervention level set by Council and therefore do not require renewal. The measure includes road surface, road pavement and kerb and channel.

Figure 4 – Percentage of sealed local roads below intervention.



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A decrease in the percentage of local roads below intervention in 2023/2024 resulted from receiving a fresh set of condition data in 2023. Unfortunately, Knox's position across the review period remains below the Similar Council and All Council averages however this performance indicator is not solely attributable to RMP related activities.

3.3. RMP Service level benchmarking

Two benchmarking activities have been completed for this review:

1. Benchmarking against neighbouring councils using the South Eastern Metropolitan Capital Works and Asset Managers (SEMCAM) spreadsheet
2. Benchmarking Councils current RMP standards against the MAV template standards

3.3.1. Benchmarking against neighbouring councils using the South Eastern Metropolitan Capital Works and Asset Managers (SEMCAM) spreadsheet

The South Eastern Metropolitan Capital Works and Asset Managers, (SEMCAM), group contains members from seventeen Councils across southeastern Melbourne. A key benefit of membership comes from the sharing of information for comparative purposes. Relevant to this review is a spreadsheet that captures RMP information including inspection frequencies, intervention levels and repair response times. Twelve of the seventeen SEMCAM members have provided their details. A desensitized version is attached as Appendix 1.

The spreadsheet demonstrates that in most cases Knox inspection frequencies, intervention levels and target timeframes are consistent with the majority of other SEMCAM Councils. Knox's initial response targets, which include inspection of the reported issue and a make safe process, for road potholes, footpath displacements, missing pit lids and kerb and channel issues are shorter than most other Councils. For some activities, Knox's repair response time is longer than other Councils, however the Knox standard applied is the same regardless of asset hierarchy whereas other Councils vary.

3.3.2. Benchmarking Councils current RMP standards against the MAV template standards.

In February 2025, Council's insurer MAV Insurance released the MAV - RMP Template and provided comments and recommendations where standards differed between their template and Councils RMP for roads, footpaths, roadside vegetation and kerb and channel. Appendix 2 contains the insurers findings and recommendations colour coded in order of potential risk.

Recommendations coloured yellow suggests an unreasonable risk control where Council should consider the benefits of amending the standard to the MAV template. These recommendations included:

- Increase the frequency of proactive inspections for local footpaths and unsealed roads.
- Reduce repair timeframes for potholes on link and collector roads.

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- Reduce repair timeframes for key and commercial footpaths.

Funding is currently not available to implement these recommendations.

- Increasing the frequency of proactive inspections for local footpaths and unsealed roads is estimated to cost in the vicinity of \$100K. Benchmarking across South Eastern Metropolitan councils does not identify that Council's inspection frequencies for local footpaths are outliers.
- Knox's initial response targets, which include inspection and a make safe process, for road potholes and footpath displacements are shorter than most other Councils. Make safe processes usually involves filling potholes in roads and applying wedges or grinds to footpaths.
- Council's RMP operates in accordance with the Road Management Act (2004) which states the purpose of a Road Management Plan is *to establish a management system for the road management functions of a road authority which is based on policy and operational objectives and available resources.*

Recommendations coloured grey suggests an absent/ambiguous/unmeasurable risk control where Council should consider including the standard recommended in the MAV template. These recommendations included:

- Include repair timeframes for roadside vegetation and footpath vegetation height clearance.
- Include intervention standards for kerb and channel displacement.
- Include repair timeframes for kerb and channel.

Council will include these three recommendations the next amendment of the RMP.

3.4. Performance Assessment

The Road Management Act (2004) provides relevant Road Authorities a policy defence on the premise it complies with its Service Levels outlined in its RMP. If the Road Authority demonstrates compliance, this can mitigate the exposure to personal and property claims.

For this review, Council's proactive hazard inspection and maintenance performance data has been extracted from the Confirm asset management system for the period 1 Jan 2021 until 31 Dec 2024. The scope of maintenance activities included is consistent with the 2021 review. The decision to keep the scope the same is due to a delay implementing system changes resulting from the last amendment of the RMP and sporadic usage of new defect types.

Summary results of the investigation are tabled in section 3. In summary:

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- 98% (average) of proactive hazard inspections completed in accordance with the RMP
- 97% (average) of initial responses completed in accordance with the RMP
- 99% (average) of rectification works completed in accordance with the RMP

Table 1 shows that Councils performance across the past four RMP reviews is steadily improving.

Performance target	2013	2017	2021	2024
Proactive hazard inspection	95%	97%	Note 1	98%
Initial response performance	86%	95%	94%	97%
Rectification works	91%	96%	91%	99%

Table 1: Performance across the past three RMP reviews

Note 1. Not measured

3.4.1. Performance Assessment – Proactive hazard inspections

Table 2 displays Councils operational approach to comply with the proactive inspection cycles contained within its RMP. The municipal area of Knox is split into 49 inspection zones to which the inspection routes are assigned. Inspection routes group asset classes and hierarchies. An annual schedule of inspections is split into two-month cycles. By analysing system data, Councils compliance with its proactive inspection cycles has been calculated at 98%.

Council's KPI target for proactive hazard inspections is 100%. Reasons for not achieving the target were investigated and included:

- Systematic issues due to incorrect data configuration when implementing Confirm or late data entry of new assets,
- A small number of Inspections being completed late, and
- A small number of inspections are missing with potential causes being either a device synchronization failure, or an operator error

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Inspection Route	Asset Category	Hierarchy	Cycle	Compliance %
RMP Bridges and Culverts	Bridges / Structures	All	6 Month	99.5%
RMP Bus Shelters	Bus Shelters	All	1 Year	100.0%
RMP Drain	Internal and External Drainage	Collector, Industrial, Access & VicRoads	1 Year	99.9%
RMP Road (Link) - and ext. Drain	External Drainage	Link Roads	6 Month	94.9%
	Kerb and Channel			
	Road Pavement			
	Signs - Regulatory and Warning			
	Retaining Walls, Stairs, Minor Structures			
	Road Surface			
	Local Area Traffic Management devices			
Road Furniture				
RMP Road (Collector and Industrial, Key Access Footpaths)	Kerb and Channel	Collector & Industrial Roads, Key Access Footpaths	1 Year	100%
	Road Pavement			
	Signs - Regulatory and Warning			
	Retaining Walls, Stairs, Minor Structures			
	Road Surface			
	Local Area Traffic Management devices			
	Footpath			
Road Furniture				
RMP Road (Local Roads)	Kerb and Channel	Local Roads, Footpaths (Local Access Routes, Industrial Routes, Reserve Routes)	2 Year	100.0%
	Road Pavement			
	Signs - Regulatory and Warning			
	Retaining Walls, Stairs, Minor Structures			
	Road Surface			
	Local Area Traffic Management devices			
	Footpath			
Road Furniture				
Footpaths (Commercial)	Footpath	Commercial	6 Month	99.7%
School Crossings	School Crossings	All	1 Year	100.0%
Shared Paths	Shared Paths	All	1 Year	86.6%
Total				98.0%

Table 2: Summary RMP Proactive Inspections

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3.4.2. Performance Assessment – Reactive Works Orders

Table 3 displays Council's performance in meeting its initial response and rectification time targets for the past four years. The total column represents the total number of jobs across the four years divided by the total number of jobs completed on time. Only a small number of reactive maintenance jobs, (less than 25 per asset type), were linked to Bridge and Culverts, Unsealed Roads, Local Area Traffic Management, Bus Stops and Roadside Vegetation. Knox's initial response targets, which include inspection and a make safe process, for road potholes and footpath displacements are shorter than most other Councils. Make safe processes usually involves filling potholes in roads and applying wedges or grinds to footpaths. However, Table 3 identifies that Knox has yet to achieve 100% compliance for Initial Response and Rectification Time targets for a range of RMP related maintenance activities.

Asset Class Targets		Total	2021	2022	2023	2024
Bridges & Culverts	Initial Response	88%	83%	100%	80%	86%
	Rectification Time	78%	100%	67%	100%	-
Bus Shelters	Initial Response	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Rectification Time	57%	-	100%	0%	0%
Drainage	Initial Response	98%	99%	97%	98%	97%
	Rectification Time	99%	100%	99%	99%	98%
Footpaths	Initial Response	95%	95%	94%	97%	95%
	Rectification Time	99%	99%	99%	100%	98%
Kerb & Channel	Initial Response	91%	84%	89%	98%	92%
	Rectification Time	99%	92%	100%	100%	100%
LATMs	Initial Response	71%	100%	-	60%	70%
	Rectification Time	100%	-	-	-	100%
Road Furniture	Initial Response	96%	95%	94%	100%	95%
	Rectification Time	96%	94%	93%	100%	99%
Road Pavement	Initial Response		-	-	-	-
	Rectification Time		-	-	-	-
Road Surface	Initial Response	95%	95%	95%	97%	93%
	Rectification Time	100%	99%	100%	100%	100%
Road Vegetation	Initial Response	98%	-	-	100%	100%
	Rectification Time	100%	-	-	100%	100%
Shared Paths	Initial Response	92%	95%	91%	94%	89%
	Rectification Time	99%	100%	94%	100%	99%
Signs	Initial Response	98%	97%	97%	100%	99%
	Rectification Time	98%	97%	98%	100%	99%
Unsealed Roads	Initial Response	85%	96%	95%	87%	68%
	Rectification Time	95%	-	100%	100%	92%
Total	Initial Response	97%	97%	95%	98%	95%
	Rectification Time	99%	99%	99%	99%	98%

Table 3: Summary RMP Initial Response and Rectification Completion.

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Table 4 displays the total number of maintenance jobs per asset class between 1 Jan 2021 and 31 Dec 2024 in descending order of the number of jobs. In total 15,681 RMP reactive maintenance jobs were completed. 84% of the total were associated with three asset classes:

- Drainage assets (51%),
- Footpaths (19%), and
- Signs (14%).

The reactive maintenance activity that had the most jobs were clear blocked drainage pits; however, it is difficult to determine how many of these jobs were linked to drainage pits in road reserves compared to easements drains. The most prevalent RMP maintenance activities were concrete footpath maintenance, sign maintenance, and pothole repairs. The rectified on-time performance percentages for these activities were 99%, 99%, and 97% respectively.

Asset Class	Number of Jobs	% of Total Jobs	Main Activity (No of jobs)
Drainage	7946	51%	Clear blocked drainage pits (5218 jobs)
Footpath	2921	19%	Concrete footpath maintenance (2740 jobs)
Signs	2194	14%	Sign maintenance regulatory/warning (1412 jobs)
Road Surface	977	6%	Pothole repair / minor patching (680 jobs)
Shared Paths	890	6%	
Road Furniture	587	4%	
Kerb and Channel	104	1%	
Bridge and Culvert	23	0%	
Unsealed Roads	20	0%	
LATM	10	0%	
Bus Shelters	7	0%	
Roadside Vegetation	2	0%	
Total Jobs	15816	100%	

Table 4: Summary RMP Reactive Maintenance Jobs between 1 Jan 2021 and 31 Dec 2024.

3.4.3. Performance Assessment – RMP Compliance Internal Audits

The Road Management Plan Compliance Internal Audit is an annual business plan activity to assess that current processes, inspections and maintenance activities are being undertaken in accordance with Council's Road Management Plan (RMP), and to demonstrate to Council's insurer that Council has in place a process of self-regulation.

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The process focuses on a small set of randomly selected Works Orders and supporting field sheets/documentation provided by relevant Operations staff. Steps include:

- a desktop systems-based audit of the works order information, and
- an onsite validation of completed work.

Table 5 shows Councils performance across the review period for Roads, Footpaths and Shared Paths. No audit was completed in 2021 due to Covid travel restrictions. The results show a high level of compliance with this internal audit process.

Asset Class	2022	2023	2024
Roads	100%	100%	95%
Footpath	100%	95%	100%
Shared Path	100%	100%	80%

Table 5: RMP Compliance Internal Audits

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4. Conclusion and recommendations

In conclusion:

- The Road Management Plan Review has been conducted in accordance with achieving the purpose defined in the Road Management (General) Regulations 2016.
- The review has involved completing a range of activities to assess the appropriateness, reasonableness and deliverability of Council's Road Management Plan standards.
- The result of the review identifies that Council's inspection, maintenance and repair standards are appropriate and achievable.
- Council's RMP operates in accordance with the Road Management Act (2004) which states the purpose of a Road Management Plan is *to establish a management system for the road management functions of a road authority which is based on policy and operational objectives and available resources.*
- Comparisons to previous reviews demonstrate gradual improvement however Council has not reached one hundred percent compliance.

This review has identified that some administrative changes are required. These are summarised below and detailed in Appendix 4.

- Remove or make current the work order process diagram.
- Clarify proactive inspection cycles and remove notation from the Hazard Inspection Frequency table.
- Remove non RMP related asset classes from the Hazard Inspection Frequency table for consistency.
- Fix typographic errors throughout the document.
- Insert or amend, (non-standard related), content from the MAV - RMP template as appropriate.

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1. Summary of Recommendations

1.1. Recommended amendments to Council's RMP

No	Page	Recommendation	Nature of Amendment
1	12	Update references to Confirm implementation to describe current state	Administrative
2	13	Remove or make current the work order process diagram	Administrative
3	17	Section 2.2 Dot point 7 – move to new section 2.3(a) Add new Dot point - On road carparks.	Administrative
4	17	Add new subsections 2.3(a) Within road reserve and 2.3(b) Not within the road reserve. Move Dot point 5 Drainage to subsection 2.3(b) Dot point 7 - replace uninformed with unformed Dot point 9 - replace on with in Add new Dot point to section 2.3(a) – Vehicle cross overs	Administrative
5	22	Replace words 6 months with more frequent	Administrative
6	23	Hazard Inspection Frequencies Table Remove Bike racks, Bins, Fire plug markers, Miscellaneous roadside furniture and Street light infrastructure Remove Signs - Other. Remove Road Pavement. Remove Roadside vegetation in vicinity of overhead cables. Remove VicRoads arterial roads. Update inspection cycles to reduce notation ambiguity.	Administrative - no change in standard as these asset classes have no associated maintenance activities.
7	28 29	Appendix 1. Kerb and Channel - add vertical and horizontal displacement Obstructions - add vegetation overhang	Administrative - increase in standard
8	6	Legislative and Statutory requirements - Add Wrongs Act 1958	Administrative
9	7	Stakeholder Lists - expand to match MAV Template	Administrative
10	26	Management during emergency situations. Consider whether a more formal approach is required. Refer MAV Template.	Administrative

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1.2. Recommended actions not resulting in amendments to Councils RMP

No	Recommended Action	Responsibility
1	Provide further training to relevant Operations staff on usage of the new RMP Subject Types and Defect types	Strategic Infrastructure
2		
3		

Appendix 1. SEMCAM Comparisons

				SEMCAM Council											
	Inspection Frequency	KNOX	MAV	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Roads	High	6 m	1-6 m	12 m	6 m	3 m	6 m	12 m	6 m	6 m		12 m	1 M	6 m	6 m
	Medium	12 m	6-24 m	12 m	6 m	6 m	12 m	36 m	12-18 m	6 m		24 m	1M	12 m	12 m
	Low	24 m	6-24 m	12 m	12 m	12 m	24 m	Reactive	24 m	13 m		24 m	12M	48 m	36 m
	Night	-	-	Undef		Undef	6 - 24 m	Nil		Nil		Nil	3Y-6Y		
Kerb	High	6 m		12 m		3 m	6 m	12 m		13 m		12 m	1 M	as per roads	as per roads
	Medium	12 m		12 m		6 m	12 m	36 m		13 m		24 m	1M	as per roads	as per roads
	Low	24 m		12 m		12 m	24 m	Reactive		13 m		24 m	12M	as per roads	as per roads
Drainage		as per roads		36 m		24 m	3 - 36 m	12-36 m	as per roads	Undef		as per roads	5Y		
Footpaths	High	6 m	1-6 m	6 m	6 m	6 m	1-6 m	6 m	12 m	6 m	6 m	3 m	6M	6 m	6 m
	Medium	12 m		6 m	-	Undef	12 m	12 m		13 m	24 m	6 m	12M	-	12 m
	Low	24 m	6-24 m	12 m	12 m	36 m	24 m	36 m	48 m	39 m	24 m	24 m	24M	12 m	36 m
	Shared	12 m		See Low and High		Undef	6-12 m			Not defined		12 m		-	12-36 m
Signs		As per Road		Undef		12 m	Undertaken with Roads or Pathways	as per roads		Undef		as per roads	3Y-6Y	as per roads	as per roads
Bridges	Level 1 (defect)	6 m		12 m	6 m	6 m	6 m		6 m	13 m	12 m	24 m	18M		
	Level 2 (condition)	24 m		As necessary	5 years	60 m	Not defined in RMP (2-3 years)			48 m		24 m	5Y		
Retaining walls		As per Road		Undef		Undef	Undertaken with Pathways		Undef	Undef		24 m			
Vegetation and trees		As per Road		Undef		Undef	HV - 12 m			Undef		as per roads	6Y		
							LV - 24 m								

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				SEMCAM Council											
	Inspection Frequency	KNOX	MAV	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Sealed road potholes	Intervention level														
	depth	50 mm	50-70mm	25	50mm	50mm	>50mm	50 mm	50mm	>50mm	≥ 100mm	50mm	35-50mm	50m m	70mm
	diameter	300 mm	300 or >300	300	300mm	300mm	>300mm	300 mm	200mm	>300mm	≥ 300mm	300m	150-200mm	300m m	150-300mm
	and / or	and	and	and	and	and	and	and	and	Undef	and/or	and	and		and/or
	Reactive Inspection														
	High	2 d	2-10 d	7 d	2 d	10 d	2 d	5 d	10 d	Undef		5 d		5 d	14 d
	Medium	2 d		7 d	2 d	10 d	2 d	5 d	10 d	Undef		5 d		5 d	21 d
	Low	2 d	5-10 d	45 d	2 d	10 d	2 d	10 d	10 d	Undef		5 d		20 d	21 d
	Emergency		4 hr - 1 d	1 d		6 hr				2 d	Undef				
	Repair response time														
	High	32 d	4 -10 d	7 d	7 d	10 d	30 d		10 d	14 d	10 d	10 d	7D	5 d	14 d
	Medium	32 d	2 w- 1 month	7 d	14 d	10 d	30 d		10 d	14 d	15 d	10 d	14D	5 d	21 d
	Low	32 d		45 d	14 d	10 d	30 d		10 d	45 d	15 d	10 d	8W	20 d	21 d
Unsealed road potholes	Intervention level		-												
	depth	50 mm	-	Undef		40 mm	150mm		50 mm	Undef	≥ 100mm	150mm	50mm		
	diameter	300 mm	-	Undef		20% area per km	>300mm		300 mm	Undef	20%	500mm			
	and / or	and	-	Undef		and	and		and	Undef	and	and	and		
	Reactive Inspection	3 d	-	Undef		10 d	2 d			Undef		5 d			
	Repair response time	32 d	-	Undef		20 d	30 d		20 d	Undef	10 d	30 d	6M		
Unsealed road rutting, corrugations	Intervention level		-												
	depth	50mm	-	Undef		Undef	>100mm		Undef	>100mm	≥ 100mm	150mm	150mm		

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				SEMCAM Council												
	Inspection Frequency	KNOX	MAV	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	over length	over 20% of surface	-	Undef		Undef	50%		Undef	>75%	≥ 20%	3m	5m			
	Reactive Inspection	3 d	-	Undef		Undef	2 d		Undef	Undef		5 d				
	Repair response time	32 d	-	Undef		Undef	30 d		Undef	360 d	10 d	30 d	6m			
Footpath displacements	Intervention level															
	High	20 mm	20-30mm	25mm	20-30mm	20 mm	>25mm	25 mm	25 mm	>15mm	≥ 25mm	10mm	30mm			
	Medium	20 mm	20-30mm	25mm	20-30mm	Undef	>25mm	25 mm	25 mm	>15mm		20mm	30mm			
	Low	20 mm	20-30mm	25mm	20-30mm	20 mm	>25mm	25mm	25mm	>20mm		20mm	30mm			
	Reactive Inspection															
	High	3 d	2 - 10 d	7 d	7-28 d	10 d	2 d	10 d	2 d	Undef		5 d		5 d		
	Medium	3d		7 d		10 d	2 d	20 d	2 d	Undef		5 d		20 d		
	Low	3 d	5-10 d	45 d	14-28 d	10 d	2 d	60 d	2 d	Undef		5 d				
	Emergency		4 hr - 1 d	7 d		6 hr				4 hr	Undef					
	Repair response time															
	High	50 d	2 w - 1 month	7 d	14 d	10 d	45 d			10 d	15 d	10 d	10 d	14D	5 d	
	Medium	50 d		60 d	14 d	Undef	45 d			10 d	45 d	15 d	10 d	8W		
Low	50 d	2 w - 3 m	60 d	14 d	30 d	45 d			10 d	90 d	30 d	10 d	6M	20 d		
Footpath cracking	Intervention level		-													
	Width	20 mm	-	Undef		20 mm (over 0.5m)	>15mm	Undef	Undef	Undef		>20mm	20mm			
	Reactive Inspection		-	Undef		10 d	2 d	Undef	2 d	Undef	2 d	5 d				

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				SEMCAM Council											
	Inspection Frequency	KNOX	MAV	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Repair response time		-	Undef	14 d	10 - 30 d	45 d	Undef	10 d	Undef		10 d	Same as displacements	5 -20 d	
Footpath undulations	Intervention level		-												
	depth		-	Undef		Undef	>100mm	Undef	Undef	Undef		20mm / 30mm	120mm		
	over length		-	Undef		Undef	Undef	Undef	Undef	Undef		1 m / 3m	1.2m		
	Reactive Inspection		-	Undef		Undef	2 d	Undef	2 d	Undef		5 d			
	Repair response time		-	Undef	14 d	Undef	45 d	Undef	10 d	Undef		10 d	14D		
Kerb & Channel	Intervention level		-	50mm		80mm	>50mm in 10m	100mm	100mm	>50mm		>50mm in 10m	50mm		
	Reactive Inspection		-												
	High	3 d	-	Undef		10 d	3 d	10 d	2 d	Undef		5 d		5 d	
	Medium	3 d	-	Undef		10 d	3 d	10 d	2 d	Undef		5 d		20 d	
	Low	3 d	-	Undef		10 d	3 d	60 d	2 d	Undef		5 d			
	Emergency		-	Undef		6 hr			4 hr	Undef					
	Repair response time		-												
	High	150 d	-	7 d		20 d	120 d		60 d	90 d		10 d	12W		
	Medium	150 d	-	45 d		20 d	120 d		60 d	90 d		10 d	12W		
	Low	150 d	-	45 d		20 d	120 d		60 d	180 d		10 d	6M		
Pit cover missing, damaged	Hazardous to public		-			6 hr									
	Reactive Inspection	3 d	-	1 d		10 d	2 d	2 d	4 hr - 2 d	Undef		1 d			
	Repair response time	120 d	-	45 d	14 d	10 - 30 d	5 d		30 d	5 d	10 d	1 -5 d	7D		

Road Management Plan Review
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				SEMCAM Council											
	Inspection Frequency	KNOX	MAV	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Signs missing, illegible, damaged	Reactive Inspection	3 d	-	Undef		10 d	2 d	5 d	2 d	Undef		5 d		10 d	4-6 m
	Repair response time	45/150 d	-	Undef		20 d	14/40 d	5 d	10-30 d	14 d	10-15 d	5 d	3D-12W		
Bridges, structures	Damage deterioration - risk to public		-			6 hr									
	Reactive Inspection	2 d	-	Undef		10 d	2 d		4 hr - 2 d	Undef		5 d			
	Repair response time	64 d	-	Undef	28 d	30 d	100 - 150 d		Undef	Undef		10 d	3D		
Road overhead vegetation clearance	Clearance		4 - 4.5m	Undef		Out of scope	< 4.5m	4m	4.1m	Undef		4.5m	3.75m		
	Repair response time														
	High		1 week-3m	Undef		Out of scope	30 d	30 d	20 d	Undef		20 d	12W		
	Medium			Undef		Out of scope	30 d	30 d	20 d	Undef		10 d	12W		
	Low		2 w - 3m	Undef		Out of scope	30 d	30 d	20 d	Undef		10 d	6Yrs		
Footpath overhead vegetation clearance	Clearance		2.5 - 3m	Undef	2.5m	Out of scope	< 2.5m	3m	3m	Undef		2.5m	2m		
	Repair response time														
	High		2 w - 3 m	Undef		Out of scope	30 d	30 d	20 d	Undef		20 d	1Y		
	Medium			Undef		Out of scope	30 d	30 d	20 d	Undef		10 d	2Y		

Road Management Plan Review
2025



				SEMCAM Council											
	Inspection Frequency	KNOX	MAV	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Low		2 w - 3 m	Undef	70 d	Out of scope	30 d	30 d	20 d	Undef		10 d	6Y		
Procedure manual for inspections		no		No		Undef	No			Undef		No			

Road Management Plan Review
2025



Appendix 2. Knox current RMP to MAV RMP Template.

RMP Category	Knox RMP Standard vs. Template	Comments & Recommendations	Recommended Minimum RMP Standard
1 - Proactive Inspection Road - Highest	>3-6 months		
2 - Proactive Inspection Road - Lowest	>12-24 months	Amend proactive inspection of lowest category roads to >12 -24 months, or as close to standard as achievable. If RMP standard is not achievable, document reasoning.	>12-24 months
3 - Proactive Inspection Footpath - Highest	>3-6 months		
4 - Proactive Inspection Footpath - Lowest	>12-24 months	Amend proactive inspection of lowest category footpaths to >6 -12 months, or as close to standard as achievable. If RMP standard is not achievable, document reasoning.	>6-12 months
5 - Proactive Inspection Sealed Laneways	>12-24 months	Amend proactive inspection of sealed laneways to >12 -24 months, or as close to standard as achievable. If MAV Template standard is not achievable, document reasoning.	>12-24 months
6 - Proactive Inspection Unsealed Roads - Highest	>12-24 months	Amend proactive inspection of highest category unsealed roads to >6 -12 months, or as close to standard as achievable. If MAV Template standard is not achievable, document reasoning.	>6-12 months
7 - Proactive Inspection Kerb & Channel - Highest	>3-6 months		>3-6 months
8 - Reactive Inspections - Highest	2 days		10 wd
9 - Reactive Inspections - Lowest	10 days		10 wd
10 - Emergency Response	1 day		2wd
11 - Pothole Depth Intervention Level	>50mm		>70mm
12 - Pothole Diameter Intervention Level	>300mm		
13 - Pothole Repair Timeframe - Highest	>1-3 months	Amend repair timeframe for highest category pothole defects to as close to standard as achievable. If MAV Template standard is not achievable, document reasoning.	>1-2 weeks
14 - Pothole Repair Timeframe - Lowest	>1-3 months		
15 - Veg Road Overhead Clearance - Highest	?		
16 - Veg Road Repair Timeframe- Highest	?		>1-2 weeks
17 - Veg Road Repair Timeframe- Lowest	?		
18 - Footpath Intervention Level	20mm		
19 - Footpath Repair Timeframe Highest	>1-3 months	Amend repair timeframe for highest category footpath defects to at least 4 weeks, or as close to standard as achievable. If MAV Template standard is not achievable, document reasoning.	>2-4 weeks
20 - Footpath Repair Timeframe Lowest	>1-3 months		
21 - Veg Footpaths Overhead Clearance - Highest	?		
22 - Veg Footpaths Repair Timeframe - Highest	?		>2-4 weeks
23 - Veg Footpaths Repair Timeframe - Lowest	?		
24 - Kerb & Channel - Vertical Intervention Level	?	Amend kerb & channel vertical intervention level to >75mm, or as close to standard as achievable. If MAV Template standard is not achievable, document reasoning.	>75mm
25 - Kerb & Channel - Horizontal Intervention Level	?	Consider including a horizontal K&C intervention level of >75mm, or as close to standard as achievable. If MAV Template standard is not achievable, document reasoning.	>75mm
26 - Kerb & Channel Repair Timeframe - Highest	?	Consider amending highest K&C repair timeline to a maximum of 4 weeks, or as close to standard as achievable. If MAV Template standard is not achievable, document reasoning.	>2-4 weeks
27 - Kerb & Channel Repair Timeframe - Lowest	?	Consider amending lowest K&C repair timeline to a maximum of 3 months, or as close to standard as achievable. If MAV Template standard is not achievable, document reasoning.	>1-3 months
28 - Kerb & Channel Inspection Vantage	Unclear	Document kerb and channel inspections are to be carried out from the footpath - high traffic areas as a minimum.	From Footpath

Highly conservative risk control	Standard is highly conservative - Consider benefits / resource impacts of amending standard to MAV Template.
Conservative risk control	Standard is conservative - Consider benefits / resource impacts of amending standard to MAV Template.
Adequate/Reasonable risk control	Standard is considered reasonable. Council's RMP is defensible in the event of a claim.
Unreasonable risk control	Current standard is potentially unreasonable - Consider benefits of amending standard to MAV Template.
Highly unreasonable risk control	Current standard is highly unreasonable - Consider benefits of amending standard to MAV Template.
Absent / ambiguous / unmeasurable risk control	No standard is highly unreasonable - Consider including standard recommended the MAV Template.

This report compares key intervention and measurement levels documented in Council's publicly available RMP (Jan 2024) with the MAV Insurance RMP Template.

8.4 Draft Mobility and Access Action Plan

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Decision
Author:	Sustainable Transport Planner, Yingnan Wang
Manager:	Manager - Strategic Infrastructure, Matthew Hanrahan
Executive:	Director - Infrastructure, Grant Thorne

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report to seek endorsement of the Draft Knox Mobility and Access Action Plan (KMAAP) and its Background Report to be released for public exhibition. KMAAP represents a refresh of the 2012 Mobility Study, which highlighted the crucial role of the footpath and shared path networks for individuals facing mobility challenges, especially in the context of limited public transport and a high reliance on private vehicles in Knox. Over the past 13 years, most of the new works identified in the original 2012 Mobility study have been built/addressed. It is therefore timely that a revised plan be prepared, acknowledging the increasing mobility needs of an ageing population.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Endorses the Draft Knox Mobility and Access Action Plan (attachment 1) and Background Report (attachment 2) as final drafts for public consultation.
2. Note that following the public consultation period and review of feedback received, the Knox Mobility and Access Action Plan will be presented to Council for final endorsement at a future Council meeting.

1. DISCUSSION

1.1. Introduction

The Knox Mobility and Access Action Plan (KMAAP) has been prepared to update Council's previous Mobility Study, which was originally developed in 2012. In the previous Knox Mobility Study, we gained an understanding of how people with disabilities, specifically those who use mobility aids, travel around the municipality. The investigation focused on the accessibility of the footpath and shared path network within Knox and identified improvements required to cater for the travel needs of pedestrians using mobility aids. The original Knox Mobility Study resulted in a subsequent implementation plan that identified specific mobility infrastructure measures to be addressed.

As part of the original Mobility Study consultation, some residents in the focus groups indicated that using the footpath and shared path network in Knox was a more efficient mode of travel rather than waiting for a public transport service. The City of Knox enjoys an extensive shared path and footpath network covering approximately 1,350km. Over the last 10 years, Council has been working towards improving and extending the path network. In the meantime, many people changed their way of travelling due to more accessible transport infrastructure and more micro-mobility options being available. Therefore, it is appropriate to seek new feedback from the

community about the current mobility challenges and develop a new mobility plan to address them.

The new KMAAP, an advanced iteration of the previous plan, has been developed to provide another 10-year road map to improve Knox's urban infrastructure and support independent travel for all types of users within our community. An extensive consultation process was undertaken between May and July 2024 to assess the current conditions of transport infrastructure at key activity centres and identify barriers for people with mobility challenges that prohibit independent and safe travel within Knox. The KMAAP also focuses on the individual experience, resulting in Council officers auditing and identifying issues in six activity centres, as they co-audited with the lived experiences of community members, each of whom had different disabilities and saw our centres through a different lens.

The six activity centres audited included Ferntree Gully Activity Centre, Knoxfield Shopping Centre, Rowville Community Centre precinct, Scoresby Village Shopping Centre, The Basin Triangle and Wantirna Activity Centre. They were selected for site-walkthroughs with community members due to contributing factors including the majority of the areas being public realm under Council's responsibility, a mixture of flat and sloping terrain, supporting a diverse mix of uses (e.g. retail, health, service, community and education), and proximity and connectivity with active and public transport distribution across the municipality, .

For many living with a disability, travelling independently to work, social and educational opportunities can be limiting, especially in a car-dominated community with poor public transport options. This Action Plan aims to address this service gap by improving the footpath and shared path networks and Council-managed accessible parking bays, all of which Council has direct influence over. Improvements would aim to connect persons with disabilities to local opportunities and services to facilitate a more independent lifestyle. The plan will also include actions related to transport infrastructure owned by private sectors or DTP to enhance overall accessibility and mobility in the municipality through fostering partnerships with private owners, advocating to State Government and Federal Government, and raising community awareness.

1.2. Delivering the Knox Mobility and Access Action Plan

The Knox Mobility and Access Action Plan seeks to address barriers to travel and improve the mobility and accessibility of people with mobility challenges when travelling in Knox. Key barriers identified through the consultation process are related to accessible car parking, stairs, pathways, furniture, wayfinding, Tactile Ground Surface Indicator (TGSIs) and kerb ramps.

In the Draft Mobility and Access Action Plan (attachment 1), five key action categories were developed to address the above barriers, which are:

- **Accessible car parking** – six actions developed; aimed to install more accessible car parking and improve existing accessible car parking.
- **Pathways** – seven actions developed; focused on addressing footpath obstructions and providing more accessible paths across the municipality.
- **Connectivity** – five actions developed; focused on addressing unsafe crossing points, creating safe and connected pathways and improving accessibility to activity centres, buildings and public transport.

- **Supporting infrastructure** – six actions developed; aimed to create a more comfortable and convenient transport journey by providing better supporting infrastructure such as seats, handrails, TGSIs, and line marking.
- **Working towards a better future** – four actions developed; focused on exploring how to deliver complementary works under Capital Works Programs and investigating smart technologies to ensure safety and comfort for everyone well into the future.

A Background Report is also attached to this report (attachment 2). It provides evidence and data that underpin the strategies and actions outlined in the Draft KMAAP.

Through community consultation, we confirmed that Knox community is seeking a more accessible Knox, while understanding that every individual has their unique mobility needs. This action plan provides Council with another 10-year roadmap towards a more accessible Knox, drawing upon a variety of funding sources to support its delivery. It aims to prioritise some mobility-related projects by re-badging a portion of funding from existing related infrastructure programs. Due to Council's financial constraints, it is worth noting that the action plan will be addressed based on priority ranking criteria, noting that some issues with low priority may not be resolved within the next 10 years.

To ensure the plan is guided by the community needs and implemented effectively, a report summarising the works completed across the year will be prepared by Council officers and presented to Council via the Capital Works Reporting process.

2. ENGAGEMENT

2.1. Initial consultation

The consultation used to prepare the draft KMAAP consisted of three tasks: community consultation (including with key advisory committees), experiential site walkthroughs (utilising community members with disability) and specialist access audits. This work has received strong support from the Knox Disability Advisory Committee (KDAC). Several KDAC members participated in the community workshop and/or joined officers in co-auditing selected activity centres. In addition, officers provided an update on the initial results of the community survey to KDAC in July last year.

2.1.1. Community Consultation

- A community survey on the Council's "*Have Your Say*" page. Thirty **responses** to the survey were received.
- A face-to-face and an online community workshop to understand individuals' movement patterns and best practices in their eyes.
- A face-to-face workshop with Council officers to understand competing priorities and issues reported by people with disability.
- Presentations/engagements were provided to some Knox advisory committees such as Knox Disability Advisory Committee, Active Aging Advisory Committee, and Early Years Advisory Committee.

2.1.2. Site walkthroughs

Site walkthroughs were conducted in six priority activity areas, focusing on the experiences of individuals with mobility challenges. To ensure the study reflected real-life perspectives, six community members with mobility challenges from Knox community were invited to participate in a walkthrough of one activity centre each, providing their insights into the accessibility barriers they encountered. The accessibility type of each individual and the corresponding activity centre are shown below:

- A parent with a pram representing people with low/no vision – The Basin Triangle
- A person using a walking stick due to mobility restrictions – Rowville Community Centre
- A person using a walking stick – Scoresby Village
- A person who is hearing impaired and a balance issue – Wantirna Village
- A manual wheelchair user – Knoxfield Shopping Centre
- A partially vision-impaired person and a person in an Electric wheelchair – Ferntree Gully

2.1.3. Access audits

Independent access audits were undertaken in 11 precinct sites to identify council-owned infrastructure that supports the safety and comfort for people with disability, in accordance with the requirements of the National Construction Code and relevant standards (AS1428.1 and AS1428.4.1 mainly) within the Australian Standards framework.

The items that were audited included accessible car parking facilities, pathway and accessways, kerb ramps, step ramps, ramps, walkways, stairways, street furniture, Tactile ground surface indicators (TGSi), wayfinding, signage, luminance contrast, lighting and finishes including abutments. Approximately 2,500 issues were identified in access audits with multiple issues often occurring at the same location. For example, a non-accessible parking spot may have multiple issues such as incorrect line-marking, wrong signage and a missing kerb ramp. It's also important to note not all of the issues identified by access audits can/will be addressed due to site limitations and/or cost/benefit (e.g. topography, road reserve width). As with results of previous audits, initiatives will be prioritised based on risk, deliverability, cost and benefits, seeking to ensure that identified issues do not compromise on mobility and accessibility, as defined through community feedback.

2.2. Consultation learnings

During the initial consultation, the main challenges as listed in Section 1.2 above were raised. From community engagement and conversations during site walkthroughs, we confirmed that the key destinations for people with mobility issues include train stations, medical centres, community facilities, open spaces, and shopping centres. Community members with mobility issues also travel to the Melbourne CBD and more distant locations such as the airport. The most common mode of transportation is a private car, with some participants driving themselves. The most common form of public transport is a taxi, with a few participants using trains, mostly to travel to the Melbourne CBD. Most participants travel along the residential footpaths and shared paths to neighbourhood activity centres on a regular basis. A typical journey using a mobility device takes more than 30 minutes, with some indicating they travel between 20 and 30 minutes.

2.3. Proposed consultation for Draft Mobility and Access Action Plan

As part of the final consultation, the draft plan and the background report will be available for public exhibition in September 2025, with the view that the consultation will commence on 1 September 2025 and cease on 28 September 2025.

The consultation on the draft plan will invite community feedback on the proposed actions. Community members will be able to provide feedback by submitting written feedback via emails or letters, completing an online survey on Council's *Have your Say* page or sharing their thoughts verbally over the phone or in person.

Officers will also consult key Knox advisory committees that were part of previous workshops and neighbouring Councils, by either giving a presentation or sending a copy of the draft for comments. It is worth noting that officers will present the draft plan in detail to the Knox Disability Advisory Committee and seek their specific input on the proposed actions and priorities for implementation.

The proposed consultation will be open for a total of four weeks and then inform any final changes to the KMAAP prior to the presentation to Council at a future Council meeting for final endorsement. An engagement plan has been developed and is currently being reviewed by the Communication team.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Implementation of KMAAP initiatives will seek to minimise physical barriers for people who experience mobility limitations in accessing retail, services, facilities and employment and improve travel safety and comfort across different modes of transportation. These can include a variety of persons with mobility issues, including those with a disability, the elderly, parents with prams, mobility aid users, visually impaired people, and temporarily injured people.

While the mobility audit has focused on six priority areas within the municipality, any enquiries or concerns raised by the community about other locations will also be investigated. Where required, these sites will be assessed and prioritised for action alongside the issues identified within the six audited areas.

4. CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS

The subject of this report has been considered in the context of climate change and its relevance to the Knox Climate Response Plan 2021 – 2031. The delivery of those actions identified in the draft KMAAP will support Council in its vision to assist people with disability and the wider community in shifting from a car-dominated community to one with a more sustainable and healthy mix of active, public and private transport. Thus, it will reduce fuel emissions and positively impact the Council's Net Zero emission by 2040 target.

It is understood that building more DDA-compliant pathways and resting areas may create more concrete areas, thus resulting in increased risk of the heat island effect in highly urbanised areas. However, this could be offset by planting additional canopy trees along paths and resting areas. In addition, we will explore sustainable materials for footpaths, which are easy to maintain and accessible for people with mobility challenges.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The construction of a footpath may result in the relocation or removal of vegetation. Where this is the case, vegetation will be offset on the other side of the street or replanted once the new path is constructed. For local streets with low traffic, we also prioritise streets without any footpath over streets having a footpath which will help reduce the impervious surface area, potentially retaining the existing green space while improving the accessibility of those local streets.

This proposal also aligns with community feedback regarding building footpaths on streets where there is an existing footpath on one side. A recent example is the withdrawal of a footpath project under Capital Works Program after Council received “not necessary” comments from the majority community members during the public consultation.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Achieving accessibility compliance across all of Knox would be cost prohibitive relative to available budgets. It's been estimated that addressing the six targeted activity centres assessed in this audit would cost approximately \$500,000 per year (\$5 million across 10 years). In addition, addressing new footpath gaps that are mobility related requests would cost an additional \$300,000 per annum to build (\$3 million across 10 years).

It is prudent therefore to present a financially responsible approach that sits within Council's financial capacity, without majorly impacting on existing budget sources. This is achieved through re-assigning funding from existing related programs; including.

- \$200,000 of the \$3.2million Footpath Renewal Program to be re-assigned to Mobility Upgrade Works. This budget would be for correcting existing kerb ramps, footpaths, TGSI's, etc.
- \$200,000 for New Mobility Works (combining approximately \$83,000 from the Mobility Plan Implementation operating budget and \$117,000 from the annual New Footpath Program). This budget would be for new kerb ramps, sections of footpaths, mobility improvements, new accessible car parking, and installing supporting infrastructure such as seats and wayfinding signs.
- Other funding opportunities include new accessible parking spaces approved under Parking Management Plans being progressively developed across our activity centres. Plus, maintenance upgrades under existing maintenance budgets, for works such as correcting sign types, fixing linemarking colour, replacing TGSI's etc.

7. RISKS

The key risks identified with delivering the Knox Mobility and Access Plan include:

- Potential reduction of other car parking spaces in the activity centres due to the increased number of accessible parking spaces. Car parking demands in the activity centres will be appropriately assessed through Parking Management Plan consultation process.
- The potential removal or impact on existing vegetation along the proposed routes. During the scoping and design phase, a qualified arborist will be required to assess the existing vegetation on site to determine potential impact and options to minimise the cycling facility's impact on the local environment.

The key risks identified with not delivering the Knox Mobility and Access Plan include:

- Limiting the physical access of segments of our community
- Poorer health and wellbeing of people with mobility issues such as increased isolation, reduced physical activity, increased mental issues, increased social exclusion and inequality
- Non-compliance with disability access standards and possible litigation
- Reputational risks
- Missed funding and partnership Opportunities from State and Federal governments

8. COUNCIL AND HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN 2025-2029

Enhancing community connection to vital services and resources

Strategy 1.1 - A variety of transport options is available through the effective planning, advocacy and management of efficient, active, sustainable and accessible transport modes, particularly in growth locations.

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 2.4 - 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 4.2 - Our diverse community is informed and has opportunities to participate and provide feedback through clear and meaningful communication and engagement.

Being a strong voice for safety

Strategy 5.1 - Our community feels safer in public spaces and facilities through planning, maintenance, education, design and proactive program delivery for Council owned and managed spaces and via advocacy for others.

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 - Knox Mobility & Access Action Plan [**8.4.1** - 16 pages]
2. Attachment 2 - Draft Knox Mobility and Access Action Plan Background Report [**8.4.2** - 77 pages]

Draft Knox Mobility and Access Action Plan 2025-2035



knox



Mayor’s message

Life inevitably presents us with a range of challenges, but despite these obstacles, every individual should have the opportunity to live life to their fullest potential. As custodians of our city, people, and the natural environment that sustains us, it is our responsibility to foster the growth of our community in ways that promote access to opportunities, experiences, and choices for everyone.

The Mobility and Access Action Plan is an important step in ensuring that no one is left behind in our vision for a more inclusive municipality. While the plan focuses primarily on improving path networks and accessible parking, its impact reaches far beyond these physical changes. By addressing the fundamental transport needs of our community, we aim to create an environment where all individuals, regardless of ability, culture, language, sexuality, gender identity, age, socio-economic status, or life experiences, can fully participate in and enjoy the services, spaces, and experiences our city offers.

The Mobility and Access Action Plan reflects our commitment to building a community that values diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunity. It is a recognition that true accessibility is not just about providing physical infrastructure, but about fostering a culture where every person, no matter their background or circumstance, can move freely and engage fully with the world around them. The plan is a small but crucial part of our broader vision to create a community where everyone can thrive, where mobility and access are not privileges, but basic rights. By making these improvements, we hope to empower our residents to live with greater independence, confidence, and connection to one another. Together, we are building a future where all people, regardless of their differences, are valued, included, and supported.

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Glossary

Accessible parking	A car parking space that is accessible for people with a disability who are eligible for and display a valid parking permit in their vehicle.
Barrier	Limits people's ability to use and enjoy a public place or space. It can be an obstruction such as tables or chairs along a pathway or missing items such as handrails along stairs.
Bullnose	A vertical rise at the bottom of a pram ramp, which creates a tripping hazard and increases the challenges for people with mobility aids when using pram ramps.
Crossfall	The slope of a path towards the edge.
Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)	A piece of legislation aimed at preventing discrimination against individuals with disabilities, ensuring that they have the same rights and opportunities as those without disabilities.
Mobility device	A device used by people with disability such as manual and electric wheelchairs, walking frames, walking sticks, scooters, canes and crutches to help them move within spaces and places.
Shared zone in an accessible car parking space	A striped space next to the accessible car parking bay that gives extra room for permit holders to enter and exit their vehicles and access pathways
Smart technology	Technology including sensors and high-definition cameras that automatically adjust crossing times by detecting how many people are either waiting at a crossing or currently crossing the road.
Tactile ground service indicator (TGSi)	Raised surface domes or cones on the ground designed to warn pedestrians who are blind or who have a vision impairment with information about features such as stairs, ramps or hazards.
Wayfinding signage	Signs with words or images that help people find their way around a place, such as showing directions to key destinations.



Accessibility: the ability for everyone to participate in day-to-day activities and to use buildings and infrastructure.



Mobility: the ability to move in a physical space with ease and comfort.

When something provides accessibility and mobility, it means it is designed or arranged in a way that allows you to use it easily, regardless of any physical limitations or impairments.

About the plan

The Knox Mobility and Access Plan (KMAAP) is a 10-year plan that focuses on improving people's ability to travel around Knox. While creating public spaces that accommodate all types of disabilities presents challenges, Council endeavours to ensure spaces and places used by people with disability are accessible, safe, convenient and comfortable.

This action plan mainly focuses on improving our paths and accessible car parking facilities managed by Council. However, Council will enhance overall accessibility and mobility in the municipality through providing service and regulation, fostering partnerships with private owners, advocating to State Government and Federal Government, and raising community awareness.

We recognise that "accessibility" means different things to each individual, and achieving full accessibility across Knox will be a long-term journey. Due to Council's financial constraints, it will not be achievable within the next 10 years. However, this plan represents an important step forward. It reflects what we've heard from the community and ensures that improvement works will be guided by community needs and delivered against the new priority criteria that will be developed through this action plan.



What guides this plan?

✔ Disability Discrimination Act 1992 & Victorian Disability Act 2006

Both protect the rights of people with disability from discrimination. These laws ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to services, public spaces, and transportation, promoting inclusivity and equal opportunities for all.

✔ Intersectionality

We understand that every individual has multiple, intersecting identities that shape their unique experiences and mobility needs.

✔ Universal design

We believe that transport infrastructure should be accessible to as many people as possible, regardless of age, ability, gender identity, culture, language, or any other social characteristics.

✔ Co-design

We work towards a "nothing about us without us" approach that includes people living with disability in decisions relating to service design and delivery.

People with disability include, but are not restricted to, those who have long-term physical, mental, cognitive, intellectual or sensory impairments.

Due to limited feedback from the community with mental disabilities, the KMAAP focuses on the specific challenges experienced by individuals using mobility devices, such as electric and manual wheelchairs, long canes, walking sticks, walking frames, and prams, as well as those with body-balancing issues and those with hearing or vision impairments.

Engaging our community

An intensive consultation process was undertaken to understand the issues and challenges people with mobility challenges face when travelling in Knox.

We appreciate the effort of volunteers and community members who contributed to the consultation.

Community engagement



We asked you a series of questions about travel patterns, key destinations, what makes your journey easier or more pleasant, and where you think attractive and easy to travel. Different channels (online versus in person; written versus verbal) were used to cater for the needs of people with different disabilities:

- online community survey
- face-to-face workshop
- online workshop.
- consultation with Knox Disability Advisory Committee (KDAC)

Site walk-throughs



We walked around six activity centres with community members with different disabilities to assess Council's assets through their eyes.

- Ferntree Gully Activity Centre
- Knoxfield Shopping Centre
- Rowville Community Centre
- Scoresby Village Shopping Centre
- The Basin Triangle
- Wantirna Activity Centre

Access audits



We engaged an Access Auditor to undertake onsite inspections of Council-owned assets in the following 11 precinct sites, in accordance with the requirements of the National Construction Code and relevant Australian Standards.

- Bayswater Activity Centre
- Boronia Activity Centre
- Ferntree Gully Activity Centre
- Knoxfield Shopping Centre
- Knox Central Activity Centre
- Mountain Gate Shopping Centre
- Rowville Community Centre
- Scoresby Village Shopping Centre
- The Basin Triangle
- Upper Ferntree Gully Activity Centre
- Wantirna Activity Centre

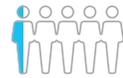
Disability in Knox

*Knox community statistics are sourced from the 2018 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, Census 2016 and Census 2021.



17.2%

of people in Knox live with a disability, which includes all reported disability.



9.8%

of people in Knox have a physical disability that likely impacts mobility across all levels of restriction (mild to profound)



18%

of people in Knox suffer from the most prevalent long-term health condition – arthritis.



13.3%

of people in Knox provide unpaid assistance to a person with a disability, long-term illness or old age.



12.4%

of people with disability use mobility aids or equipment.



40%

increase in people with core daily activity limitation is forecasted from 2018 to 2031.

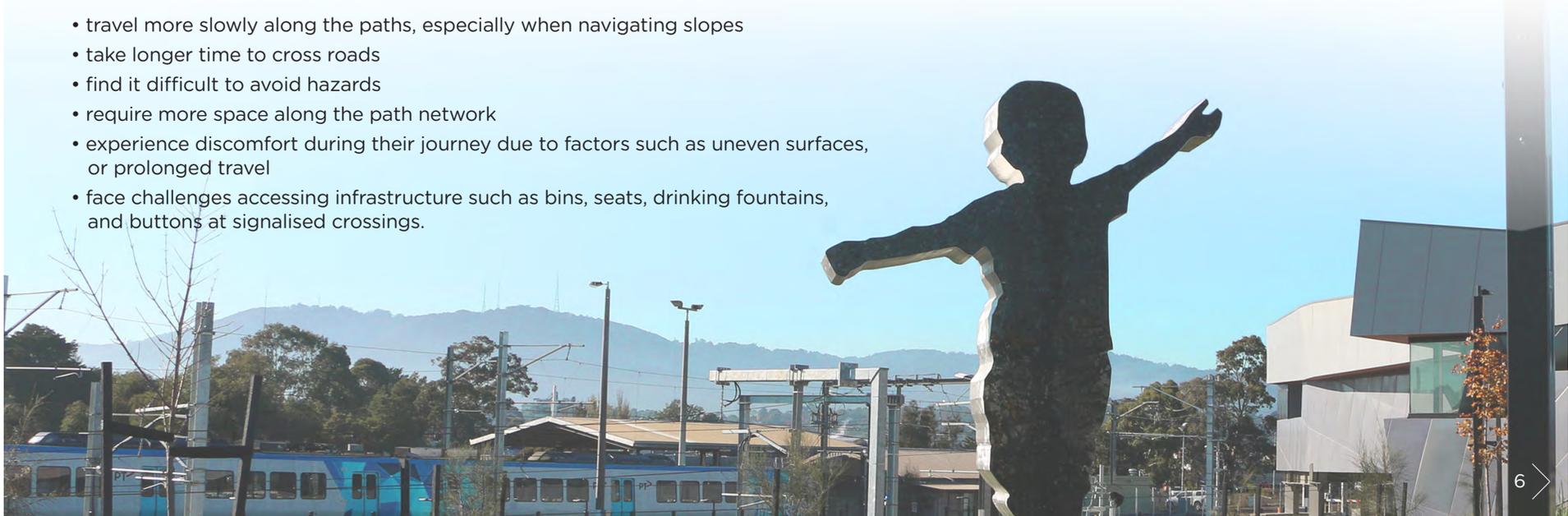


38%

of people with disability find it difficult using some or all forms of public transport. One of the main reasons for this is not being able to reach stops or stations.

People with mobility impairments experience travel differently from other users because they:

- travel more slowly along the paths, especially when navigating slopes
- take longer time to cross roads
- find it difficult to avoid hazards
- require more space along the path network
- experience discomfort during their journey due to factors such as uneven surfaces, or prolonged travel
- face challenges accessing infrastructure such as bins, seats, drinking fountains, and buttons at signalised crossings.



Our community is saying

'If I was by myself, I would rush across the pedestrian crossing which means I'm likely to fall. I would probably avoid the crossing.'

'The pram ramp is too steep and narrow, so I have to be dropped off instead of coming alone.'

'The distance between the bus stop and my house is too far, even though it is considered 'reasonable' for people without disabilities.'

'If there aren't enough accessible car spaces, I have to park in the street which is dangerous, go somewhere else or go home.'

'It is frustrating when finding out the path ends nowhere.'

'I like the painted yellow markings; I can see them from a mile off.'

'I have found the footpaths very uneven, particularly where the bitumen has been used to try to level the concrete slabs. Tree seeds and small broken branches are continual hazards.'



What we discovered

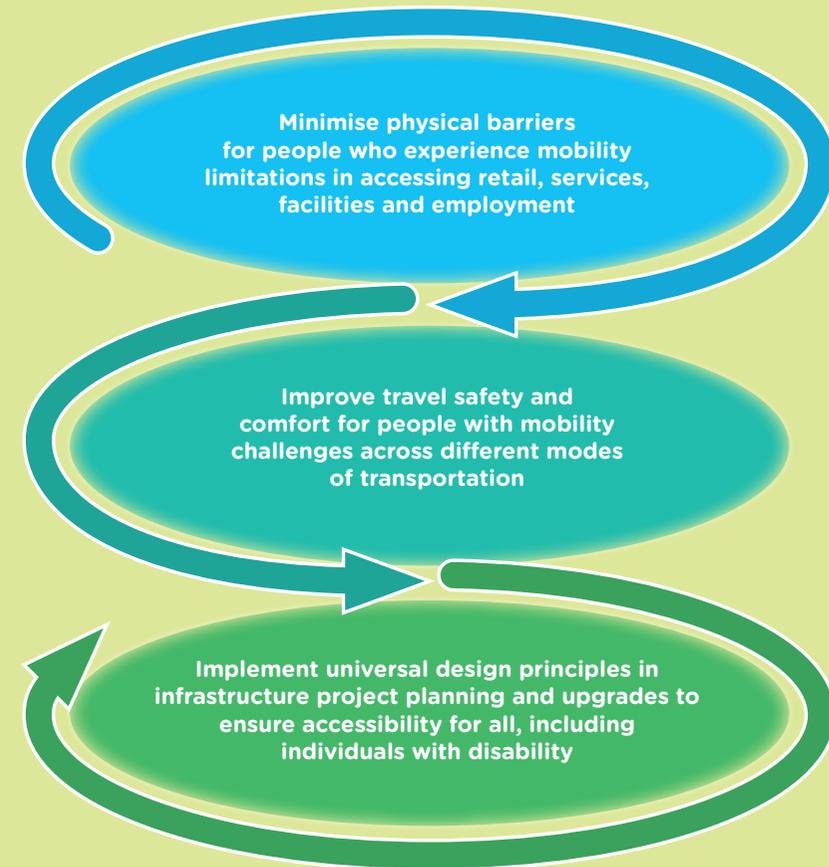
Every finding matters, whether gathered from community input, site walk-throughs, or access audits, in identifying the challenges faced by people with mobility issues. These insights help uncover issues and highlight barriers hindering independent and safe travel, serving as the first step in developing effective actions.

Element	Key Issues
Accessible car parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> insufficient used without a valid permit poorly located shared zones absent, blocked or on the wrong side no pram ramp unclear/incorrect line marking difficult to find
Stairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> absence of compliant handrails no Tactile ground service indicator warnings edges of steps not easily visible
Pathways and walkways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> not provided/terminates pathway edges not level with nature strip too steep obstacles present such as encroaching vegetation, overhanging branches, rubbish bins, shop furniture uneven and/or broken unsafe crossings
Furniture and fixtures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no backs or armrests on benches no space for mobility devices to park no shade
Wayfinding signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> incorrect lack of informative signage to assist in decision-making and navigation
Tactile ground surface indicators (TGSIs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> broken or lifted directional or warning TGSIs not provided difficult to see not aligned with the path of travel
Kerb ramp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> bullnose not aligned with direction of travel too steep a landing is not provided

What we are working towards

We are committed to implementing a series of actions to effectively address the barriers identified above.

Through these actions, we aim to:

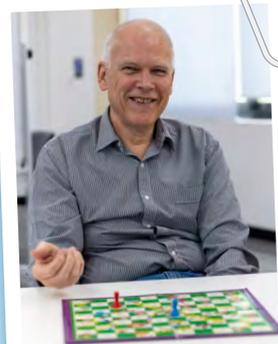


Draft Knox Mobility and Access Action Plan 2025-2035

Action Today, Mobility Tomorrow, 2025 - 2035

Action Today, Mobility Tomorrow 2025 - 2035





Community story 1:

Lawrence, a wheelchair user, enjoys the freedom of driving his car everywhere, finding it much faster and more convenient than relying on public transport. He often visits Stud Park Shopping Centre and Wellington Village, but sometimes struggles to find an accessible parking spot. He's hoping for more accessible parking spaces and better enforcement of illegal parking.



Community story 2:

Shelley loves being independent and staying connected with her community through social activities. She takes great joy in being active and involved in many community activities. However, she has to move slowly and cautiously as she has cerebral palsy which impacts her balance, fatigue levels and hearing. She's advocating for safer crossing points to make walking easier and give her the chance to drive less.



Community story 3:

For over 40 years, Geoff and Leonie have called Ferntree Gully home. Leonie, who uses a mobile scooter, and Geoff, who is partially vision-impaired, love walking their grandchild to his kindergarten, local parks, and playgrounds. They're asking for better footpath maintenance to keep the paths wide, smooth, and safe for everyone.



Community story 4:

Shirani, who uses a walking stick to navigate daily activities and has experienced muscle weakness from childhood arthritis, finds joy and peace in walking through local parks. She looks forward to seeing more accessible seats along the paths in the future, so she and others like her can take short rests and continue enjoying the outdoors with comfort. In addition, she has been advocating for an accessible parking spot at The Basin Triangle!

Accessible car parking

People who experience mobility issues mainly travel as a passenger or driver in a private car or in a taxi. Therefore adequate, well-designed and well-located accessible car parking enable people with mobility impairments to use public places and spaces comfortably and safely.

Our goal for accessible car parking is that people with mobility challenges can park comfortably and conveniently.

We aim to:

- ✓ Provide more accessible parking spaces in Council-owned car parks
- ✓ Ensure accessible car spaces in Council-owned car parks are well designed, located and connected to the footpath and public amenities
- ✓ Encouraging developers and the private sector to increase the number of accessible parking spaces at key activity precincts
- ✓ Educate the public to keep accessible parking spaces clear and available for those who need them



We will achieve it by:

1.1

Installing at least one accessible parking space for every 50 regular parking spaces in Council-owned car parks



1.2

Considering increasing enforcement to prevent the illegal use of accessible parking spaces by a person without a valid permit



1.3

Retrofitting existing non-DDA-compliant parking spaces to address current community concerns through capital work programs



1.4

Seeking Knox Disability Advisory Committee's feedback on the current supply of accessible parking as part of Knox Parking Management Plan consultations



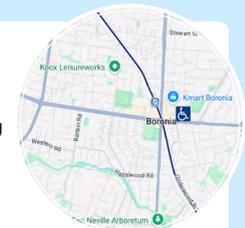
1.5

Advocating to developers and the private sector to maximise the provision of accessible car parking spaces



1.6

Creating accessible parking maps for Council-owned car parks



Pathways

Pathways are fundamental to enabling safe, independent, and inclusive mobility for people with mobility challenges. Properly designed footpaths contribute to greater social participation, improved quality of life, and well-being of individuals.

Our goal for pathways is that they are well-maintained, wide and gently sloping with compacted surfaces and gentle edges.

We aim to:

- ✓ Continue to increase the provision of safe and accessible footpaths and shared paths across the municipality
- ✓ Continue to address footpath obstructions by monitoring and enforcing local laws and educating retailers and residents
- ✓ Maintain the surfaces and edges of paths to reduce tripping and slipping hazards



We will achieve it by:



2.1 
Prioritising the streets without any footpath in capital work programs

2.2 
Maximising the width and minimising the slope and crossfall of paths

2.5 
Exploring different compacted and anti-slippery footpath materials that are accessible and eco-friendly to reduce environment impact

2.4 
Continuing to remove bullnoses on pram ramps through renewal projects

2.3 
Reducing path obstructions through retrofitting, maintenance and advocacy to other stakeholders.

2.6 
Encouraging private developers to incorporate accessible paths and infrastructure in their subdivisions through planning processes

2.7 
Improving auditing process to identify footpath defects across municipality



Connectivity

Effective footpath connectivity enhances walkability and makes it easier for people to safely and easily reach their destinations.

Our goal for connectivity is pathways are connected and crossings are safe, ensuring easy access to community destinations and public spaces.

We aim to:

- ✓ Create a connected and safe pathway network
- ✓ Improve accessibility to activity centres, buildings, facilities and public transport
- ✓ Update wayfinding signs to help people using mobility aids easily navigate and access DDA-compliant infrastructure



We will achieve it by:

3.1 Prioritising the construction of missing links of footpaths with high footpath hierarchy



3.2 Continuing to address unsafe crossings across the municipality and to prioritise pedestrian crossings in key activity centres



3.3 Improving wayfinding signage to support accessible needs



3.4 Advocating to State Government to provide DDA-compliant pathways that connect to bus stops



3.5 Seeking external funding to fast-track construction of accessible pathways and improvement of pedestrian crossings



Supporting infrastructure

Supporting infrastructure such as seating, toilets, handrails, TGSi tactile markers and drinking fountains maximises the comfort and convenience of public places and spaces.

Our goal for supporting infrastructure is to ensure that it is well-designed and easy to use for the community, regardless of individual mobility needs.

We aim to:

- ✓ Install benches, resting areas and shade structures in public spaces, providing opportunities for people with mobility impairments to rest during their travels
- ✓ Advocate to State Government on public transport issues impacting people with disability
- ✓ Enhance physical access for the whole experience or journey

We will achieve it by:



4.1 Increasing pathway project budget to include DDA-compliant seats with extra space for mobility aids along pathways



4.2 Using materials with luminance contrast in the new and upgrade works to improve people's awareness of potential hazards and obstructions along footpaths, particularly in areas with higher footpath hierarchy



4.3 Considering installing landings along steep paths and DDA-compliant handrails along stairs to improve accessibility through renewal projects



4.4 Installing and maintaining clearly visible TGSIs for people with visual impairment in key activity centres



4.5 Advocating to State Government for DDA-compliant bus stops/shelters in Knox



4.6 Increasing tree canopy along paths and reserves to enhance the natural experience and promote a more inviting, green environment

Working towards a better future

Council is committed to creating an inclusive infrastructure environment where people of all abilities can access and enjoy the municipality's public places and spaces, ensuring safety and comfort for everyone well into the future.

We aim to:

- ✓ Incorporate universal and accessible design principles throughout the planning and designing phases into Council's updated standard drawing, in Council's public transport and safety advocacy.
- ✓ Create mobility fund category under Capital Works Programs to constantly improve transport infrastructure accessibility

We will achieve it by:



Have your say

Did we get it right?

The draft action plan will be placed on the “Have Your Say” page of our website for public consultation; tell us what you think.

Have your say:
haveyoursay.knox.vic.gov.au

Alternatively, contact the Traffic and Transport team:

Phone: 9298 8000

Email: knoxcc@knox.vic.gov.au

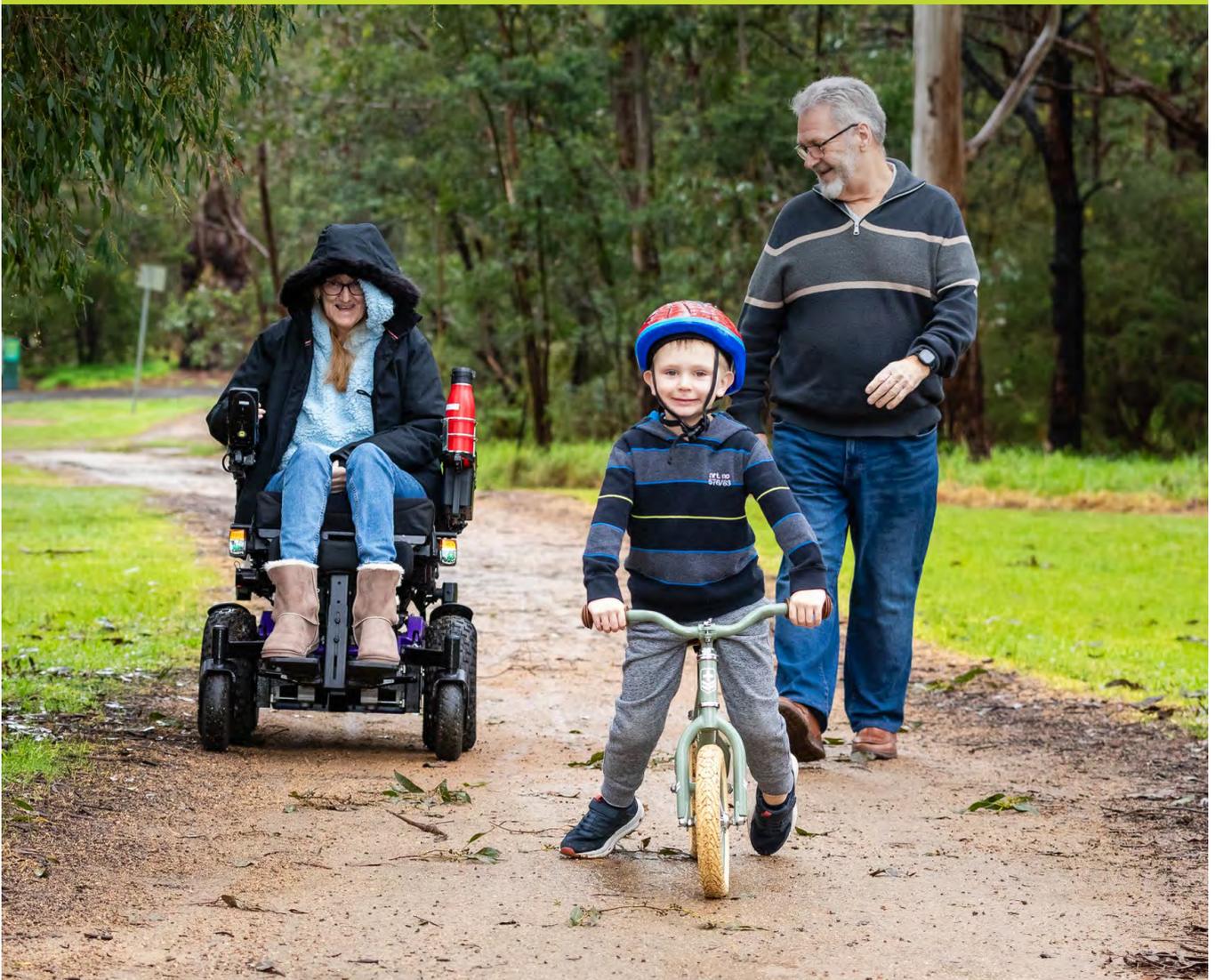
Social media: facebook.com/knoxccouncil
[Twitter@knoxcc](https://twitter.com/knoxcc)

Visit Council: Knox Civic Centre
511 Burwood Highway
Wantirna South 3152



Knox Mobility and Access Action Plan 2025-2035

BACKGROUND REPORT



knox



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1 Introduction

In 2011, Knox City Council (Council) endorsed the Knox Mobility Study which identified key improvements required to enable mobility aid users to access various destinations, facilities and services across the municipality. As part of the study, it was identified that the path network played a key role and at times substituted the use of public transport as it provided independent mobility while providing more direct and faster transportation routes.

The Knox Mobility and Access Action Plan 2025–2035 (KMAAP), an advanced iteration of the 2011 Mobility Study, focuses on identifying the current challenges faced by the community, especially people with disability (PLWD), when travelling throughout Knox. The KMAAP also serves as a roadmap for the next decade, providing guidance on how we can improve Knox's infrastructure to be safer, more accessible, and more comfortable for those who experience mobility issues through provision and regulation, advocacy, collaboration and partnership, advocacy and awareness raising.

The KMAAP primarily addresses the challenges faced by pedestrians with mobility challenges in the municipality's activity centres and community. The majority of these individuals are people using Mobility Devices (PMDs), while some don't. PMDs use electric and manual wheelchairs, long canes, walking sticks, walking frames and prams. While the research covered various transport networks, parking areas, footpaths and open spaces in the activity centres, Council's influence on improvements to these spaces and places is strongest in areas under Council ownership. Improving access for people with a physical disability via footpath and shared paths, connections to accessible car parking, and into public transport facilities and around their neighbourhood, can broaden inclusiveness and widen opportunities to fully participate in social activities.

This document, the Knox Mobility and Access Action Plan 2025–2035 Background Report (Background Report), provides evidence and data that underpin the strategies and actions outlined in the KMAAP.

THANK YOU

Knox City Council recognises the valuable contributions and dedication of individuals with mobility challenges, individuals of disability, parents, guardians and carers, in the engagement process. We are grateful for the insightful ideas and practical solutions shared by Knox Disability Advisory Committee and the members of the community.

We also appreciate the efforts of our consultants (Symplan and Accredited Solutions National (ASN)) in shaping the KMAAP and this Background Report. Symplan assisted with community consultation and report drafting, while ASN led the access audits for selected activity centres in the municipality.

2 What we mean by disability

2.1 Language and definitions

The choice of language used in this Background Report is based on the United Nations' *Disability-Inclusive Language Guidelines*.¹ This language emphasises the person, not the disability, by placing a reference to the person or group before reference to the disability. The term person or people with disability (PWD) is therefore used to refer to anyone who lives with a physical, mental and/or cognitive disability.

2.2 Disability

For the purposes of this study, the term disability is an umbrella term for both physical and mental or cognitive disabilities that result in permanent or episodic activity limitations and participation restrictions. The formal definition of disability is provided in the Glossary of terms, Appendix 3.

The six disability groups include sensory and speech (including loss of sight or hearing), intellectual, physical (including chronic or recurrent pain, incomplete use of limbs), psychosocial (including mental illness, memory problems and social or behavioural difficulties), head injury (including stroke or acquired brain injury) and other (including restrictions in everyday activities due to other long-term health conditions). The causes of disability are complex and often difficult to identify.²

2.3 Models of disability

The medical model of disability focuses on the person's impairments and differences rather than on what the person needs.³

The starting point of the social model of disability is that the 'problems' are the environments and circumstances in which people find themselves rather than their physical or mental status.⁴ 'Fixing the problem' under the social model of disability focuses on addressing barriers and limitations in the person with disability's physical environment rather than trying to 'cure' or 'heal' their physical or mental health, which is the foundation of the medical model of disability.

The human rights model of disability focuses on achieving equity and inclusion and how the person's overlapping or intersecting forms of discrimination and vulnerability contribute to their unique experiences and sense of identity.⁵

The social and human rights models of disability recognise that each person will have varying levels of comfort⁶ based on their mental and physical health and wellbeing status, and their individual experiences of how the environment enables or limits their capacity to reach their full potential.

The KMAAP is founded on the social and human rights models rather than the medical model of disability.

¹ United Nations, Geneva (2019)

² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024)

³ Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (2021)

⁴ Victorian Government. (2022). *Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan (2022-2026)*

⁵ Victorian Government. (2022). *Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan (2022-2026)*

⁶ Victorian Government. (2022). *Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan (2022-2026)*

2.4 People living with disability

For the purposes of this plan, people living with disability (PLWD) are pedestrians using powered or manual mobility devices (wheelchairs, canes and sticks, electric scooters and walking frames). These pedestrians would experience a range of physical and mental health conditions including visible disability such as poor balance, muscle weakness, para or quadriplegia, low or no vision, or hearing impairment. They are also likely to experience invisible disability including cognitive impairment, dementia, anxiety and neurodiversity. Anyone accompanying the person using the mobility equipment or pram, including parents, carers, family members and friends is also considered a pedestrian. PLWD are diverse in their culture, language, sexuality, gender identity, age, ability, socio-economic status and life experiences.

2.5 Accessibility and mobility

Mobility refers to a person's ability to move in a physical space. It is influenced by their physical, mental and/or cognitive capacity factors such as strength, balance, stamina, coordination and ability to use their limbs.

Accessibility refers to an individual's ability to participate in day-to-day activities and use facilities and infrastructure in the public and private realms. The primary determination of accessibility is whether the design and function of infrastructure and activities enable a person to use, enjoy and participate in activities and services. Therefore, accessibility needs to consider the specific mobility needs and aspirations of PLWD.

Whereas someone might be mobile, they may have limited accessibility due to structural and physical barriers to their full engagement in society. A focus on accessibility, rather than just mobility, is a prerequisite for an equitable and inclusive society.

2.6 Capacity, functionality and quality

PLWD's abilities to use footpaths, accessible car parks, and supporting infrastructure comfortably, safely and conveniently depend on three intersecting factors: capacity, functionality and quality.

Capacity quantifies the availability and space of individual assets such as pathways, accessible car parks and toilets, measuring whether these assets meet demand. Footpath and shared path capacity is primarily a function of the width of the individual pathway and the ability of the network to provide connections between key places. The capability of accessible car parks and other supporting infrastructure depends on whether they are readily available for PLWD.

Functionality refers to whether the pathways, accessible car parks and other supporting infrastructure serve their intended functions and accommodate universal access needs. Footpath functionality considers whether there is a clear path of travel available, the crossfall/gradient of the path and whether the surface matches the path hierarchy and specific needs and aspirations of the users. Car parking functionality considers whether the spaces are being used for their intended purposes.

Quality is the physical condition of the pathway network and car parks. Footpath quality and car park quality consider the presence of hazards that compromise the users' safety, comfort and convenience.

2.7 Walkability

Walkability is the ability of the environment to facilitate both mobility and accessibility. Walkable neighbourhoods enhance both real and perceived levels of safety and are interesting to move through. The assets and infrastructure in walkable neighbourhoods are connected, comfortable, convenient, accessible and efficient. Walkable neighbourhoods motivate and encourage people to select active and public transport over a private motor vehicle, where feasible.

Factors contributing to walkable environments are the availability of wayfinding signage, supporting infrastructure such as benches and drinking fountains, connections between paths, land use mix and diversity, level of traffic and absence of obstacles and impediments along the footpaths.

2.8 Mobility devices

Mobility devices are used to assist the movement of people over short to medium distances. They are typically used by people with a range of physical and cognitive disabilities but may also include devices used to transport babies and toddlers.

Mobility devices may be used for all or part of the journey and can be used in conjunction with one another.

For the purposes of this study, mobility devices include:

- wheelchairs (manual and electric)
- electric scooters
- walking frames
- long canes (for people with visual impairments)
- walking sticks
- prams.

2.9 Accessible public infrastructure

Public infrastructure includes footpaths and shared paths, public transport, parks and recreation, car parking, street furniture (benches, drinking fountains, signage) and toilets.

The ability of the neighbourhoods in which people live, play, learn, work and shop to support their needs and aspirations plays an important role in creating a sense of belonging and inclusion. Public infrastructure and amenities that are accessible to people of all abilities ensure that the community feels safe, secure and valid.⁷

A safe, accessible and comfortable path network connecting places and spaces within the neighbourhoods provides opportunities for people of all abilities to access services, connect with others, work and enjoy leisure time. It supports active transport and reduces reliance on private transport and has a range of health, economic and environmental impacts. It also facilitates engagement with the natural environment.⁸ Supporting infrastructure, such as benches, drinking fountains and wayfinding signage, makes a pedestrian's journey more comfortable, safe and convenient.

⁷ Knox Liveable Streets Plan 2012-2022.

⁸ op. cit.

3 Our community and infrastructure

This section describes community, health and land use context in which PLWD live, work, shop, learn and play. Appendix 2 provides full details and sources of the community and health profile discussed below.

3.1 Disability

Nearly a fifth (17.2%) of Knox's population has a disability of some type, which includes all reported disability, including conditions without specific limitations or restrictions.⁹ Knox has a slightly higher proportion of people needing assistance with core activities compared to Greater Melbourne (5.8 % and 5.5 % respectively). Knox also has a higher proportion of people providing unpaid assistance to a person with a disability, long-term illness or old age compared to Greater Melbourne (13.3% compared to 12.6% respectively).

Regarding mobility and access planning:¹⁰

- An estimated 12.8% (20,720) of people in Knox households have a disability that in some way limits daily activity in relation to at least one of the core activities of mobility, communication or self-care
- 5% (8,130) of people in Knox have a profound or severe limitation requiring help sometimes or always, from others
- A further 7.8% (12,590) of Knox residents have a moderate or mild activity limitation. Those with mild or moderate disabilities do not need help from others, but may have difficulty with, or need to use, aids or equipment when communicating, getting around or looking after themselves. Those unable to perform tasks such as easily walking 200 metres, walking up or down stairs without using a handrail, or bending to pick up an object, are also classified as having mild limitations. Accessibility issues for this group also need to be acknowledged in mobility and access planning.

PLWD experience a range of impairments including memory problems or periods of confusion, are slow at learning or understanding things, loss of hearing and chronic or recurring pain or discomfort.¹¹ More than three-quarters (78%) of PLWD require assistance with mobility and more than a third of PLWD living in households (39%) require assistance with private transport.¹²

Between 2016 and 2021:

- the number of people needing assistance with core activities in Knox increased by 1,751. The proportion of people needing assistance with core activities in Knox increased by 1% from 4.8% to 5.8%
- the greatest increase in the number of people needing assistance with core activities in Knox occurred in people aged 80 years and over, followed by people aged 20–59 years
- the number of people providing unpaid care increased by 2,490 and the proportion of people increased from 11.8% to 13.3%.

⁹ People that reported a disability of some type, with no detail on any limitation, difficulty, use of aids or school or employment restrictions

¹⁰ Survey of Disability, Ageing & Carers, ABS (2018)

¹¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2020)

¹² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024)

The number of people in Knox with severe or profound disability is projected to increase from an estimated 8,500 in 2021 to 11,800 by 2031. This represents a 40% increase over 10 years, with the majority of growth in the population aged 65+ years as Knox's residents continue to 'age in place'. A similar increase might be expected in those with moderate and mild core activity limitations, given the strong association between disability and age.

3.1.1 Age profile¹³

The increased prevalence in disability with age, combined with an ageing population, leads to a large proportion (44%) of people with disability aged 65 and over.¹⁴

In Knox:

- the highest proportion of people requiring assistance with core activities occurs after the age of 65 years
- the need for assistance with core activities in children is highest among five to nine-year-olds and lowest among 30 to 34-year-olds
- compared to Greater Melbourne, Knox has a higher proportion of people needing assistance with core activities among people aged five to 44 years, and over 80 years compared to other age cohorts
- between 2016 and 2021 the greatest increase in the number of people needing assistance with core activities occurred in people aged 80 years and over, followed by people aged 20-59 years.

3.1.2 Mobility aids

The application of national data prevalence rates suggests that around 3,500 people (2.1% of the population) in Knox use at least one mobility aid at the following rates:¹⁵

- walking stick (50%)
- walking frame (47%)
- wheelchair, manual or electric (20%)
- cane, sonar (14%)
- scooter (10%).

3.1.3 Socio-economic and health status

Compared to Greater Melbourne and Victoria, Knox has a higher prevalence of all long-term health conditions, particularly with regards to arthritis, heart disease and mental health conditions. The most prevalent long-term health condition in Knox is arthritis (17.7% of the population), followed by mental health conditions (11.3% of the population - including depression and anxiety).

Age pensions in Knox represent a higher proportion of all welfare payments compared to Victoria, reflecting the municipality's ageing population. However, welfare payments for disability and caring represent a lower proportion of Knox's total welfare payments compared with Victoria.

¹³ In the absence of data on the number of people with disability living in Knox, the need for assistance has been used as a proxy

¹⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024)

¹⁵ National prevalence

People needing assistance with core activities are typically more socially and economically vulnerable compared to the general community. Relative to the general Knox community, people needing assistance with core activities are less likely to attend an educational institution, have a significantly lower level of educational attainment, a higher unemployment rate, have limited access to appropriate and affordable housing and are represented in the lowest and medium lowest household income quartiles. They also have lower rates of car ownership and are less likely to be attending an educational institution.

The incidence of long-term health conditions is significantly higher among people living in Knox's low-income households. There are higher proportions of people in low-income households living with arthritis, dementia, mental health conditions (including depression and anxiety) and experiencing another long-term health condition. The prevalence of dementia increases with age, with the condition very rare in those under 65 years of age (0.1%), increasing to over one-quarter (27.5%) of those aged 95 years and over.¹⁶ In 2021, 1.1% of the Knox community were living with dementia, which is higher than the average for Australia (0.7%).¹⁷

3.2 Knox's infrastructure

3.2.1 Activity centres

Knox's 26 activity centres attract people for shopping, working, studying, recreation or socialising. They consist of a mix of retail, residential, commercial, educational, recreational, administrative, service, health, entertainment and cultural facilities that satisfy the community's day-to-day needs. They are typically served by public and active transport networks consisting of trains and buses, footpaths and shared paths.

The municipality has a hierarchy of activity centres, with the higher-order centres, such as the Knox Central Activity Centre and Bayswater and Boronia Major Activity Centres, serving a regional catchment while the lower-order neighbourhood activity centres provide access to local goods, services, and employment opportunities serving the needs of the surrounding community.¹⁸

3.2.2 Public, private and active transport

Public transport provides an alternative to private transport, for those with and without access to a private vehicle. Good public transport is an essential component of a liveable community, supporting participation and inclusion in society.¹⁹

Victorian residents with limited mobility are eligible for the following supported public transport which allows them to travel free on all metropolitan and regional trains, buses and trams:

- Access Travel Pass for people with a permanent physical disability, cognitive condition or mental illness that prevents them from using myki
- Scooter and Wheelchair Travel Pass for people relying on a scooter or wheelchair for mobility outside the home
- Companion Card for carers or companions travelling with PWD
- Multi-Purpose Taxi Program providing members with half price fares on taxis and some rideshare services (up to \$60).

¹⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2020)

¹⁷ op. cit.

¹⁸ Victorian Government (2017)

¹⁹ Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development (2017)

Knox is a car-dominated municipality with poor walkability in neighbourhoods.²⁰ Compared to Greater Melbourne, Knox has higher proportions of people travelling to work by car (as driver and passenger) and smaller proportions of people travelling by train, tram or walking to work.

The municipality is served by one train line between the Melbourne CBD and Belgrave. Four train stations along this line, Bayswater, Boronia, Ferntree Gully and Upper Ferntree Gully, have different levels of accessible transport facilities, such as station access, information screens, toilets, parking, and pick-up/drop-off.

Fifteen bus routes operate in Knox, two Smart Bus services, and three Telebus services. During peak periods, service is effective along Burwood Highway and Stud Road, but it is poor in parts of Scoresby, Knoxfield, Rowville and Lysterfield.²¹ The NightRider bus also services parts of Knox. The 'Knox Transit Link' bus service connects the route 75 tram to Westfield Knox. Knox Transit Link buses operate at the same frequency and have the same hours of operation as the tram service.

The quality, quantity and functionality of pathways can influence how people use active transport to access work, education, leisure and shopping.²² The typical width of a pathway is 1.5 metres, with shared pathways ranging from 2.5 metres to 3 metres.²³

These pathways serve two important roles:

- Movement – providing a space for pedestrians to travel between places.
- Place – providing a space where people can stop to rest, chat, think and take in their surroundings.²⁴

Pathways are an essential component of Knox's open space component, linking people to places. There are over 1,200 kilometres of footpath and 120 kilometres of off-road shared paths²⁵ which are maintained by Council. The vast majority of people in Knox prefer to cycle on a shared path facility with pedestrians rather than use bike lanes on the street.²⁶

3.2.3 Accessible car parking

Knox's activity centres have large expanses of car parking, which are expected to satisfy the increasing and changing needs of the community, including PWD. Accessible car parking spaces are normally located near facilities such as shops and accessible toilets. A continuous path of travel connects the accessible car parking spaces and the facilities.

In Council-owned car parks, accessible spaces are maintained by Council, and the management of parking restrictions is regularly reviewed as part of the Knox Parking Management Plan. Meanwhile, accessible spaces in private car parks are owned and maintained by private operators.

²⁰ Clause 28.01-1 Knox Planning Scheme.

²¹ Knox Integrated Transport Plan 2015-2025

²² Knox Open Space Plan 2012-2022

²³ Personal comment, Knox City Council

²⁴ Rossiter, B (2019)

²⁵ Knox Cycling Action Plan 2024-2035 Background Document

²⁶ Knox Cycling Action Plan 2024-2035 Background Document

3.2.4 Health and aged care facilities

Key facilities used by PMDs in Knox include:

- five major activity centres (Knox Central, Boronia, Mountain Gate, Rowville and Bayswater)²⁷
- six neighbourhood activity centres (Studfield Shopping Centre, Scoresby Village, Wantirna Mall, Upper Ferntree Gully, Ferntree Gully, Wellington Village)²⁸
- seven hospitals (Angliss Hospital, Eastern Health, Greater Knox Family Practice, The Melbourne Eastern Private Hospital, Knox Private Hospital, Wantirna Health, All Medical, and Wellness on Wellington)²⁹
- 28 residential aged care facilities³⁰
- 11 senior citizen centres.³¹

3.2.5 Accessible playgrounds and toilets

Knox has four accessible playgrounds in Bayswater (Marie Wallace Bayswater Park), Ferntree Gully (Ferntree Gully Community Centre and Wally Tew Reserve) and Rowville (Stud Park playground at the Rowville Community Centre). These playgrounds have extra features for children living with disability and offer play equipment for children of all abilities.³²

Accessible toilets are found at most public places including train stations, shopping centres, parks and recreation centres, community centres, medical facilities and hospitals. Some accessible toilets are locked and fitted with a Master Locksmiths Access Key, providing PLWD with dedicated access to these toilets.

Changing Places toilets³³ are larger than standard accessible toilets providing PLWD and people with high support needs and their carers with extra facilities such as height-adjustable adult-sized change tables, ceiling track hoist systems, centrally located toilet, additional circulation space, automatic door and a privacy screen. There is a Changing Place toilet at Wally Tew Reserve.

²⁷ [Activity Centre and facilities](#)

²⁸ [Activity Centre and facilities](#)

²⁹ [Activity Centre and facilities](#)

³⁰ [A-guide-to-disability-and-aged-services.pdf \(knox.vic.gov.au\)](#)

³¹ [A-guide-to-disability-and-aged-services.pdf \(knox.vic.gov.au\)](#)

³² Rossiter (2019)

³³ Changing Places, Transforming Lives

4 What guides us

This section describes strategic and other drivers influencing planning and designing for PLWD (refer to Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Guiding framework



4.1 Statutory and strategic context

The hierarchy of statutory and strategic context guiding planning and designing for PLWD in Knox is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2 - Statutory and strategic instruments

<p>International</p> 	<p>Strategic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities <i>Universal Declaration of Human Rights</i> United Nations Global Sustainable Development Goals 	
<p>National</p> 	<p>Statutory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 	<p>Strategic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability 2023 National Urban Policy 2024 (consultation draft)
<p>State</p> 	<p>Statutory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Victorian Disability Act 2006</i> <i>Equal Opportunities Act 2010</i> <i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006</i> <i>Local Government Act 1989</i> <i>Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008</i> <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> <i>Road Management Act 2004</i> <i>Transport Integration Act 2010</i> 	<p>Strategic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan 2022-2026</i> Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023
<p>Knox City Council</p> 	<p>Statutory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knox Amenity Local Law 2020 <p>Strategic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knox Community Plan 2021-2031 Council Plan 2021-2025 (incorporating the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025) Knox Planning Scheme Community Access and Equity Implementation Plan 2017-2022 Knox Connection, Access, Respect, Equality and Safety Strategy 2022-27 Knox Integrated Transport Plan 2015-2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knox Child, Youth and Seniors Plan 2021-2025 Asset Plan 2022-2032 Knox Liveable Streets Plan 2012-2022 Knox Cycling Action Plan (2025-2035) Footpath and Shared Path Asset Management Plan 2016 Active Knox Plan 2024 Knox Parking Policy 2018 Knox Principal Pedestrian Network 2017

4.1.1 International

Charters such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Global Sustainable Development Goals reinforce the imperative to recognise the right of all persons with disability to live safely in the community without discrimination, and to have equitable access to opportunities, services and facilities that foster social inclusion and participation. Key to achieving this outcome is the right for people with disability to personal mobility and independence.

4.1.2 National

Statutory instruments such as the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002* outline Council's statutory responsibilities to ensure people with disability have the same access to public places including parks, shopping centres, public footpaths and walkways as the rest of the community. This may require making necessary modifications to infrastructure such as improving way-finding information, installing tactile markers and limiting gradients on footpaths.

The vision underpinning Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031³⁴ is for an inclusive Australian society that ensures people with disability can fulfill their potential, as equal members of the community.

Policy priorities in this Strategy under the 'Inclusive Homes and Communities' outcome area are that 'people with disability can fully participate in social, recreational, sporting, religious and cultural life' and 'the built and natural environment are accessible'.

The findings from the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability 2023 led to recommendations focusing on ensuring people with disability integrate and participate in safe, inclusive and diverse communities and have equal opportunities to contribute to communities that value their presence and treat them with dignity and respect.

The Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport support the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. They provide clarity to providers and operators of public transport services and infrastructure about their responsibilities to make their services accessible and eliminate discrimination against people with disability. These Standards require all of Australia's public transport networks and associated infrastructure to be fully accessible by the end of 2022 (except for trains and trams, which have until the end of 2032). The Standards are supported by *The Whole Journey: A guide for thinking beyond compliance to create accessible public transport journeys*³⁵ which guides all built environment and transport planners and professionals in taking a holistic view of the whole journey through planning, implementation and operation.

The National Urban Policy 2024 (consultation draft)³⁶ identifies several challenges facing PWD such as safety, income inequality and difficulties accessing social infrastructure. This draft strategy notes that walkability of an urban area is critical to community wellbeing, particularly for PWD and highlights the need for active travel infrastructure to be safe, accessible and well maintained.

³⁴ [Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031](#)

³⁵ Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development (2017)

³⁶ Australia's National Urban Policy Consultation Draft

4.1.3 State

The intent of the *Victorian Disability Act 2006*, *Equal Opportunities Act 2010* and *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* is to outline all agencies' responsibilities to prevent discrimination and ensure the inclusion and participation in the community of people with disability. These Acts reinforce the federal and international statutory and strategic imperative to safeguard the rights and responsibilities of people with disability and their equal opportunities to participate in community life.

Under the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* it is not only Council's responsibility to understand and comply with the obligations under the Charter, but also to build a culture of human rights in the community.³⁷

The purposes of the *Local Government Act 1989*, *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* and *Planning and Environment Act 1987* are to outline Council's responsibilities in promoting and upholding the community's safety, security health and wellbeing, and to ensure the municipality is administered and planned in an efficient, orderly and fair manner.

Statutory instruments such as the *Road Management Act 2004* and *Transport Integration Act 2010* define Council's roles as the Responsible Authority to manage local roads, including footpaths and shared paths, and manage the financial risk in relation to the management and maintenance of pathway assets.

4.1.4 Knox City Council

Council's roles

Council's roles in ensuring PMDs and PLWD have equal access to services and facilities in the community are framed by international, federal, state and local statutory instruments and policies.

Figure 3 - Council's roles

Advocacy	Provision and regulation	Collaboration and partnerships	Awareness raising
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding Appropriate standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance Retrofitting New builds Enforcing Local Amenity Law 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People living with disability Private property owners State government Trading associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information dissemination

These roles specifically include:

- ensuring spaces and places used by PLWD and PMDs are safe, convenient and comfortable through enforcement and ongoing maintenance, renewal and new build programs
- supporting and addressing social equity issues affecting the City

³⁷ Knox Community Access and Equity Implementation Plan 2017-2022

- ensuring every member of the municipality's diverse community can participate, contribute and access service
- undertaking targeted projects in response to the needs of groups and individuals experiencing disadvantage in the community
- advocating on behalf of PLWD and PMDs to private property owners, the public sector and the business community
- raising awareness of the issues and challenges experienced by PLWD to private property owners, key stakeholders and the business community
- fostering community cohesion and encouraging active participation in civic life
- planning for and providing services and facilities for the local community.

Plans and policies

Key focus areas of the Knox Community Plan 2021-2031³⁸ and Council Plan 2021-2025 (incorporating the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025)³⁹ are fostering connection, resilience and wellbeing and civic engagement. Health-related priorities within these plans are mental health, physical activity, safety and climate change. A key theme is accessibility of services and public places for people with disability.

'Walkability and walkable neighbourhoods' is a theme underpinning the Knox Planning Scheme. Strategies to achieve this outcome are promoting a safe, integrated and sustainable transport system; maximising access to social and economic opportunities; providing safe, direct and comfortable pedestrian routes that are accessible to all users, including wheelchairs, prams and scooters.

Schedule 12 to Clause 43.04 of the Development Plan Overlay in the Knox Planning Scheme, which is applicable to the Rowville Commercial Core including Stud Park Shopping Centre, requires the preparation of a Disability Access Audit Report which assesses the access requirements for people with disability.⁴⁰

One of the initiatives under the 'social and economic inclusion' objective in the Knox Integrated Transport Plan⁴¹ is to enhance access to meet the needs of people using mobility equipment. This recognises the critical role public transport plays in meeting the needs of those who don't have access to, or are not in a position to use, a private vehicle due to their life situation. It acknowledges that meeting the needs of this community segment is critical to achieving an inclusive community.

Key outcomes expressed in Council's integrated decision-making framework comprising other policies and plans include striving for inclusion and equity, acknowledging diverse needs, increasing access to services and facilities for people with restricted mobility and reducing car dependency.

Specific strategies to achieve these outcomes include providing well-designed shared paths, delivering sustainable transport options, ensuring equitable and appropriate use of available parking spaces, providing effective wayfinding, installing shelter and other amenities along the pathway network and advocating for transport that is accessible to different needs.

³⁸ Knox Community Plan 2021-2031

³⁹ Knox Council Plan 2021-2025

⁴⁰ Knox planning scheme

⁴¹ Knox Integrated Transport Plan 2015-2025

Knox Amenity Local Law 2020

The Knox Amenity Local Law aims to:

- provide for the peace, order and good governance of the district
- promote a safe physical and social environment, in which residents can enjoy a quality of life that meets the general expectations of the community
- prevent and manage nuisances which may adversely affect the enjoyment of life or health, safety and welfare of people within the district.

These objectives are to be achieved by:

- regulating and managing activities of people which may be dangerous, unsafe or detrimental to the quality of life of other people in, or around, the district
- regulating and controlling the use of Council land, roads and assets
- providing standards and conditions for specified activities to protect the safety and welfare of people within, and around, the district.

The Local Law plays an important role in promoting safe physical and social environments for the whole community, including PMDs. This is achieved by regulating and controlling the use of Council land, roads and assets to prevent and manage nuisances which compromise the community's enjoyment and safety. The Local Law is applicable to any area where public and private land intersect and to activities carried out on public places such as footpaths, shopping centres, parks and recreation areas. The Local Law is also applicable during major events in public spaces organised privately or by Council. Examples of issues regulated by this Local Law are abandoned shopping trolleys, overhanging vegetation, street trading (for example, A-Frames and outdoor dining furniture) and other footpath impediments such as dumped rubbish, building activities and bins, and cars.

Retailers require a permit to install structures associated with footpath trading in the municipality's activity centres. Local laws apply a Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) compliance lens during the assessment, granting and regulating these permits to ensure activities do not compromise the safety of PMDs. In the case of non-compliance with the relevant permit, Council will issue an infringement notice and, if necessary, rectify the issue at the retailer's expense.

Community organisations hiring Council facilities in the municipality's parks and recreation areas are required in terms of their lease agreements to ensure these facilities, and the areas surrounding the facilities do not compromise the community's safety or wellbeing. The Local Law has the capacity to deal with any breach of these lease agreements.

Council will notify private property owners of the need to remove any vegetation overhanging the footpath. If the issue is not addressed, Council will invoke the Local Law and remove this vegetation at the owner's expense. While the Local Law has specific control over footpath trading and overhanging branches, Council's other departments such as Building Services, Planning, Traffic Engineering and Engineering services share a collective responsibility for compliance and regulation of activities and events on Council-owned land in the municipality.

Equity Impact Assessment

The Knox Equity Impact Assessment process is a 'whole of Council' framework informing the development of Knox's policies and strategies and budgetary decisions. The process aims to respond to and avoid inequalities caused by factors such as gender, socio-economic and health status and cultural background. It is founded on the principle of 'intersectionality' which is the ways in which different aspects of a person's identity such as their disability can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination or marginalisation.

4.2 Drivers for change

4.2.1 Social

Knox's community is both growing and ageing, indicating there is likely to be a continued growth in the number of PLWD using mobility equipments in Knox's public places and spaces.

PLWD experience physical barriers on a daily basis. They may also experience social, health and economic issues such as mental illnesses, incontinence, stigma and discrimination in the workplace, and vulnerability to the rising costs of living. These factors can lead to social isolation and disengagement from community life.⁴²

PLWD have limited access to transport, many of whom are entirely reliant on public and active transport such as walking because they are unable to drive a car, unable to afford the costs of running a car, or have relinquished their car due to age.

People living with cognitive impairment such as dementia are more likely to reside in the community than in residential care homes.⁴³ The neighbourhood's qualities and amenities therefore play an important role in supporting social inclusion and promoting independence and a high quality of life.⁴⁴

'The Pram ramp is very steep and narrow. I would have to cross in the driveway. I wouldn't be able to come [to the medical centre] alone, I'd have to be dropped off.'

While engaging in public life can be therapeutic for people living with cognitive impairment, the public realm can also be overwhelming and intimidating, heightening their already high levels of anxiety and confusion.⁴⁵

These inequities are coupled with a trend in 'ageism' among some people which results in negative images of older people and the potential to overlook the ageing population's mobility and accessibility needs and expectations.

⁴² Knox Community Access and Equity Implementation Plan 2017-2022

⁴³ Biglieri & Dean (2022)

⁴⁴ Gan *et al.* (2021)

⁴⁵ Sturge, J *et al.*, (2021)

4.2.2 Institutional

PMDs need to put in extra effort to conduct their daily activities; a factor often overlooked by policy makers and built environment professionals.

Disability may be viewed by some negatively as a cost, burden or bother with planning and designing for inclusion sometimes focusing more on compliance than comfort and convenience.⁴⁶ This is referred to as 'ableism'. Decisions in large organisations may be made in silos, and sometimes accessibility, equity and inclusion are not considered from the start in projects.

Able-bodied people tend not to notice or think about people with disability.

At the same time there is an increasing acknowledgement among built environment professionals of the role public places and pathways play in facilitating safe travel, engaging in physical activity and participating in community life for all people, including PLWD.⁴⁷

4.2.3 Movement

Regardless of the primary mode of transport, all trips begin and end with a walk. This has implications on all pedestrians, particularly PMDs who face specific challenges moving in Knox's public places and spaces.

Public transport networks play a critical part in the liveability of a city and its ability to be resilient to challenges such as population growth and an ageing population.⁴⁸ PLWD and cognitive impairment may experience communication barriers making it difficult to hear or see public transport announcements and navigate the transportation network.

Knox has only one train line servicing the north-eastern and eastern part of the municipality. As a result, the community is heavily reliant on private transport for both long and short distances. While Knox's streets have traditionally been designed for cars, attitudes are changing, and streets are increasingly seen as multi-purpose public spaces.⁴⁹ This will require balancing the needs of movement and place in street design, prioritising the existing and changing needs of pedestrians.⁵⁰

Although PLWD are more reliant on public transport due to their physical or cognitive limitations, they are also 15 times more likely to find public transport inaccessible and unaffordable than those without disability.⁵¹ Real and perceived challenges in using public transport are likely to limit their opportunities to participate independently in many social, economic or cultural aspects of the community.⁵²

The major barrier to PLWD accessing public transport is the surrounding built environment. This includes poor footpath and shared path connectivity and quality, difficulties reaching an access point such as a bus stop and train station, and dangerous crossings.⁵³

⁴⁶ Stafford *et al.* (2023)

⁴⁷ Health and Wellbeing Engagement Report 2021

⁴⁸ Knox Integrated Transport Plan 2015-2025

⁴⁹ Knox Liveable Streets Plan 2012-2022

⁵⁰ Knox Liveable Streets Plan 2012-2022

⁵¹ Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Transportation Working Group (2024)

⁵² Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development (2017)

⁵³ Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Transportation Working Group (2024)

Footpaths and shared paths, like streets, are public places used by pedestrians of all abilities and cyclists. The travel experience of PMDs and other pedestrians and cyclists differs for several reasons:

- they may travel both faster and slower than other pedestrians, potentially causing conflict
- they may find it more difficult to avoid hazards as they have more restricted paths of travel and have physical and cognitive limitations
- they may take up more space along the path network due to the size of their mobility device and may be travelling with a support person
- they may experience more discomfort during their journey due to their disability
- they may travel in a seated position or experience muscle weakness and therefore experience difficulties using infrastructure such as bins, playground gates, drinking fountains and buttons at signalised crossings.

These differences can result in conflict between users, with PMDs the most vulnerable.

I would say cyclists are my number one challenge as they seem to not notice/not care about others using the shared pathways, and I feel very afraid using pathways when there are cyclists present. I usually try to use the pathways when there are few to no cyclists.

Obstructions along the pathway such as temporary signage (for example, A-Frames), parked cars, low and overhanging branches, commercial fittings such as café or retail display stands, construction works and other obstructions make it difficult for PMDs to move comfortably and safely along the path network.

Presently, I use a walker, soon to be assessed suitability to use a mobility scooter. I have found the footpaths very uneven, particularly where the bitumen has been used to try to level the concrete slabs.

Tree seeds and small broken branches are a continual hazard.

People use health and safety as an excuse to block roads and footpaths. They should have a permit and display it if they do so.

Some PLWD can face multiple challenges and issues during their travel, compounding their discomfort and inconvenience.

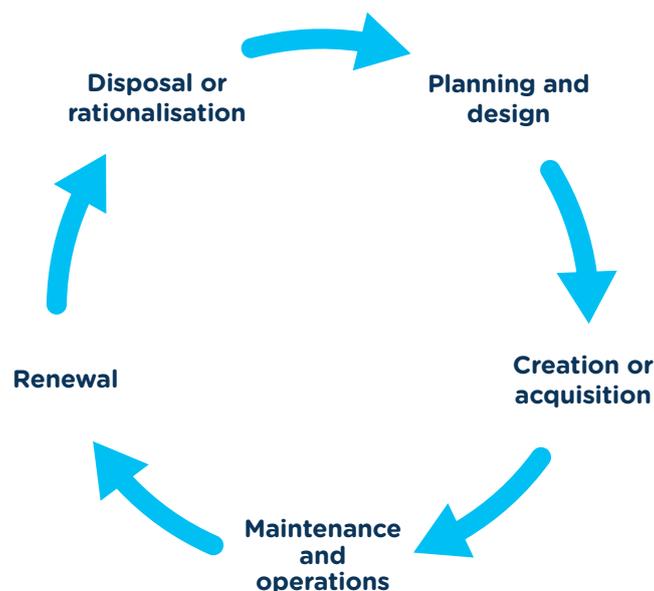
Uneven ground, narrow pathways, lifts with one door or no room to mobilise, loose bricks, lack of disabled parking, narrow doorways, all are very present issues to myself and other mobility aid users.

Even when public transport providers and operators comply with the relevant standards, PLWD may face a range of barriers to a seamless journey.⁵⁴ They are more likely to need to plan their journey, with or without the use of public transport, than people without disability due to the different challenges they face. In their pre-journey planning they may have to consider factors such as weather, public transport and modal interchange availability, access to suitable paths and networks, availability of supportive infrastructure such as accessible bathrooms, vertical transportation (lifts, escalators), availability of toileting facilities for assistance dogs, service disruptions, accessible parking and continence aid change facilities, wayfinding, seating and shelter.⁵⁵

4.2.4 Asset management

Long-term costs of owning and operating infrastructure assets involve a 'whole of life' approach of asset lifecycle management across the lifecycle phase (refer to Figure 4).⁵⁶

Figure 4 - Asset management cycle



Source: Knox Asset Plan 2022-2032

Knox is located at the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges and is therefore a hilly municipality. Many of Knox's activity centres were built prior to the introduction of new standards and therefore may not meet the needs and expectations of PLWD and PMDs. Factors such as steep slopes and crossfalls along many of Knox's footpaths and shared paths, steps at the entrances to some buildings, narrow footpaths through neighbourhoods and in shopping centres present challenges which in some instances are difficult and expensive to overcome.

⁵⁴ Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Transportation Working Group (2024)

⁵⁵ op. cit.

⁵⁶ Asset Plan 2022-2032

The impacts of ageing population, climate change and increased residential density on Knox's liveability have raised awareness of the need to facilitate environmental sustainability across the community, including among PMDs. This, together with the increase in fuel costs and congestion, is likely to lead to a modal shift from the private vehicle to mobility devices and public transport within some sectors of the community. It is also likely to increase the demand for quality and well-maintained amenities and infrastructure, which protect pedestrians from heat and wet weather.

4.2.5 Technological

Assistive technology, such as mobility devices, is essential for PLWD to achieve functional independence, improve quality of life, and lead normal lives.

Changes to the road rules in April 2023, which legalised private e-scooters on Victorian roads, bike and shared paths, has led to an increase in their use throughout the municipality. These personal electric devices (PEDs), together with recreational vehicles such as scooters, skateboards and roller blades pose a risk to PMDs due to the speed they can travel. The dockless hire system and parking of these PEDs can result in obstructions along the footpath, compromising the safety and comfort of PMDs.

Improved digital connectivity, such as the digitalisation of transport information, ticketing and services, is increasing reliance on technology and reduced staffing levels, which can be challenging for some PWD. On the other hand, the collection of data can assist staff in providing customer-focused assistance to people where needed and access to real-time public transport timetables.

4.3 Best practice

Three principles are identified underpinning this plan for developing best practice.

- 1. Intersectionality** is a lens used to develop policies, programs and service delivery processes that recognise and address how systems, structures and attitudes can overcome multiple and overlapping forms of structural discrimination and disadvantage compromising mental and physical health and wellbeing.
- 2. Universal** design embodies principles such as equitable and flexible use to ensure services and facilities are accessible to as many people as possible, regardless of age, ability, gender identity, culture, language and any other social characteristics.
- 3. Co-design** is a 'nothing about us without us' approach involving partnering with PLWD in service design and delivery to support increased inclusion and more informed decision-making and investment. Co-design avoids PLWD feeling 'different' or receiving unwanted special treatment. It also involves collaborating with other stakeholders such as the retail, health, transport and business sectors, and the community to identify opportunities to address any conflicting interests

5 Engaging our community

Engaging with our community throughout the process ensured the research findings reflected the specific needs, fears and aspirations of individuals with mobility issues using Knox's public places and spaces.

5.1. Community engagement tasks

The methodology used to prepare the KMAAP consisted of three tasks: community consultation, experimental site inspections and access audits.

5.1.1. Community consultation

A community survey including a series of questions about travel patterns, key destinations and challenges was placed on Council's website between 30 April 2024 and 28 May 2024. Thirty responses to the survey were received.

A face-to-face community workshop was held at Council's office on 21 May 2024 and an online workshop was held on 18 June 2024. The participants provided an insight into their movement patterns and the main challenges they face when using infrastructure such as car parking, shared paths, benches, accessible toilets and shops. The participants gave examples of where 'best practice can be demonstrated both in Knox and elsewhere'.

A face-to-face workshop with Council officers involved in planning for, designing and regulating Council's public places and spaces was held on 21 May 2024. The purpose of this workshop was to understand competing priorities and issues reported by PLWD.

The findings from the different community consultation activities are integrated in relevant sections in this Background Report and the KMAAP.

5.1.2. Site walkthroughs

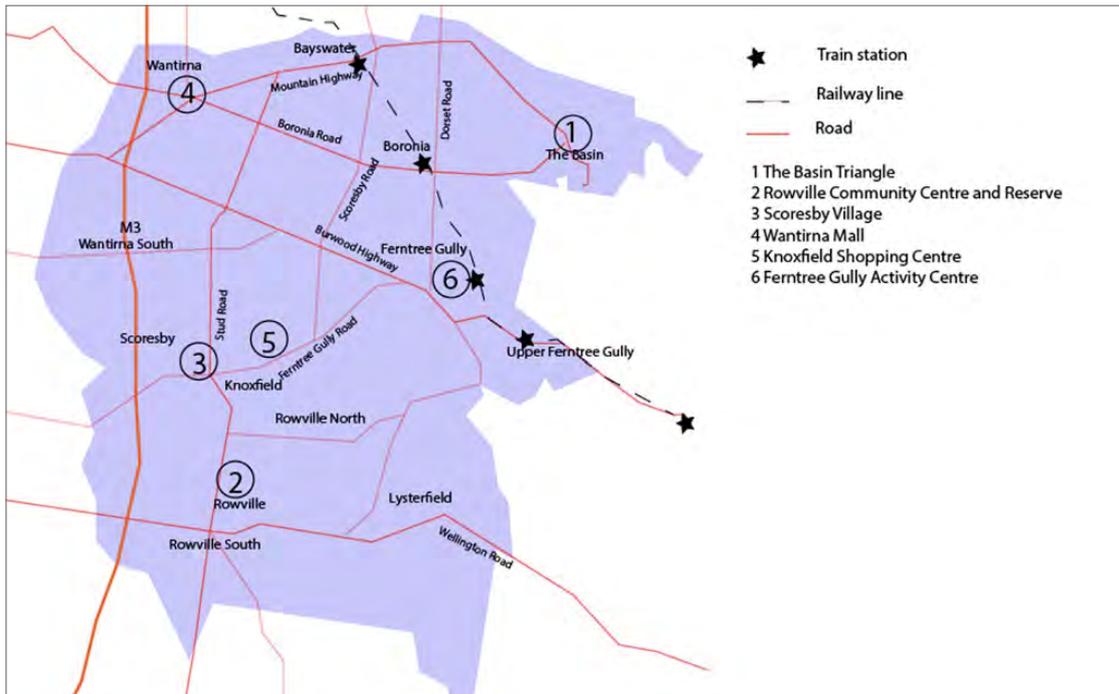
Site walkthroughs were conducted with PMDs in the following six sites (refer to Table 1 and Figure 5):

Table 1 - Experiential site inspections

Description and date of inspection	Community members and their mobility devices
1. The Basin Triangle 12 June 2024	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located at one of the tourist gateways to the Dandenong Ranges • Serves the local community • Co-located with several community facilities, including a playground, Hindu temple, community hall, special development school and seniors centre 	<p>A parent with a pram, who is an orientation and mobility officer, Guide Dogs Victoria, representing people with low/no vision</p>

Description and date of inspection	Community members and their mobility devices
2. Rowville Community Centre and Reserve 13 June 2024	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes a community centre, accessible playground, reserve. Co-located with Rowville Secondary College and Stud Park Shopping Centre 	A person who uses a walking stick due to mobility restrictions caused by childhood arthritis
3. Scoresby Village 14 June 2024	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larger neighbourhood activity centre serviced by several bus routes Part of the Scoresby-Rowville-Knoxfield industrial and commercial area Co-located with Scoresby Recreation Reserve and a playground 	A person using a walking stick
4. Wantirna Mall 17 June 2024	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of the state-significant Wantirna Health Precinct, together with the Knox Private Hospital and Wantirna Health Hospital. Strategic directions focus on integrating employment generating uses with residential, hospitality, retail and community uses Offers residents easy access to various amenities like retail, hospitality, and commercial activities. It has access to a SmartBus Route and a number of local bus routes 	A person having cerebral palsy which impacts her balance, fatigue levels and hearing
5. Knoxfield Shopping Centre 3 July 2024	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plays a key role in offering convenience retail and commercial services that cater to the everyday needs of the local community and is well-served by multiple bus routes for easy access 	A manual wheelchair user
6. Ferntree Gully Activity Centre 3 July 2024	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of four activity centres servicing local catchments in the Dandenong foothills. Neighbourhood/local centres provide a limited mix of uses for local convenience to service the basic needs of the immediate residents, important focal points for the surrounding neighbourhood, ideally located close to community services, as well as accessible by public transport Well-served by public transport, with train services and a number bus routes 	A partially vision-impaired person and a person in an electric wheelchair

Figure 5 - Location of experiential site inspections



Source: Sympian and .id consulting

The following criteria guided the selection of sites suitable for the experiential inspections:

- majority of public realm in Council ownership
- mixture of flat and sloping terrain
- distribution across the municipality
- diverse mix of uses (retail, health, service, community, education)
- proximity and connectivity with active and public transport, community, health, educational and recreational facilities.

5.1.3. Access audits

In order to understand the extent to which disability access provisions are applicable and the intent of such, a professional access auditor was engaged to undertake onsite inspections of Council-owned assets in the following precinct sites for the purpose of reviewing disability accessibility.

Priority precincts (refer to Figure 5)

- The Basin Triangle
- Rowville Community Centre and Reserve
- Scoresby Village
- Wantirna Mall
- Knoxfield Shopping Centre
- Ferntree Gully Activity Centre

Additional precincts

- Bayswater
- Boronia
- Knox Central
- Mountain Gate
- Upper Ferntree Gully.

The audit area for each activity centre can be found in Appendix 4. This audit was undertaken against the requirements of the National Construction Code and relevant standards (AS1428.1 and AS1428.4.1 mainly) within the Australian Standards framework to identify specific issues compromising the safety and comfort for people with disability with respect to the following elements:

- accessible car parking facilities
- pathway and accessways
- kerb ramps
- step ramps
- ramps
- walkways
- stairways
- street furniture
- tactile ground surface indicators (TGSI)
- wayfinding
- signage
- luminance contrast
- lighting
- finishes including abutments.

5.2. Limitations

The consultation was conducted within the following limitations:

- The response to the survey was limited.
- The stakeholder engagement focuses on the challenges and needs of PMDs and therefore does not specifically focus on the needs and challenges of other pedestrians and PLWD who do not move within the public realm.
- Experiential site inspections were conducted in a sample of the municipality's activity centres. The findings may therefore not be entirely representative of the challenges experienced by PLWD and PMDs in all the municipality's activity centres.
- Mobility devices not represented in the experiential site inspections included electric scooters, walking frames, long canes used by people with visual impairments.
- The volunteer with cognitive impairment was unwell on the day of the scheduled site inspection and was therefore unable to participate in the experiential site inspection.
- The experiential site inspections and accessibility audit was limited to activity centres and some of the immediate interfaces such as the road network and public transport infrastructure.
- The discussions focused on assets and infrastructure in Council ownership.
- The stakeholder engagement outcomes are not supplemented by a feasibility study which considers maintenance schedules, skills and experience of staff members and available resources.

6. What we discovered

This section integrates the findings from the anecdotal information gathered from all consultation activities.

6.1. Summary of community consultation

Participants used a range of mobility devices including manual and electric wheelchairs, walking frames, walking sticks and prams. One participant with limited mobility did not use any mobility device. Some participants travelled alone, and others travelled with a carer.

Transport mode

The most common form of transport was private car as a passenger with some participants driving themselves. The most common form of public transport was taxi with a few participants using trains, mostly to travel to the Melbourne CBD.

Most participants travelled along the residential footpaths and shared paths to neighbourhood activity centres on a regular basis. A typical journey using a mobility device is more than 30 minutes, with some indicating they travel between 20 and 30 minutes.

Key destinations in Knox

Key destinations people travelled to included train stations, medical centres, community facilities, open spaces and shopping centres including:

- Community facilities - Knox Swimming Centre, Ferntree Gully, Vermont Men's Shed.
- Medical facilities - Box Hill Hospital, Boronia Medical Centre/Imed radiology.
- Shopping centres - Westfield Knox Shopping Centre, Boronia Shopping Centre, Ferntree Gully Shopping Centre, the Basin Triangle, The Zone, Stud Park Shopping Centre, Wellington Village, Scoresby Village and Mountain Highway Shopping Centre.
- Public open spaces - Arboretum, Peregrine Reserve.

They also travel to the Melbourne CBD and more distant locations such as the airport.

Places respondents indicated they would travel to if they were more accessible are Boronia Shopping Centre, Mountain Gage Shopping Centre, Rowville Lakes and Quarry Park.

6.2. Summary of audit findings

Approximately 2,500 issues were identified through the access audits with multiple issues often occurring at the same location. For example, a non-accessible parking spot may have multiple issues such as incorrect line-marking, wrong signage and a missing kerb ramp. It's also important to note not all of the issues identified by access audits can/will be addressed due to site limitations and/or cost/benefit (e.g. topography, road reserve width). As with results of previous community audits, initiatives will be prioritised based on risk, deliverability, cost and benefits, seeking to ensure that identified issues do not compromise on mobility and accessibility, as defined through community feedback.

Below is the summary of key findings from access audits and the corresponding recommendations.

Issues and challenges	Recommendations
Kerb ramp design and location	
<p>The transition from the kerb ramp to the roadway does not align with the required direction of travel and/or the roadway. This presents an access barrier for people with a vision impairment and people using mobility devices.</p>	<p>This can be rectified through retrofitting work or prevented during the road design phase as per AS1428.1 - 2009 Clause 10.7.</p>
Gradients where there are significant topography constraints	
<p>As the topography of land changes, it is not easy in all areas to meet the requirements, such as gradients.</p> <p>This makes it difficult for people with restricted mobility or who use mobility devices to travel in both directions as it is more tiring to navigate the uphill slope and more challenging to control speed when travelling downhill.</p>	<p>When building works are proposed within the pathway network, pathways are to have a maximum gradient of 1 in 20 with a flat landing every 15 metres when possible. If above is not possible to achieve, it is highly recommended to provide landings at greater frequencies than every 15 metres, as well as ensuring there are resting points along steep topographical areas. Resting points should also include compliant seating and room for a mobility device to be positioned.</p>
Flora encroachments on the footpaths	
<p>Travel along pathways can be impeded in the following ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Flora adjacent to the pathway is overgrowing/hanging and encroaches the clear width of travel. 2. Grass-type flora is growing over grassed area edging and/or within the construction joint lines within the pathways. 	<p>Raise awareness of the need for land owners and occupiers to keep pathways clear of flora at all times.</p> <p>Maintain and clear grass type flora within the construction joints.</p>
Abutments of surfaces	
<p>Different levels between adjoining surfaces or cracks along footpaths cause tripping hazards.</p>	<p>Replace sections of the pathway.</p> <p>Reduce the height differences between adjoining surfaces.</p>

Issues and challenges	Recommendations
Tactile ground surface indicators (TGSIs)	
<p>Absent, cracked, broken TGSIs are a barrier to safe and comfortable navigation for people with a vision impairment.</p>	<p>It is highly recommended that all of the TGSIs be upgraded in a strategic approach.</p> <p>Instore durable TGSIs with a minimum of 30% luminance contrast within 300 millimetres from the hazard.</p>
Wayfinding signage	
<p>Absence of wayfinding signage with raised tactile characters makes it difficult for people, including those with a vision impairment, to navigate public places and spaces.</p> <p>Where there has been signage provided, very limited or none of the signage has raised tactile characters, symbols or Braille.</p>	<p>Install wayfinding signage with raised tactile characters at all key wayfinding decision points with at least 30% luminance contrast.</p>
Car parking	
<p>Poorly located and designed car parking restricts the ability of people with disability to use public places and spaces.</p> <p>Car parking bays with a steep gradient are unsafe and uncomfortable to use.</p>	<p>Provide bollard within the shared area.</p> <p>Provide a shared area.</p> <p>Ensure the car parking bay dimensions and delineations are compliant.</p> <p>Either relocate the bay to a more suitable position or rectify the gradient.</p>

Approximately 2,500 issues identified through the accessibility audits are documented in a separate spreadsheet. As part of the KMAAP implementation, each issue will be analysed and categorised into three categories: new works, retrofitting works and maintenance works. New works and retrofitting works will be included in the future’s mobility priority list while maintenance works will be sent to Council’s Maintenance Team for their attention and action. Some of these issues overlap with those presented in Section 6.3. The findings have also informed the structure and content of the Best Practice Toolkit to be developed during the implementation of the KMAAP.

6.3. Challenges and issues

Some challenges raised during the consultation process are listed in detail below under three main components:

- Availability and safety of accessible parking
- Quality, capacity and functionality of footpaths and shared paths (including crossings, tactile markers, pram ramps, slope, impediments, obstructions, rails, conflicts with cyclists)
- Availability of supporting infrastructure and amenities.

The following abbreviations have been used for each of the experiential site locations:

WM Wantirna Mall	RCC Rowville Community Centre	SV Scoresby Village
FTG Ferntree Gully	TBT The Basin Triangle	KF Knoxfield Shopping Centre

6.3.1. Availability and safety of accessible parking

Difficulty finding an accessible car park due to inadequate provision and use by other vehicles such as delivery trucks, motorbikes and vehicles used by non-eligible drivers or passengers was one of the key issues expressed by the participants.

If there aren't enough, I have to park in the street, which is dangerous, go somewhere else or go home.

Factors such as absence of, obstructed or poorly located shared zones and inadequate space to safely exit and enter the car compromise the safety and convenience of people using accessible car parking.

<p>Accessible car park has no connections to a safe pedestrian crossing. SV</p>	<p>Accessible car parks not located adjacent to footpath and have no shared zone. RCC</p>	<p>No shared zone and too narrow, therefore wheelchair user must travel in roadway to reach driver's side. KF</p>



Accessible car park too short, therefore PMDs have to enter and exit the car in the roadway. **KF**



Accessible car park too short, therefore PMDs have to enter and exit the car in the roadway. **FTG**



Shared zone too narrow and does not have painted yellow lines. **KF**



Parallel parking makes it dangerous as PMDs have to use the roadway to enter and exit car and access the footpath. **WM**



Oblique accessible car park difficult to reverse into. **FTG**



No shared zone, no ramp onto footpath, too short. **WM**



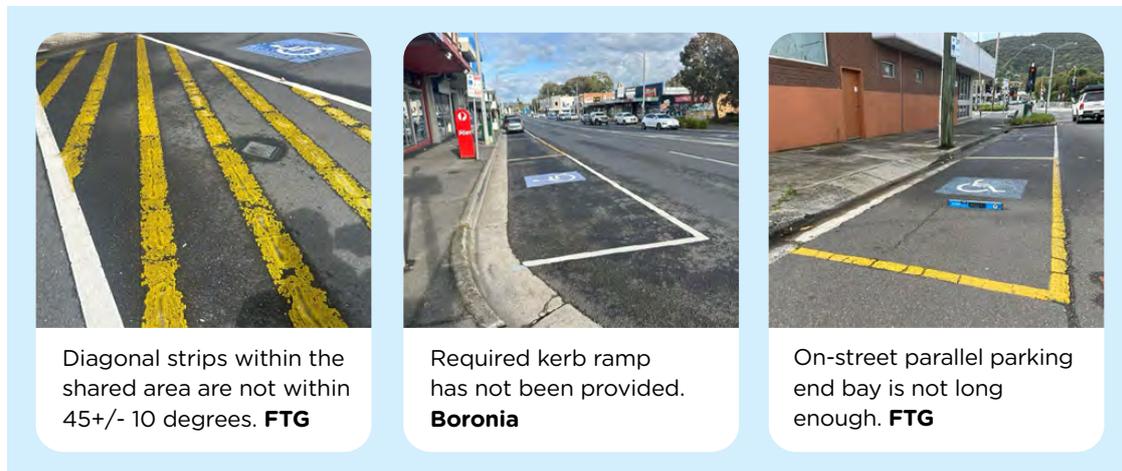
Bollard has not been provided in shared zone. **SV**



Dedicated accessible parking space line markings are not yellow. **FTG**



Line markings are broken, faded or have sections missing. **FTG**



6.3.2. Footpath and shared paths

Connectivity and quality were the two issues associated with footpaths identified during the experiential site inspections.

Surfaces and edges

Poor-quality surfaces cause tripping hazards and difficulties using wheeled devices. They can also cause discomfort for people with chronic pain. Edges that are uneven or not protected from the surrounding surfaces are dangerous as they can introduce tripping hazards.

If I tripped over the lip on the drain, my fall would be worse.

While the participants in the experiential site inspections indicated that surfaces do not necessarily have to be sealed, they must be compacted, free from debris and level.





Poorly maintained asset infrastructure causes tripping hazard. **SV**



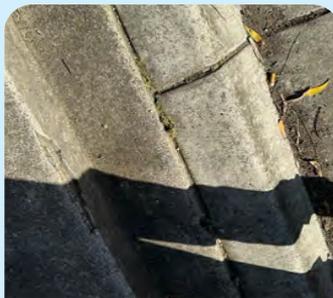
Grated slotted openings are in the same direction as the dominant direction of travel, thus they are a tripping hazard. **KF**



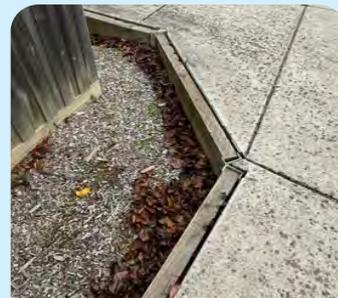
Asset infrastructure a tripping hazard and obstruction. **KF**



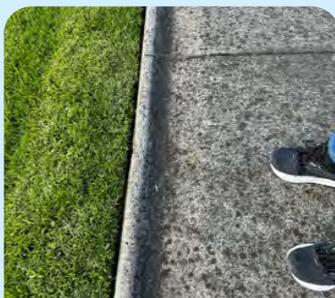
Footpath edge higher, therefore presents as a tripping hazard. **WM**



Edge treatment (bullnose) presents as a tripping hazard and makes it difficult to access path. **WM**



Footpath edge at different level causes potential tripping hazard. **SV**



Drain at edge presents as a tripping hazard, especially as path has a steep slope and crossfall. **WM**



Uneven footpath surface and narrow footpath presents as a tripping hazard. **WM**



Grate slotted openings are in the same direction as the dominant direction of travel. **FTG**

Building and facility accessibility

It is estimated 30% of Australians living with disability experience difficulties accessing buildings and facilities.⁵⁷ The main difficulties include steps at the entrances to buildings, and surfaces at



Step obstructs entry. Mat causes wheelchair wheels to spin. **FTG**



Absence of handrails. **RCC**



Stairs very steep, steps narrow and have no contrast markings, handrail does not go to the bottom of the staircase. **WM**

Kerb ramps



Bullnose edges difficult to navigate. **KF**



Pram ramp too steep. **SV**



Pram ramp too steep. **WM**

57 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024)

Alignment and connectivity

Paths with sharp curves and steep crossfalls are difficult for PMDs to navigate. Poor connections between individual path and shared paths, and between paths and shared paths and pedestrian crossings make it difficult and unsafe to move between key destinations and use facilities such as accessible car parking.

When paths just end that is really frustrating and sometimes dangerous.

 <p>Footpath terminates and does not connect to anything. SV</p>	 <p>Footpath does not align with the desire line. SV</p>	 <p>Step at end of footpath through gate difficult for PMDs to use. SV</p>
 <p>Footpath not continuous. RCC</p>	 <p>Footpath terminates and does not connect to anything. KF</p>	 <p>Narrow paths just 'end'. KF</p>

Crossings

Specific issues associated with connectivity included paths not connecting on either side of the road, footpaths not connected with a zebra or signalised crossing, and footpaths that just ‘end’ or lead to unsafe places.

Pedestrian safety at crossings is compromised by a lack of signalised or zebra crossings, kerb ramps that are not aligned with pedestrian refuges, absence of pedestrian refuges in arterial roads, and footpaths that are not connected with one another at a crossing.

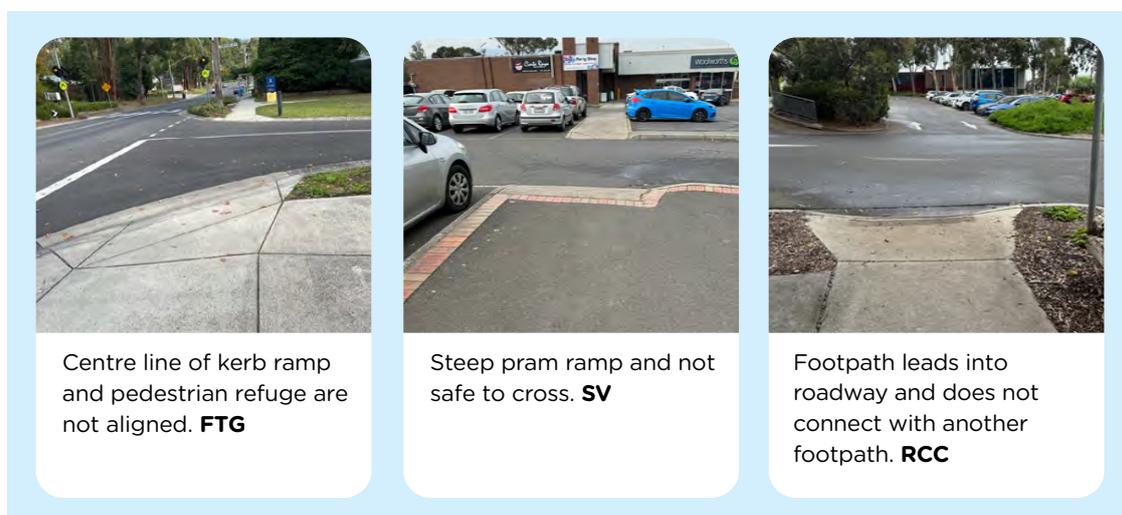
Issues at signalised crossings include signal cycles that are too short and difficulties reaching and using the buttons.

If I was by myself, I would rush across the pedestrian crossing which means I'm likely to fall. I would probably avoid the crossing.

There are a number of traffic lights where the button to press is difficult/impossible to reach when in a wheelchair; for example, on the opposite side or around the side of the pole. Also a number do not have paved areas surrounding the light pole and wheelchair easily loses traction and gets stuck.

I can never get across the road in time before the light turns red. It's dangerous for elderly and disabled people. Most places do not have us in mind.

There are a number of traffic lights where the button is difficult to press or reach when seated in a wheelchair; for example, on the opposite side or around the side of the pole. Several traffic lights do not have paved areas surrounding the light pole, causing wheelchairs to lose traction and get stuck.



Width, slope and crossfall

The width, slope and crossfall of a footpath can influence how safe and comfortable footpaths are. Steep slopes in the municipality's hilly areas can be an issue but are to some extent unavoidable while narrow footpaths do not provide space for two pedestrians to walk alongside one another and can cause conflict between users of all abilities.

 <p>Sloping narrow footpath with curve makes it difficult to navigate. SV</p>	 <p>Footpath narrows at the edge. SV</p>	 <p>Footpath too narrow, difficult for carer to walk alongside person using wheelchair. FTG</p>
 <p>Narrow footpath inaccessible for people using wheelchairs. SV</p>	 <p>Narrow sloping footpath with no ramp makes train station inaccessible. FTG</p>	 <p>Footpath just wide enough for one mobility device. WM</p>

Path obstructions

Structures such as outdoor dining furniture, advertising signage, refuse bins, signage poles, bollards, overgrown vegetation, public transport infrastructure and cars overhanging the footpath can reduce the space pedestrians have to travel in, cause tripping and falling hazards and interfere with the ability of people with visual impairment to navigate.



Sign post obstructs footpath. **KF**



Bus stop infrastructure obstructs footpath. **SV**



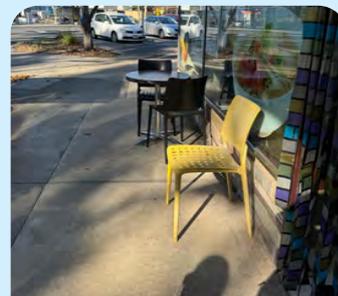
Bus stop infrastructure obstructs footpath. **SV**



A frame and outdoor dining furniture obstruct the footpath. **WM**



Outdoor dining furniture obstructs footpath. **SV**



Outdoor dining furniture obstructs footpath and causes difficulties for people using a long cane to identify edges. **FTG**



Overhanging cars obstruct footpath. **KF**



Retail merchandise obstructs footpath. **SV**



Bins obstruct footpath. **SV**



Poorly maintained vegetation narrows footpath. **FTG**



Bollard narrows footpath. **FTG**



A sign obstructs footpath. **FTG**

Tactile markers (TGSIs)

There was general acceptance that TGSIs are necessary to serve the needs of people with visual impairments. Key issues identified were broken markers, markers not orientated in the intended direction of travel, and markers that are not clearly visible.

It's okay as I know it has to be here for people who are visually impaired.

All people with disability have different needs, which makes it so hard to get it right.

It's a trip hazard for me but I know it has to be there. Unfortunately, we don't live in an ideal world.

I like the painted tactile - I can see it from a mile off.

		
<p>TGSI does not align with safe travel direction and is same colour as path surface. WM</p>	<p>No TGSIs at pedestrian crossing. FTG</p>	<p>No TGSI in pedestrian refuges. TBT</p>

Luminance

Luminance contrast raises awareness of potential hazards such as steps, changes in level, steep slopes and bollards for PWD.



Stair-nosing luminance contrast strip has not been provided. Compliance handrails have not been provided on both sides of the stairway. **FTG**



Stair-nosing luminance contrast strip has not been provided. **RCC**



Bollard does not have adequate luminance contrast painting. **FT**



Bollards do not have luminance contrast painting. Footpath surface covered in debris. **KF**



Bollards are a potential tripping hazard if there is no contrast painting. **SV**

6.3.3. Availability of supporting infrastructure and amenities

Benches that are not connected to an adequately compacted footpath, do not provide space for PMDs to sit, are difficult to get off and are not sheltered, reduce PMDs’ comfort and convenience.

Benches without arms make it difficult for people with muscle weakness to use. Insufficient space between the bench and other structures such as picnic tables and other seating makes it difficult for people to park their mobility devices.

Drinking fountains with stiff buttons can be difficult to use for people with muscle weakness. Drinking fountains that are too high are difficult for people seated in wheelchairs to access.

Poorly located electric vehicle charging stations can prevent and restrict access for PLWD.

Accessible toilets that are locked, used as storage or not well connected to footpaths make it uncomfortable for PLWD to go about their day-to-day activities in public places and spaces.

The image contains six photographs illustrating accessibility issues:

- Top Left:** A person in a wheelchair is seated on a wooden bench on a grassy area. The bench is not on a concrete pad and lacks handrails. **FTG**
- Top Middle:** A picnic table is positioned very close to a bench, leaving a narrow path for a wheelchair. **FTG**
- Top Right:** A bench is situated on a concrete pad that is too small and lacks space underneath for a wheelchair. **RCC**
- Bottom Left:** A wooden bench is too low to the ground and does not have armrests. **WM**
- Bottom Middle:** A bench with a circular metal frame backrest is shown; the backrest does not extend far enough to protect a person in a wheelchair. **SV**
- Bottom Right:** A wooden bench is placed too close to a tree, making it difficult to maneuver a wheelchair. **FTG**

		
<p>Electric charging equipment difficult to access due to bollards, sign pole and absence of ramp. FTG</p>	<p>Buttons difficult to push due to muscle weakness. RCC</p>	<p>Drinking fountain is not DDA compliant. FTG</p>

Accessible toilets make a huge difference to our ability to visit public places.

6.3.4. Specific sites with issues

The following direct quotations are drawn from the community's feedback on specific sites with issues.

*There is no pedestrian crossing at the corner of Quarry Road and Railway Avenue Upper Ferntree Gully which connects the **footpath between Upper Ferntree Gully Station and Ferntree quarry/footpath to Ferntree Gully shops.** It is a very dangerous intersection and those with mobility have to cross on the road through the train crossing. Please fix immediately!*

*There seem to be many areas around **Wellington Village** whereby there is only a footpath on one side of the road. This makes using a mobility scooter, wheelchair, pram or walking tricky.*

*The **shared path on Kellets Road between Lakesfield and Napoleon** has a section that is loose rocks instead of concrete and is impossible to push a pram over and is a tripping hazard*

Boronia shopping area is divided by Main Road (Dorset) for parking and access to all shops.

Boronia shopping area - The parking is all over the place and the pedestrian areas are also all over the place and no consistent paths for pedestrians.

Mountain Gate shops - Most of the shops at Mountain Gate are not wheelchair accessible. I also want to be able to walk my dogs around our streets and up to the Mountain Gate shops. Council has addressed the footpaths being blocked by cars at the Fitzgerald Road end of Conn Street which I greatly appreciate, however the footpath at Silverton Drive is often blocked by cars as well.

I want to be able to go to the **Mountain Gate shops** safely in my electric wheelchair and not be limited to going into only a few stores because most are not wheelchair accessible. Using my electric wheelchair I have to go up Fitzgerald Road towards Burwood Hwy using the road because there are no footpaths. It is scary and dangerous as the cars speed up and down this road. If I use Silverton Drive the footpath out the front of numbers 26 and 24 is sloped towards the road. This slope in an electric wheelchair is accentuated, making it dangerous to navigate especially if the path is wet.

I want to be able to access my local community without the limitations of stores not being accessible, or sloped footpaths.

Arboretum Ferntree Gully needs easier access and more parking spaces off Francis Crescent.

The Arboretum is great but the access ramp alongside the disabled parking spaces has a small step in it that almost resulted in my elderly mother being tipped from the wheelchair. **Stud Park** the shops and **Centrelink centre** on Fulham Road Rowville need serious reviews for disabled parking and I cannot safely take my mother to this part of the centre due to the inappropriate accessible parking and the design of the footpath access

Stud Park - It is tricky to access by footpath: poor/no/limited lighting from Bergins Road to/from Stud Park at night. No footpath up along Chemist Warehouse building connecting to library/main shopping centre. No footpaths from along Churchill Park Drive from Bergins Road.

Rowville Lakes – Accessible roadside parking and access ramps would make it easier to visit the lakes and picnic area. Smooth pathways into the area would also be beneficial. Gravel paths and a transit wheelchair are quite dangerous. We currently stay in the car and have a coffee looking at the lakes and the other people enjoying the lakeside opportunities as it is too challenging to get to the walking paths.

There are some parks that I find tricky as they don't have fences or are close to the road – for example, **Marie Wallace in Bayswater**.

Knox Shopping Centre can be hard as there are lots of high curbs or speed bumps with hard edges that are hard to get a pram or trolley over in the car park. I also struggle to get a double trolley there when I go to do the shopping.

Quarry Park – Paths away from top area are too steep with a wheelie walker to get back up (but accept that's not fixable).

Tripping point between the road and access ramps near accessible parking spaces and entrances to public places. For example, **Knox City Shopping Centre** undercover car park near the hand car wash there is a designated crossing from the car park to the footpath (Ozone end, but a small ridge from the roadside creates the possibility of tipping the wheelchair forward. We have to turn around on the roadside and come up the ramp backwards which is not really safe or easy for the carer to navigate

Paths which 'just end', e.g. along Timmothy Dr to David Cooper Park and High Street Road shops.

6.4. Best practice

Through consultation, best practice principles are identified regarding accessible car parking spaces, footpath and shared path design, building accessibility and supporting infrastructure.

Accessible car parking

Good connectivity to footpaths, adequate space to manoeuvre around the vehicle and structures that prevent ineligible parking are key features that ensure PLWD can park safely and conveniently.

		
<p>Accessible car parking located at footpath into park and has shared zone (but no bollard). Arboretum FTG</p>	<p>Wide pathway next to the accessible car parking space. SV</p>	<p>Share zone adjacent to accessible car park which is connected to the footpath and protected by a visible bollard. WM</p>

Footpath and shared path design

Well-maintained, wide and gently sloping footpaths with compacted surfaces and safe edges are key attributes of safe and comfortable footpaths.

The new park at Scoresby Village Shopping Centre gets a big tick from me – the footpaths are wide, there are good pram ramps, the layout is well done, there is sheltered seating including space for wheelchair users.



Path is wide and has sealed good-quality surface. Arboretum



Wide footpaths with good-quality surface and gentle slope. **KF**



Wide footpath with good-quality surface. **SV**



Gentle slope makes it comfortable to use. Arboretum



Surface of utility cover prevents trips and falls. **SV**



Asphalt and concrete grinding improve footpath quality. **KF**



Stairs have rail and tactile markers. **TBT**



Path surface good quality. And has edges and arm rests. Connects to car park. **RCC**



Wombat crossing improves safety and connectivity between footpaths. **SV**

Building accessibility

Ramps provide equitable access into buildings for PMDs.



The complex block contains three photographs illustrating different accessibility scenarios for accessible car parking. The first photo shows a brick-paved footpath leading to a parking space with yellow diagonal markings, but no bollard. The second photo shows a wide, clear concrete pathway adjacent to a parking area. The third photo shows a parking space with yellow markings and a bollard, connected to a footpath.

Accessible car parking located at footpath into park and has shared zone (but no bollard). Arboretum **FTG**

Wide pathway next to the accessible car parking space. **SV**

Share zone adjacent to accessible car park which is connected to the footpath and protected by a visible bollard. **WM**

Supporting infrastructure

Benches placed at regular intervals are necessary to provide rest, particularly along footpaths in the municipality's hilly areas.

Handrails along steep slopes and staircases make it safer for PLWD to use.

Space around benches enables PMDs to access the seating and table.

It would be great if picnic areas had a place where you could push a wheelchair up to a picnic table.

Drinking fountains with levers rather than buttons assist people with muscle weakness.



Bench has arm rests and is accessible from a sealed surface. Arboretum



Picnic table has space to park a wheelchair or pram and is under cover. **SV**



Bench installed on concrete pad, has arm rests and is connected to footpath. **RCC**



Drinking fountain operated with lever assists people with muscle weakness. **RCC**



Signage assists communication. **RCC**

Visual and tactile cues

TGSI tactile markers and luminance painting to identify changes in level and obstructions such as increase visibility and ensure safety, particularly for people with visual impairment.

 <p>TGSI tactile marker is well maintained, contrasts with footpath surface and angled towards direction of travel. WM</p>	 <p>TGSI tactile marker colour contrasts with footpath surface. TBT</p>	 <p>TGSI tactile marker good quality and high contrast with footpath surface. RCC</p>
 <p>Contrast paint identifies potential hazard. TBT</p>	 <p>Bollard colour increases visibility. FTG</p>	

6.5. Competing priorities/conflicts

Several competing priorities need to be considered when planning for, designing and maintaining the built environment to maximise accessibility and safety for PLWD.

These competing priorities also need to be considered during the budget allocation processes.

- In some instances, compliance with parking standards may still not result in adequate parking for everyone, including PLWD. This is a particular issue when accessible car spaces are used by ineligible vehicles.
- Biodiversity is essential to combatting climate change. Potential competing biodiversity priorities are the need to ensure adequate lighting while protecting fauna and landscaping and trees for shelter, and the need to prevent cracking and obstruction of footpaths. Addressing these competing priorities will safeguard both comfortable travel and a sustainable local ecosystem.
- For public transport infrastructure such as bus shelters and signage to be safe, it has to be placed on the footpath. However, poorly located public infrastructure can cause obstructions, particularly on narrow footpaths.
- Steps into buildings are sometimes necessary to provide adequate drainage and accommodate Knox's hilly structure. These can cause obstructions for PLWD, preventing access into buildings which abut footpaths.
- Safety gates into children's playgrounds can be difficult to open for PLWD, particularly for PMDs with wheels.

7. The Action Plan

This Background Report has highlighted specific issues in Knox's built environment that compromise the safety, comfort and convenience of pedestrians, particularly PLWD. It has also identified a range of best practice examples that can inform Council's maintenance, renewal and new build processes over the next 10 years.

The KMAAP has been developed to address the findings identified in this Background Report. In this action plan, we will work towards:

- minimising physical barriers for people with disability in accessing goods, services, facilities and employment
- improving travel safety and comfort for people with disability across different modes of transportation
- implementing universal design principles in infrastructure project planning and upgrades to ensure accessibility for all, including individuals with disability.

Five action categories were developed under the theme of 'Action Today, Mobility Tomorrow'.

- Accessible car parking
- Pathways
- Connectivity
- Supporting infrastructure
- Working towards a better future.

Please refer to the Knox Mobility and Access Action Plan for the full list of actions in the above categories.

The delivery of those actions can support Council in its vision to assist PLWD and the wider community in shifting from a car-dominated community to one with a more sustainable and healthy mix of active, public and private transport.

Improving infrastructure to suit the needs of PLWD will also ultimately improve the experience of all users, and lead to greater walkability and health outcomes.

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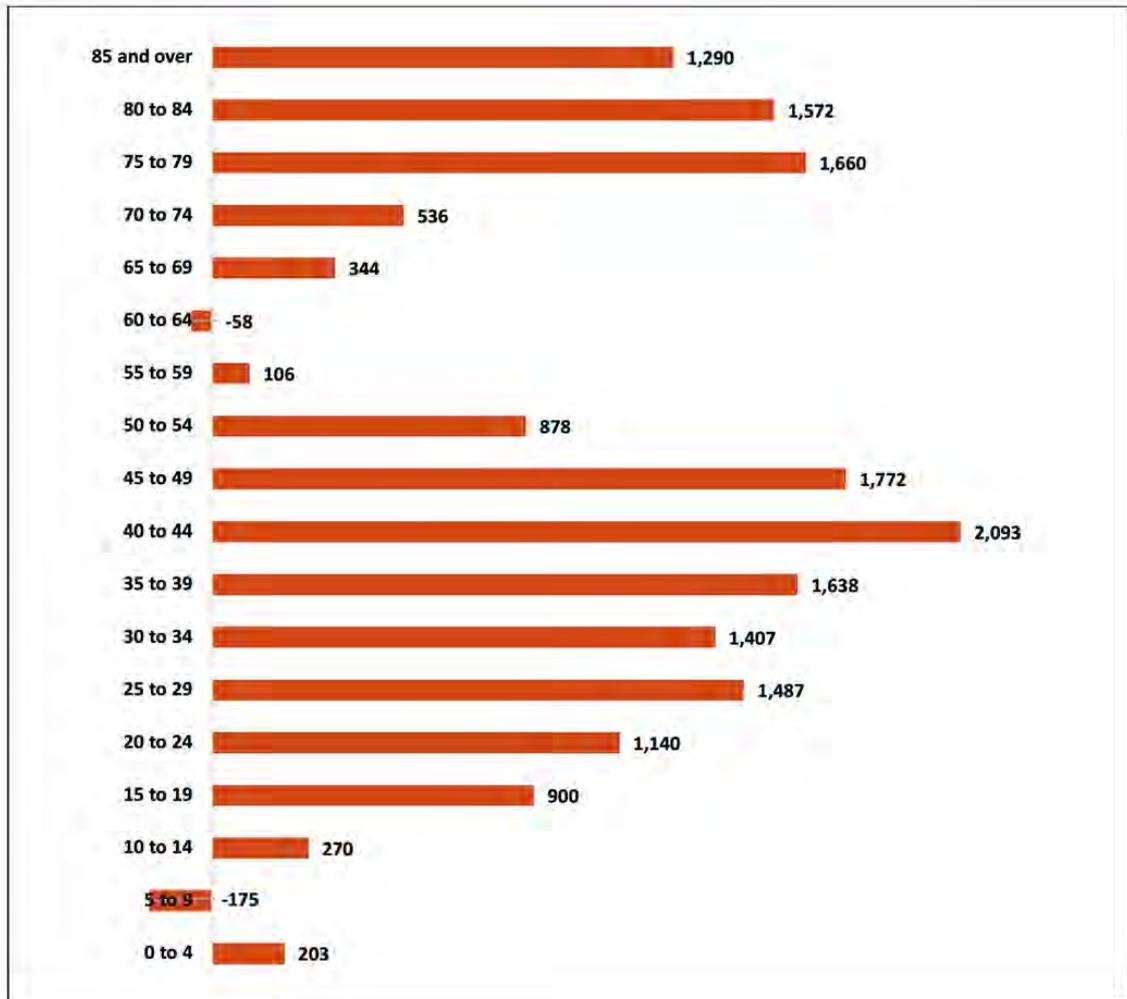
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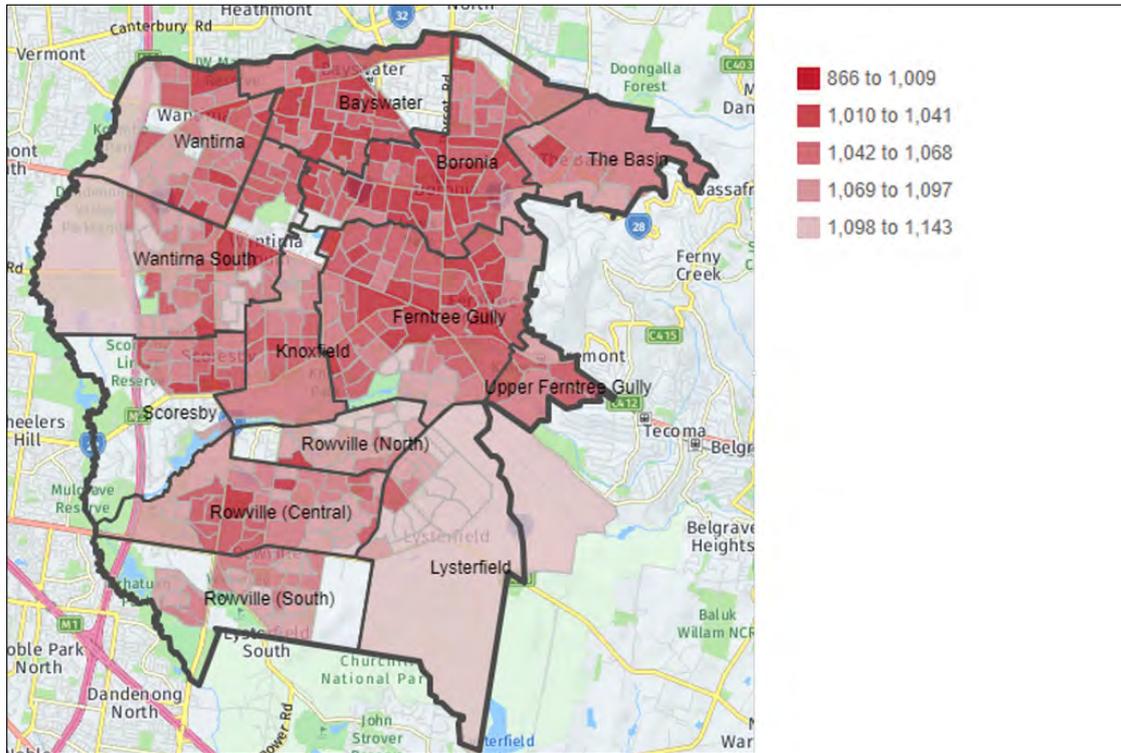
Appendix 2 – Socio-economic and health profile

Figure 6 – Projected population growth by age, 2021-2036



Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing (2021), compiled by .id consulting

Figure 7 - SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage, 2021



Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing (2021), compiled by .id consulting

Table 2 - Assistance for core activities needed by age group (years), 2021

Age group	Knox 2021		Greater Melbourne 2021 %	Knox change 2016-2021 #
	#	%		
0 to 4	107	1.3	1.3	-37
5 to 9	435	4.6	4.0	+104
10 to 19	733	3.9	3.5	+153
20 to 59	2,187	2.6	2.4	+319
60 to 64	471	4.8	6.5	+44
65 to 69	581	6.7	8.8	+32
70 to 74	753	10.2	12.5	+219
75 to 79	866	16.8	19.3	+174
80 to 84	1,134	30.3	32.2	+358
85 and over	1,868	53.4	53.7	+346
Total	9,170	5.8	5.5	+1,751

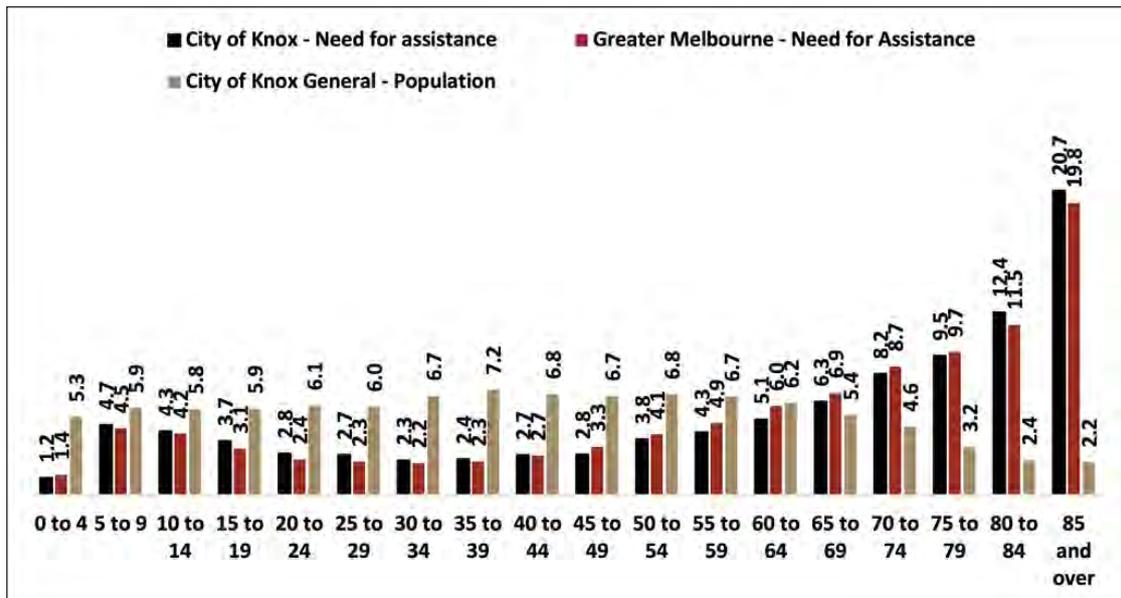
Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing (2021), compiled by .id consulting

Table 3 - People providing unpaid care to a person with disability, long-term illness or old age

Assistance to a person with a disability, long-term illness or old age	Knox 2021		Greater Melbourne 2021 %	Change 2016-2021 #
	#	%		
Provided unpaid assistance	17,493	13.3	12.6	+2,490
No unpaid assistance provided	109,283	82.8	81.8	+4,584
Not stated	5,219	4.0	5.6	-2,135
Total persons aged 15+	131,995	100.0	100.0	+4,939 (+3.9%)

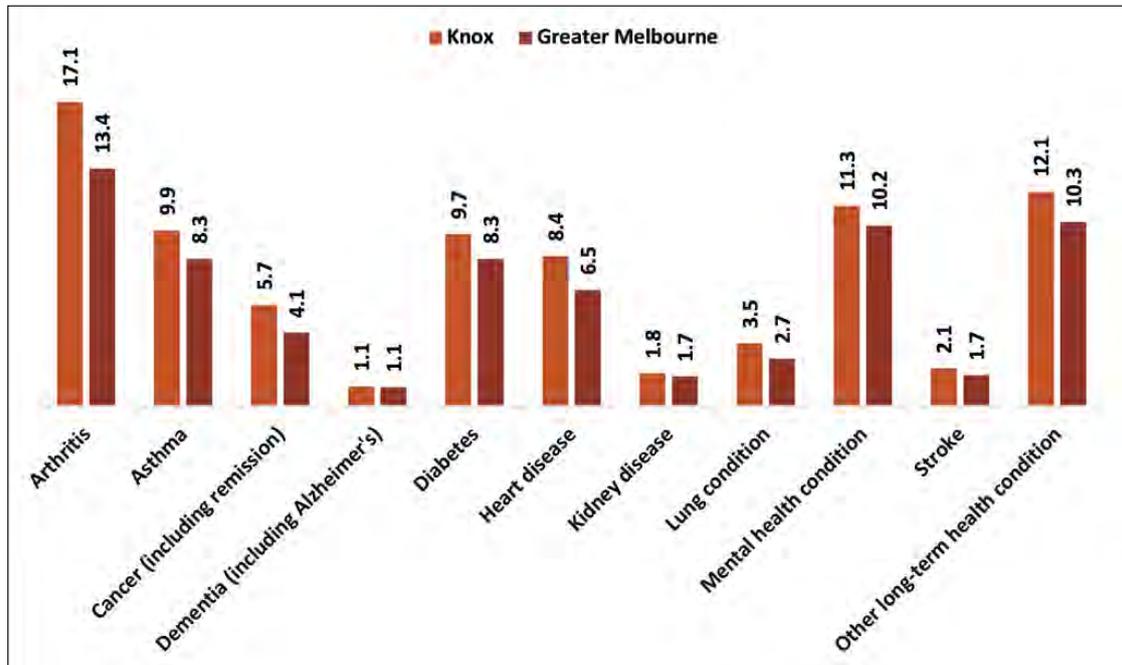
Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing (2021), compiled by .id consulting

Figure 8 - Proportion of people needing assistance of total population by five-year age groups, 2021



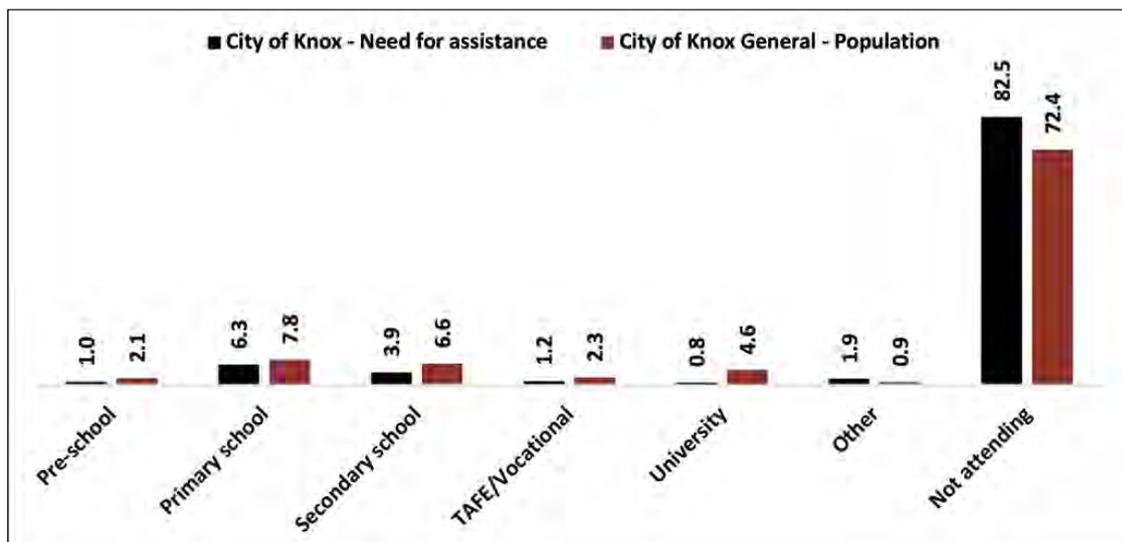
Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing (2021), compiled by .id consulting

Figure 9 - Long-term health conditions, 2021



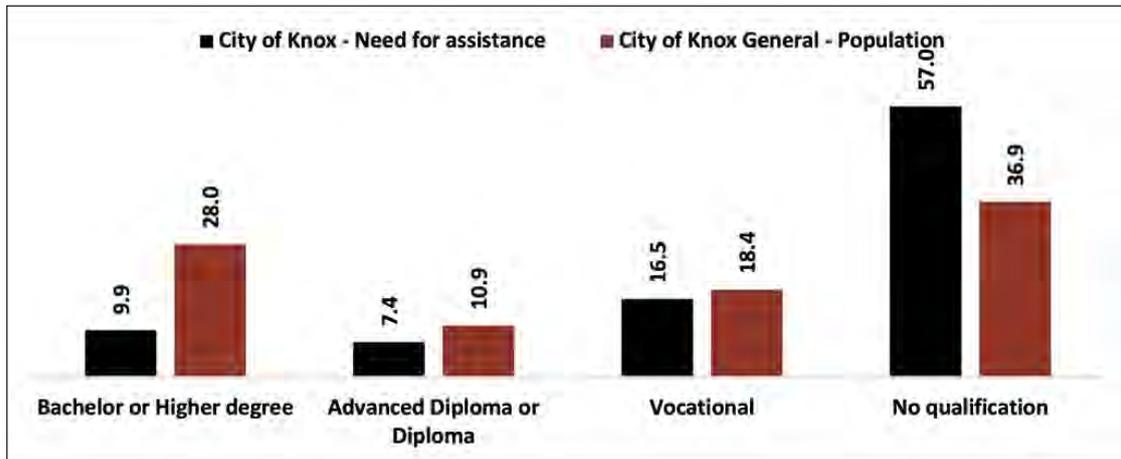
Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing (2021), compiled by .id consulting

Figure 10 - Type of educational institution attending, people needing assistance 2021



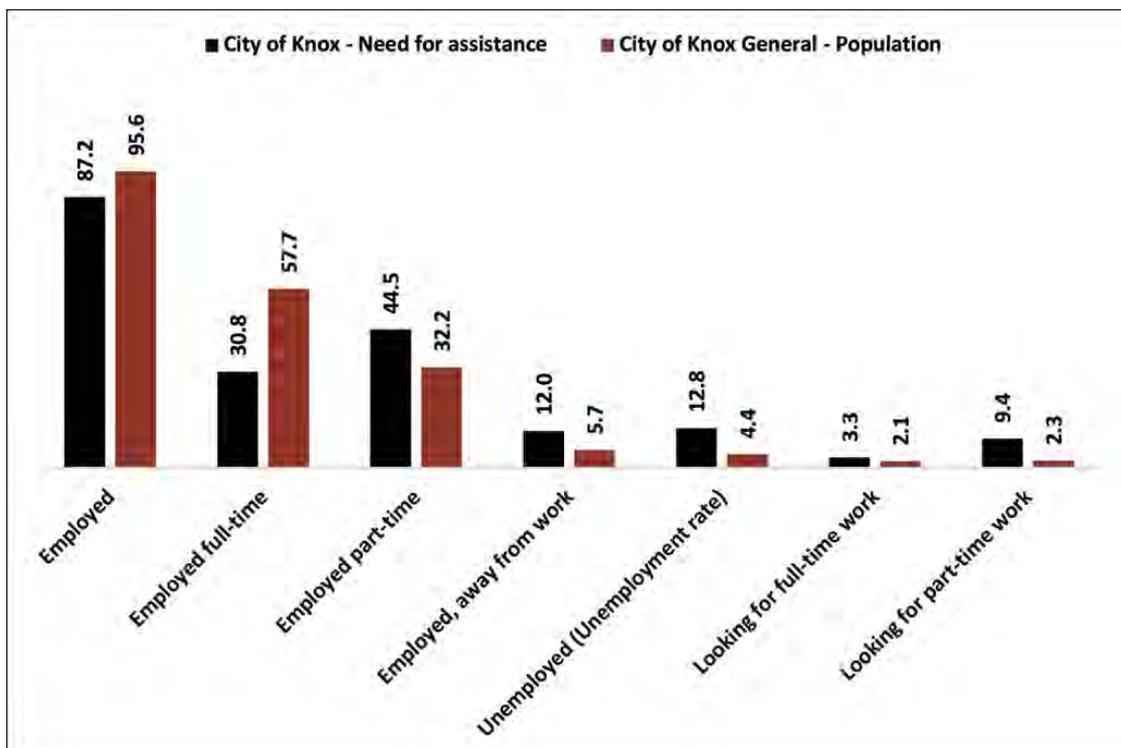
Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing (2021), compiled by .id consulting

Figure 11 - Educational attainment, people needing assistance 2021



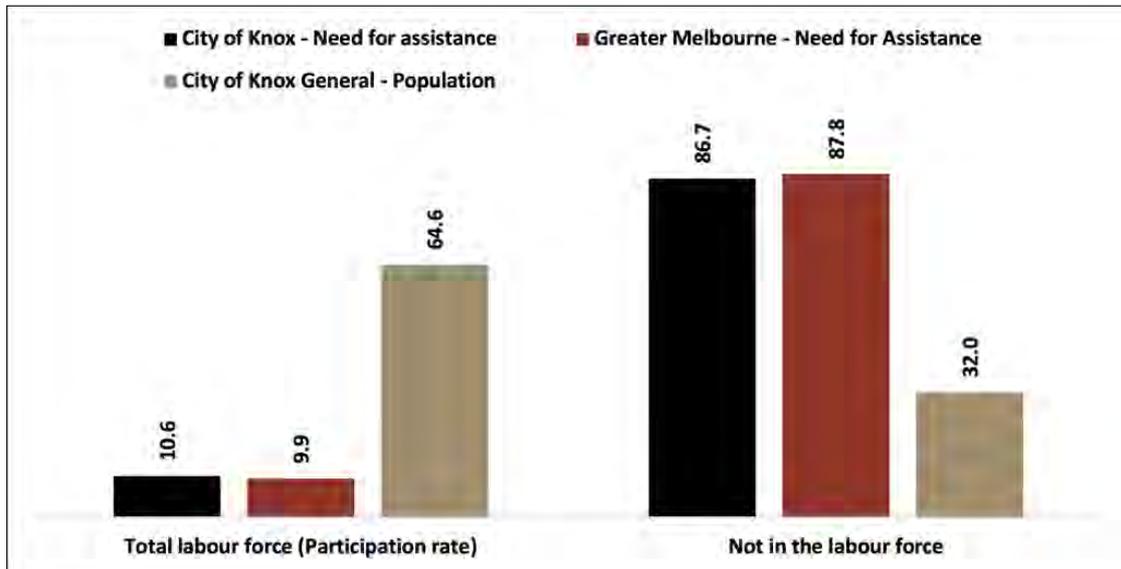
Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing (2021), compiled by .id consulting

Figure 12 - Employment status, people needing assistance, 2021



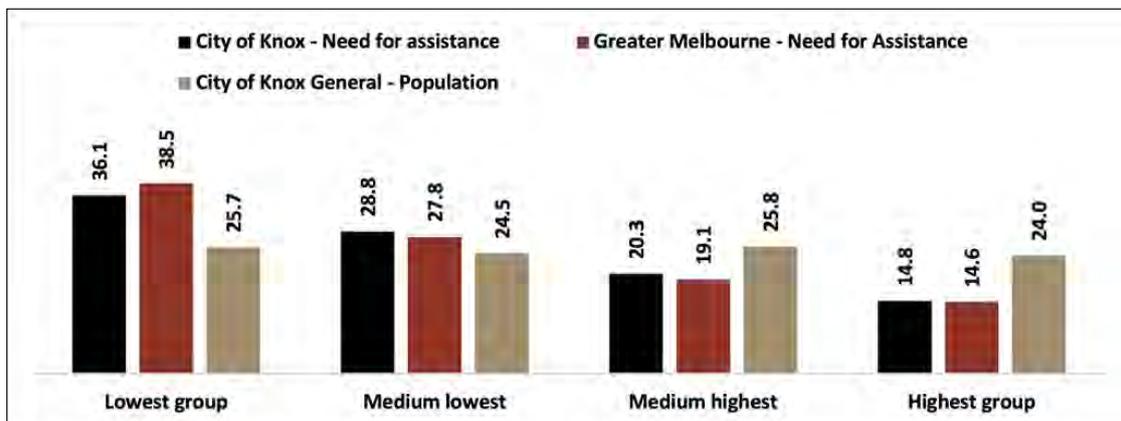
Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing (2021), compiled by .id consulting

Figure 13 - Labour force participation rate, people needing assistance, 2021



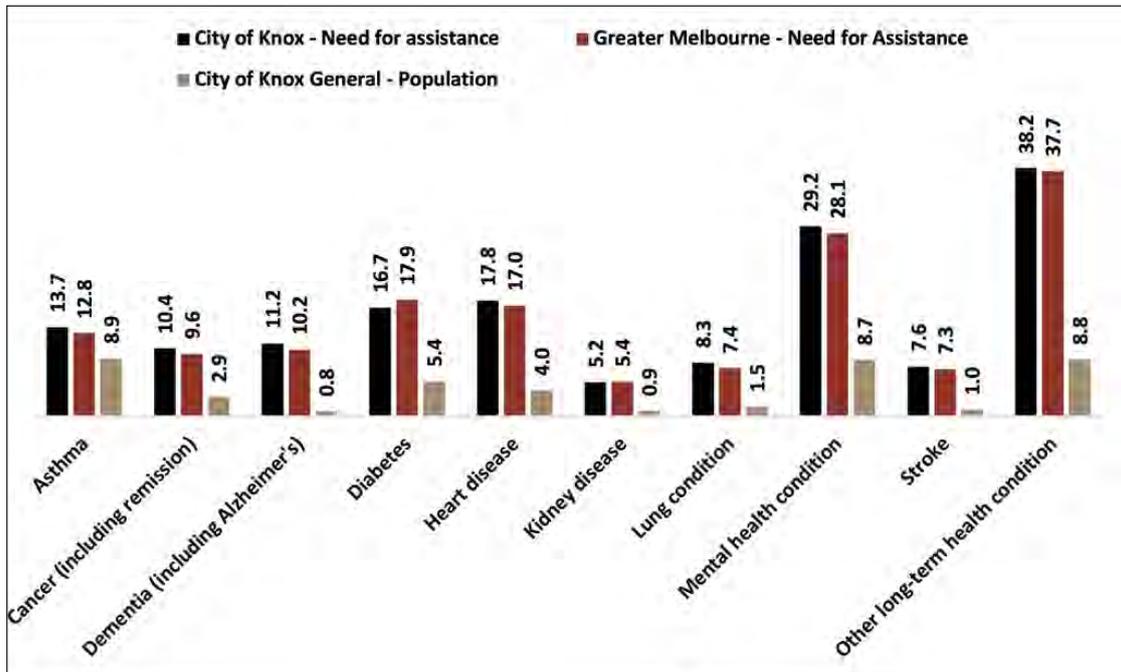
Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing (2021), compiled by .id consulting

Figure 14 - Income quartiles, people needing assistance, 2021



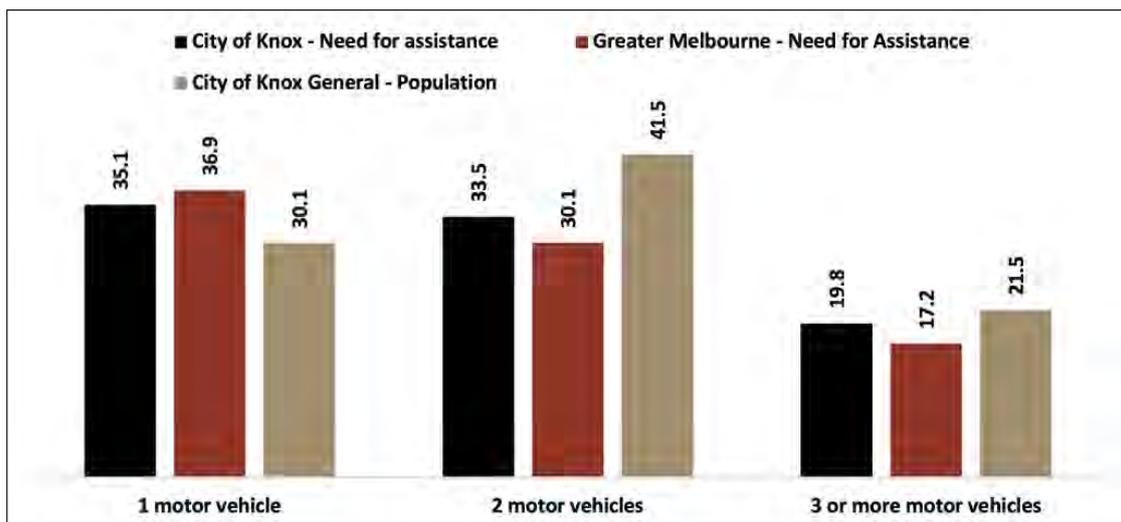
Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing (2021), compiled by .id consulting

Figure 15 - Long term-health condition, people needing assistance, 2021



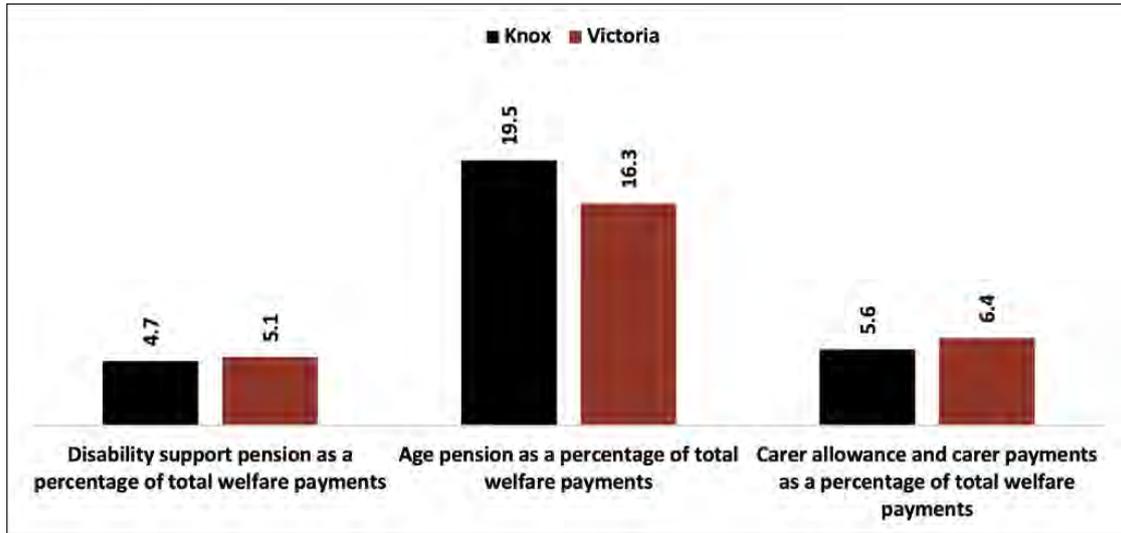
Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing (2021), compiled by .id consulting

Figure 17 - Car ownership, people needing assistance, 2021



Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing (2021), compiled by .id consulting

Figure 18 – Disability support, age and carer allowance pensions as a percentage of total pensions, Knox and Victoria, June 2024



Source: Department of Social Services

Table 4 – Core activity definition and prevalence

Level of core activity limitation	Definition	Population affected Australia/Victoria	Population affected Knox
Profound	Greatest need - always needs help with at least one core activity: communication, mobility or self-care	2.5%/2.3%	5% (Profound/severe) (n=8,130)
Severe	Needs help sometimes or has difficulty with a core activity	2.5%/2.3%	
Moderate	No need for help but has difficulty with a core activity task	2.5%/2.3%	7.8% (Moderate/mild) (n=12,590)
Mild	No help and no difficulty with core-activity tasks, but has other limitations, such as use of aids and equipment or inability to perform specific physical tasks. ⁵⁸	2.5%/2.3%	

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018)

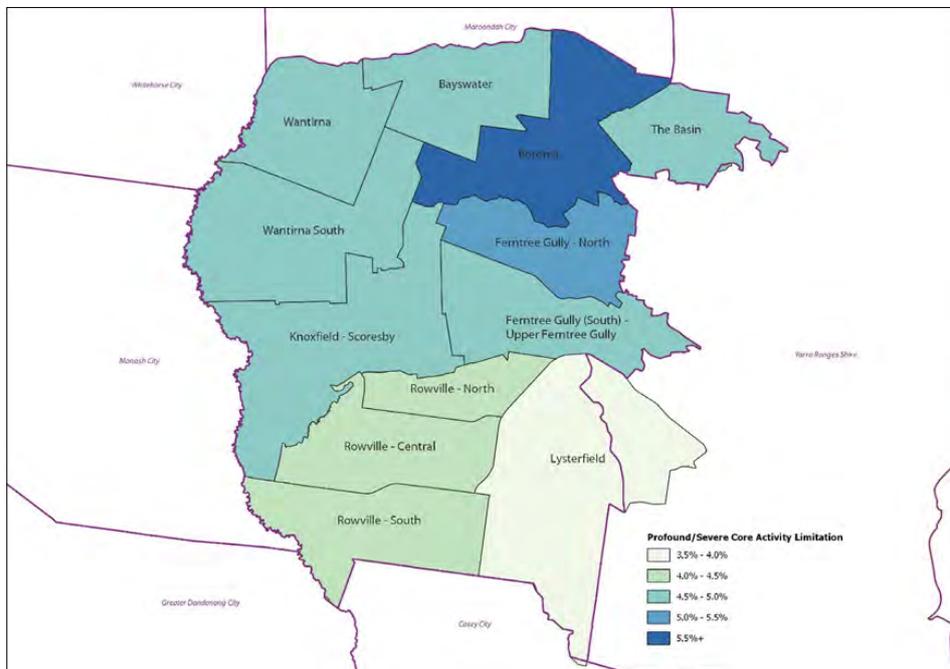
⁵⁸ Easily walking 200 metres, walking up and down stairs without a handrail, bending to pick up an object

Table 5 - Disability estimates (physical or mental/behavioural condition), Knox suburbs, 2018

Suburb (SA2)	Profound/severe core activity limitation		Moderate/mild core activity limitation	
Bayswater	640	5%	1,059	8.3%
Boronia	1,648	7.1%	1,932	8.3%
Ferntree Gully North	727	5.2%	1,224	8.6%
Ferntree Gully South/UFTG	701	4.6%	1,231	8.1%
Knoxfield-Scoresby	838	5%	1,142	6.8%
Lysterfield	273	3.9%	448	6.4%
Rowville Central	703	4.4%	1,008	6.3%
Rowville North	360	4.3%	663	7.9%
Rowville South	450	4.1%	786	7.1%
The Basin	220	4.9%	356	7.9%
Wantirna	715	5%	1,110	7.7%
Wantirna South	842	4.6%	1,616	8.7%
Total	8,130⁵⁹	5%	12,590⁶⁰	7.8%

Source: Australian Bureau Statistics (2018)

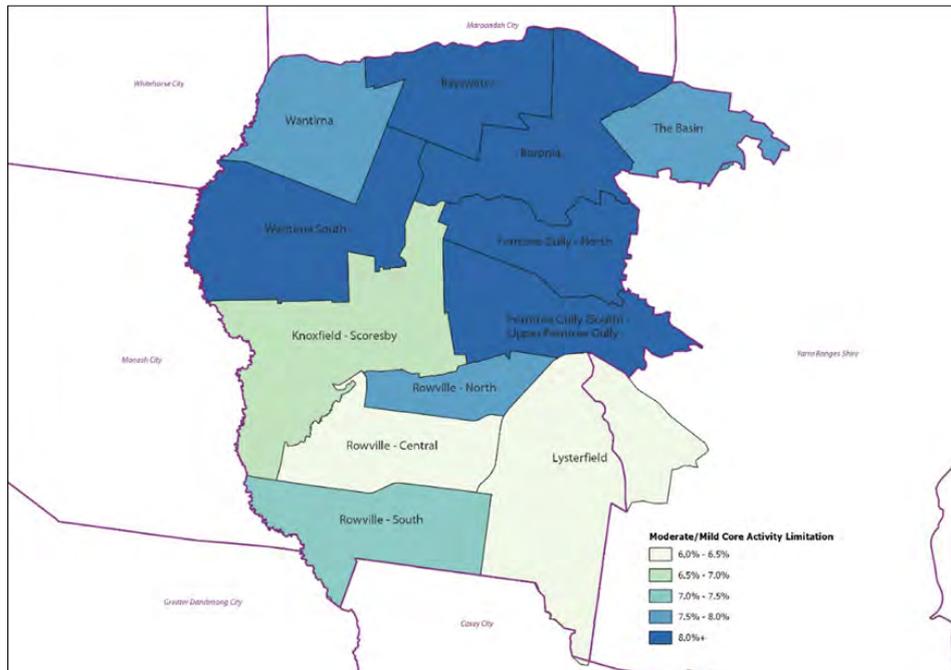
Figure 19 - Physical and mental/behavioural disability estimates (profound/severe activity limitation), as percentage of population, Knox suburbs, 2018



Source: Australian Bureau Statistics (2018)

59 Rounded to LGA total
60 op. cit.

Figure 20 - Physical and mental/behavioural disability estimates (moderate/mild activity limitation), as percentage of population, Knox suburbs, 2018



Source: Australian Bureau Statistics (2018)

Table 5 - Disability estimates (physical or mental/behavioural condition), Knox suburbs, 2018

Suburb (SA2)	Profound/severe core activity limitation	Moderate/mild core activity limitation	Estimated number using mobility aid
Bayswater	422 3.3%	900 7.1%	281
Boronia	1,088 4.7%	1,642 7.1%	655
Ferntree Gully North	480 3.4%	1,040 7.3%	337
Ferntree Gully South/UFTG	463 3.0%	1,046 6.8%	348
Knoxfield-Scoresby	553 3.4%	971 5.8%	324
Lysterfield	180 2.6%	381 5.5%	129
Rowville Central	463 2.9%	857 5.4%	279
Rowville North	238 2.8%	564 6.7%	168
Rowville South	297 2.7%	668 6.1%	177
The Basin	145 3.2%	303 6.7%	96
Wantirna	472 3.3%	944 6.6%	256
Wantirna South	556 3.0%	1,374 7.4%	404
Total	5,360⁶¹ 3.3%	10,700⁶² 6.6%	3,460⁶³

Source: Australian Bureau Statistics (2018)

61 Rounded to LGA total
 62 As above
 63 As above

Appendix 3 – Glossary and acronyms

DDA Disability Discrimination Act 1992

PWD People with disability

PMDs People using mobility devices

TGSI Tactile ground surface indicator

Ableism⁶⁴	Attitudes that motivate harmful or discriminatory behaviour toward people with disability. Describes the experience of people with disability of segregation, isolation, discrimination, prejudice, systemic bias and oppression. Identifies attitudes and behaviours that class people with disability as different, less than or inferior to people without disability, incapable of exercising choice and control, and a burden on society.
Accessibility⁶⁵	The degree to which an environment, service or product allows access by as many people as possible.
Accessible parking	A car parking space that is accessible for people with a disability who are eligible for a permit. Users of these parking spaces must display a valid parking permit in their vehicle.
Asset	A physical item owned or controlled by Council which provides or contributes to the provision of services to the community (Community Facilities Plan 2021-2024).
Assistive technology	Equipment or devices that help someone do things as a result of a disability or assist someone do things more safely. Includes special equipment, mobility devices such as wheelchairs. Engineering that supports improved access for people with disability to complete tasks by increasing, maintaining or improving the functional capabilities and independence to facilitate accessibility and participation. ⁶⁶
Barrier	Factor in a person's environment that limits their functional ability through their absence or presence.
Built environment	All the structures built to support human activity – comprises everything physically part of a city such as buildings, roads, squares, parks, sidewalks, commercial signage and street furniture.
Crossfall	The slope of a path towards the edge such as a gutter on either side.
Dementia	An umbrella term used to describe progressive symptoms that affect cognition like impaired memory, confusion navigating space, inability to focus, reduced visual perception, and difficulty with communication, activities of daily living, reasoning and judgement.

⁶⁴ Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability: *Final Report 2023*

⁶⁵ World Health Organization (2023)

⁶⁶ Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development (2017)

Dementia-friendly community⁶⁷	A dementia-friendly community is one where people living with dementia are integral in creating places and spaces that understand, respect, support and empower them.
Disability	<p>Disability is an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions, denoting the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with a health condition) and that individual's contextual factors (environmental and personal factors).⁶⁸</p> <p>Disability in relation to a person means:⁶⁹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or b) total or partial loss of a part of the body; or c) the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or d) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or e) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or f) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or g) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or that results in disturbed behaviour; <p>and includes a disability that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> h) presently exists; or i) previously existed but no longer exists; or j) may exist in the future (including because of a genetic predisposition to that disability); or k) is imputed to a person.
Discrimination⁷⁰	Direct discrimination occurs if a person treats, or proposes to treat, a person with an attribute unfavourably because of their disability. Indirect discrimination occurs if a person imposes, or proposes to impose a requirement, condition or practice that could disadvantage a person with disability.
Footpath and shared path	Footpaths are sealed or unsealed surfaces intended for use by pedestrians only while shared paths are sealed or non-sealed surfaces intended for use by both pedestrians and cyclists. Both footpaths and shared paths may be aligned with a road or located within parks and reserves.
Human rights model of disability	The human rights model of disability focuses on the equal rights that all people have. This model presents disability inclusion as a vision we should all aspire to. The human rights model recognises an individual's experience of disability as being unique to them and as contributing to their sense of identity. The human rights model also acknowledges intersecting and overlapping forms of discrimination and how these contribute to a person's experiences. ⁷¹

67 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2020)

68 World Health Organization (2023)

69 Section 4 *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*

70 *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*

71 Victorian Government (2022)

Individual mobility ⁷²	Individual mobility is defined as ‘being able to safely and reliably go where you want to go when you want to go, and how you want to get there’.
Intersectionality	Refers to the multi-layered and intersecting experiences of people with disability. Recognises intersectional experiences as the complex, cumulative ways multiple forms of discrimination, disadvantage and oppression are experienced by people with disability based on their physical, socio-cultural and economic circumstances.
Medical model of disability	Based on the premise that people are disabled by their impairments of differences and considers what is ‘wrong’ with the person, not what the person needs. ⁷³
Mobility	Moving by changing body position or location or by transferring from one place to another; by carrying, moving or manipulating objects; by walking, running or climbing; and using various forms of transport. ⁷⁴
Mobility device	A device used by people with disability such as manual and electric wheelchairs, walking frames, walking sticks, scooters, canes, crutches.
Neighbourhood ⁷⁵	The environment within walking or short driving distance beyond one’s home (or workplace) that is frequently visited and thus a meaningful part of one’s life space.
Pedestrian	In addition to someone who travels by foot, a pedestrian includes: (a) a person driving a motorised wheelchair that cannot travel at over 10 kilometres per hour (on level ground); and (b) a person in a non-motorised wheelchair; and (c) a person pushing a motorised or non-motorised wheelchair; and (d) a person in or on a wheeled recreational device or wheeled toy. ⁷⁶
Permit holder	A person who holds a parking permit that entitles them to park in a location as specified on their permit (accessible parking bay).
Permit parking	Parking restricted to businesses or residents holding a valid parking permit for a given parking area or street. The area or street is designated by signage with the wording ‘Permit Holders Excepted’.
Powered mobility device	Includes powered wheelchairs and motorised scooters.
Principal Pedestrian Network (PPN) ⁷⁷	A strategic network of pedestrian routes that encourage walking for transport.
Public health and wellbeing ⁷⁸	The absence of disease, illness, injury, disability or premature death and the collective state of public health and wellbeing.

72 Biglieri, S., & Dean, J. (2022)

73 Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (2021)

74 World Health Organization (2023)

75 Gan, D *et al.*, (2021)

76 Vic Roads (2023)

77 Knox Principal Pedestrian Network 2017

78 Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008

Public places⁷⁹	Places used by the community to move about and interact such as public footpaths and walkways, educational institutions, shops and department stores, financial institutions, parks and recreational areas, community facilities, hospitality and entertainment venues, civic buildings, public transport infrastructure, medical and health centres. ⁸⁰
Services⁸¹	Includes access to and use of any place that members of the public are permitted to enter. Includes entertainment and recreation services connected with transportation or travel.
Smart technology	Technology including sensors and high-definition cameras that automatically adjust crossing times by detecting how many people are either waiting at a crossing or currently crossing the road.
Social model of disability	Based on the premise that it is society that places limits on a person, not their disability. ⁸² The social model rejects the assumption people with disability are a problem to be fixed or excluded. It insists that the problem is the environments and circumstances in which people find themselves. The model focuses on what people need rather than what is 'wrong' with them. Application of the social model of disability designs places and spaces with mobility equipment in mind, avoiding and eliminating existing and potential barriers.
Tactile ground service indicator	Areas of raised surface domes or cones on the ground designed to provide pedestrians who are blind or who have a vision impairment with warning information about features such as stairs, ramps or hazards.
Universal design⁸³	Embedding principle of universal design means services and infrastructure are accessible to as many people as possible, inclusive of age, ability, gender, identity, culture, language and any other social characteristics.
Upgrade	Capital works undertaken to improve the condition and/or functionality of a facility.
Walkability	The ability to walk safely, comfortably and conveniently to services, facilities and activities in a neighbourhood.
Wayfinding signage	Signs with words or images directing people from point to point and confirming their progress along the way.
Wheeled recreational device	A wheeled device, built to transport a person, propelled by human power or gravity, and ordinarily used for recreation or play, and (a) includes roller blades, roller skates, a skateboard or similar wheeled device; but (b) does not include a golf buggy, pram, stroller or trolley, or a bicycle, wheelchair or wheeled toy. (a) includes roller blades, roller skates, a skateboard or similar wheeled device; but (b) does not include a golf buggy, pram, stroller or trolley, or a bicycle, wheelchair or wheeled toy. ⁸⁴

79 [D.D.A. guide](#), [accessed 27 March 2025]80 [D.D.A. guide](#), [accessed 27 March 2025]81 [Equal Opportunity Act 2010](#)82 [Australian Federation of Disability Organisations \(2021\)](#)83 [Centre for Universal Design, Australia \(2017\)](#)84 [Vic Roads \(2023\)](#)

Rowville Community Centre and Reserve



8.5 Minor Grants Program and Emergency Relief Fund 2025-26 Monthly Report and Individual Excellence Grants Update (Quarter 4)

Final Report Destination:	Mid-Month Council
Paper Type:	For Decision
Author	Community Partnerships Officer, Bryony Lee and Eleonore Smith, PA to Mayor and Councillors
Manager:	Manager Community Strengthening, Kerry Jansons and Manager Governance and Risk, Andrew Dowling
Executive:	Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley and Director Customer and Performance, Greg Curcio

SUMMARY

This report summarises the grant applications recommended for approval in July 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.

This report also summarises the Excellence Grants for Individuals awarded in Quarter 4 of the 2024-2025 financial year. Under the Excellence Grants for Individuals Program, applicants who are selected to represent either Victoria or Australia in a competitive endeavour or an elite performance may receive funding assistance of \$150.00 for events within Victoria, \$250.00 for interstate events and \$400.00 for international events.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to:

1. Approve nine applications under the Minor Grants Program for a total of \$15,539.83 (excluding GST) as detailed below:

Minor Grants Program			
Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested (inc. GST)	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
Wantirna South Cricket Club	Wet Weather Roller and Ground Marking Paint	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
One Hope Community Church	Coffee Plus - Art Sessions 2025-26	\$500.00	\$454.55 (lesser amount due to GST)
Fijian Indian Seniors Association Inc.	Purchase of Sound System	\$999.00	\$999.00
Waverley City Soccer Club	Cricket Pitch Cover Spindle	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00

Minor Grants Program			
Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested (inc. GST)	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
Inc.	Applicator		
Wantirna South Football Club	Gazebos - portable	\$2,400.00	\$2,181.82 (lesser amount due to GST)
Boronia Road Uniting Church	ADT Security Duress Pendants	\$2,500.00	\$2,272.73 (lesser amount due to GST)
Life Activities Club Knox Inc.	Upgrade Laptop	\$1,297.00	\$1,297.00
St John the Baptist Parish	Defibrillator for Church Use	\$2,500.00	\$2,272.73 (lesser amount due to GST)
Knox Obedience Dog Club Inc.	Loop for Leaps	\$1,062.00	\$1,062.00
Total		\$16,258.00	\$15,539.83

2. Defer one application under the Minor Grants Program requesting a total of \$2,500.00 as detailed below:

Minor Grants Program		
Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested
Knox Infolink Inc.	IT Equipment Upgrade	\$2,500.00
Total		\$2,500.00

3. Refuse three applications under the Minor Grants Program requesting a total of \$6,500.00 as detailed below:

Minor Grants Program			
Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested	Reason for ineligibility
Australian Nagarathar Cultural Education Foundation	Healthy Walk for Knox Community	\$3,000.00	This project is ineligible per the Community Grants Guidelines, which states funding will not be provided for retrospective payments or expenses for activities or expenses undertaken before Council approval.
Glengollan Village	Replacing Roof on Community BBQ Gazebo (fixed asset)	\$2,500.00	This project is ineligible as it relates to maintenance works on a fixed asset.
Guy Turner Reserve Tennis Club Inc.	Tennis Lighting Repairs	\$1,000.00	This project is ineligible as it relates to maintenance works and is the responsibility of the tenant as per their license agreement
Total		\$6,500.00	

4. Note that should the recommended Minor Grants be approved by Council, the remaining budget for 2025-26 will be \$141,156.17 after GST adjustments.
5. Approve one application under the Emergency Relief Fund for a total of \$18,181.82 (excluding GST) as detailed below:

Emergency Relief Fund			
Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested (inc. GST)	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
Foothills Community Care Inc.	Foothills Community Casserole	\$20,000.00	\$18,181.82 (lesser amount due to GST)
Total		\$20,000.00	\$18,181.82

6. Defer one application under the Emergency Relief Fund requesting a total of \$18,181.82 as detailed below:

Emergency Relief Fund			
Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested (inc. GST)	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
The Salvation Army	The Pantry (Extended Food Relief)	\$20,000.00	\$18,181.82 (lesser amount due to GST)
Total		\$20,000.00	\$18,181.82

7. Refuse one application under the Emergency Relief Fund requesting a total of \$20,000.00 as detailed below:

Emergency Relief Fund			
Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested	Reason for ineligibility
Our Village Network Inc.	Emergency Crisis Support for Vulnerable Families in Knox	\$20,000.00	This project is ineligible per the Community Grants Guidelines, which states grant funds cannot be used for organisations, projects or programs outside Knox unless they offer clear benefits to Knox residents. Benefit to Knox residents not sufficiently demonstrated.
Total		\$20,000.00	

7. Note that should the recommended grant be approved by Council, the remaining Emergency Relief Fund budget for 2025-26 will be \$81,818.18 after GST adjustments.
8. Note the Excellence Grants for Individuals awarded in Quarter 4 of the 2024-2025 financial year as set out in Attachment 3, with a total value of \$1,050.00.

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 totaling \$25,258. Of the 13 applications, nine are recommended for approval. A summary of the projects recommended is as follows:

- Wantirna South Cricket Club would like to purchase a wet weather roller to remove excess water and allow play after rain. They also seek funding for marking paint to maintain safe, compliant field markings.
- One Hope Community Church are seeking funding for a Melbourne artist to run art sessions up to eight times a year at the Coffee Plus Program, as well as for art supplies. This will aim to reduce isolation and help connect people within the community, improving mental wellbeing and staying active.

- The Fijian Indian Seniors Association Inc. would like to buy a sound system that will help provide the opportunity for members to get together and show their talents. It also will reduce isolation of their members who are mostly confined to their houses.
- Waverley City Soccer Club Inc. seeks funding to purchase a cricket pitch cover spindle applicator. This will ensure safe handling and storage of the pitch cover, protecting the surface from damage and helping prevent injuries during the soccer season, benefiting both soccer and cricket communities.
- Wantirna South Football Club would like to purchase two portable gazebos for use on match days by volunteers. The gazebos will provide safer, more comfortable working conditions, protecting volunteers from the elements and supporting their fundraising efforts.
- Boronia Road Uniting Church is seeking to purchase three duress security pendants to protect their elderly volunteers working in the church office. These pendants will provide immediate access to security assistance, enhancing safety for volunteers and clients.
- Life Activities Club Knox Inc. would like to purchase a laptop with updated software to help operate new audiovisual equipment. This will prevent reliance on members' personal devices and improve security.
- St John the Baptist Parish are seeking funding for two defibrillators for use by the Parish community in emergencies. They will give vital assistance and improve community safety.
- The Knox Obedience Dog Club Inc. would like to buy a competition-grade Agility Tyre to enhance training and trial capabilities. It will support safe, high-standard agility training, promote active lifestyles, responsible pet ownership and community connection.

Application details are provided in Attachment 1.

1.1.3 Applications Recommended for Deferral – Minor Grants Program

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

- Knox Infolink Inc. – IT Equipment Upgrade

This group will be encouraged to provide the additional information prior to the deadline for the August 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 \$6,500.00:

- Australian Nagarathar Cultural Education Foundation – this project is ineligible as per the Community Grants Guidelines, which states funding will not be provided for retrospective payments or expenses for activities or expenses undertaken before Council approval;
- Glengollan Village – this project is ineligible as it relates to maintenance work of a fixed asset that is the responsibility of the retirement village; and
- Guy Turner Reserve Tennis Club Inc. – this project is ineligible as it relates to maintenance works and is the responsibility of the tenant as per their license agreement.

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

Three applications have been assessed this month, requesting grants totaling \$60,000.00. Of the three applications, one is recommended for approval. A summary of the projects recommended is as follows:

- Foothills Community Care Inc. are seeking funding to help deliver their community casseroles program, that delivers free, nutritious home-cooked meals to Knox residents facing food insecurity and hardship. The Program offers quick, no-barrier support, helping people through crises and connecting them to essential services. It fosters community care, volunteer engagement and strengthens local wellbeing and resilience.

Application details are provided in Attachment 2.

1.2.3 Applications Recommended for Deferral – Emergency Relief Fund

One application is recommended for deferral to the August 2025 Mid-Month Meeting of Council as Officers seek further information regarding their application:

- The Salvation Army – Expansion of their program 'The Pantry'

1.2.4 Applications Recommended for Refusal – Emergency Relief Fund

One application is recommended for refusal;

- Our Village Network Inc – Emergency crisis supports for vulnerable families in Knox.

1.3 Excellence Grants for Individuals

This report also presents to Council for noting, expenditure under the Excellence Grants for Individuals Program for Quarter 4 of 2024-2025.

The Excellence Grants for Individuals Program is administered by the Governance and Risk Department and has an allocation of \$10,000 per financial year which provides funding to eligible Knox residents to assist with the costs of competing or performing at a State, National or International level in the following areas:

- Sport and recreation;
- Education;
- Arts and culture; and
- Environmental and/or humanitarian initiatives.

Applications are assessed against the eligibility and exclusion criteria in accordance with the Excellence Grants for Individuals Policy to determine their eligibility. The Policy, together with Council's Grant Framework Policy sets 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 Policy, applications for funding are determined by the Chief Executive Officer or their delegate.

For Quarter 4, 2024-2025, there have been 3 successful applications for a total value of \$1,050.00. Excellence grants were awarded for one interstate competition and two events overseas. A summary of the grants is included at Attachment 3.

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.

Similarly, engagement will occur with Excellence Grants for Individuals applications, if necessary, to clarify details regarding their applications prior to the delegate's decision.

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.

The Excellence Grants for Individuals Program provides financial support intended to support individuals to participate in elite competition or performance and can assist inclusion and representation of under-represented individuals. The Program assists in developing skills and fostering pride for the great achievements of individuals in the Knox community.

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	Not yet approved
August	\$
September	\$
October	\$
November	\$
December	\$
January	\$
February	\$
March	\$
April	\$
May	\$
Totals (Year to Date)	

Recommended applications for the July period total \$15,539.83 (excluding GST).

If approved as recommended, the remaining Minor Grants budget for 2025-26 will total \$141,156.17 (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	Not yet approved
August	\$
September	\$
October	\$
November	\$
December	\$
January	\$
February	\$
March	\$
April	\$
May	\$
Totals (Year to Date)	

Recommended applications for the July period total \$18,181.82 (excluding GST).

If approved as recommended, the remaining Emergency Relief Fund budget for 2025-26 will total \$81,818.18 (excluding GST).

6.3 Budget – Excellence Grants for Individuals

The Excellence Grants for Individuals are managed within Council’s adopted budget which provides \$10,000.00 for grants annually. The expenditure for the 2024-2025 financial year was \$7,000.00. The Excellence Grants budget for the 2025-2026 financial year remains at \$10,000.00.

7. RISKS

Any risks associated with administering the Minor Grant Program, Emergency Relief Fund and Excellence Grants for Individuals Program are managed through the implementation of Council’s Grant Framework Policy, the Guidelines, and Excellence Grants for Individuals Procedures. All Minor Grants, Emergency Relief Fund and Excellence 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 1.4 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,

Being a strong voice for safety

- Strategy 5.1 Our community feels safer in public spaces and facilities through planning, maintenance, education, design and proactive program delivery for Council-owned or -managed spaces and via advocacy for others.
- 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 6.2 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 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 July 2025 [**8.5.1** - 9 pages]
2. Attachment 2 - Emergency Relief Grant Program Application Extraction July 2025 [**8.5.2** - 2 pages]
3. Attachment 3 - IEG Report Q4 2024 2025 [**8.5.3** - 1 page]

Minor Grant Program Applications
July 2025

Attachment 1

2526-MGP001

Wantirna South Cricket Club

Application ID	2526-MGP001
Organisation Name	Wantirna South Cricket Club
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	Wet Weather Roller & Ground Marking Paint
Project Start Date	01/09/2025
Project End Date	30/09/2025

Request Details	The purchase of a wet weather roller to be located at Lewis Reserve No 2 Sportsfield to clear any surplus water surrounding the pitch area on wet weather days to ensure play can commence after any rain periods. In addition the marking paint is an ongoing financial commitment to the club to ensure all grounds our teams play on (Walker Reserve & Lewis Park No2) have safety circles and boundaries marked in compliance with Cricket Victoria & RDCA rules. The intention is to share the marking paint supply with Wantirna South Football Club for use during the winter season.		
Community Benefit	Provide a benefit to club participants to increase playing opportunities in wet weather conditions as well as reducing operating costs for the major stakeholders at Walker Reserve & Lewis Park Reserve No 2.		
Total Beneficiaries	180	Total Project Cost	\$ 2,983.00
Knox Beneficiaries	160	Total Amount Requested	\$ 2,500.00

Income Description	Income Amount	Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
Club	\$ 483.00	\$483	\$ 483.00
Council	\$ 2,500.00	\$2500	\$ 2,500.00

Minor Grant Program Applications
July 2025

2526-MGP003

One Hope Community Church (Community@Cavell)

Application ID	2526-MGP003
Organisation Name	One Hope Community Church (Community@Cavell)
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	Coffee Plus - Art Sessions 2025-26
Project Start Date	29/07/2025
Project End Date	30/06/2026

Request Details	To provide partial funding for a Melbourne artist to run art sessions up to 8 times a year at the Coffee Plus program, as well as provide partial funding for art supplies.		
Community Benefit	Reducing isolation, connecting with others from the community who hold a similar interest, improving mental well-being and staying active. The program promotes multiculturalism and is open to all ages and abilities.		
Total Beneficiaries	20	Total Project Cost	\$ 1,200.00
Knox Beneficiaries	10	Total Amount Requested	\$ 500.00

Income Description	Income Amount	Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
One Hope Community Church	\$ 300.00	Artist fee	\$ 300.00
One Hope Community Church	\$ 300.00	Morning Tea	\$ 300.00
One Hope Community Church	\$ 100.00	Art Supplies	\$ 100.00
Council Grant	\$ 350.00	Artist fee	\$ 350.00
Council Grant	\$ 150.00	Art Supplies	\$ 150.00

Minor Grant Program Applications
July 2025

2526-MGP005

Fijian Indian Seniors Association Inc

Application ID	2526-MGP005
Organisation Name	Fijian Indian Seniors Association Inc
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	Purchase of sound system
Project Start Date	30/07/2025
Project End Date	30/08/2025

Request Details	Provide the opportunity for the members to get together and show their talents while using the system. It also will reduce isolation of our seniors who are mostly confined in their houses.		
Community Benefit	The community benefit is reduce isolation, improve overall well being. Keeps them more active in their participation		
Total Beneficiaries	106	Total Project Cost	\$ 999.00
Knox Beneficiaries	80	Total Amount Requested	\$ 999.00

Income Description	Income Amount	Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
Knox City Council Grant	\$ 999.00	Sound System	\$ 999.00
FISA Volunteer contribution (\$40 x 3 hours)	\$ 120.00	FISA Volunteer contribution (\$40 x 3 hours)	\$ 120.00

2526-MGP006

Waverley City Soccer Club Incorporated

Application ID	2526-MGP006
Organisation Name	Waverley City Soccer Club Incorporated
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	Cricket pitch cover spindle applicator
Project Start Date	21/07/2025
Project End Date	29/09/2025

Request Details	Waverley City Soccer Club and the Templeton Cricket Club was recently provided a \$1,000 grant for a defibrator, which we are extremely thankful for. Again in conjunction with the Templeton Cricket Club, we would like to request an additional \$2,500 or as much as to the extent possible to purchase a cricket pitch cover spindle applicator to safely store the cricket pitch that the council has previously helped purchase.		
Community Benefit	Safely application and storage of the cricket pitch asset which has been previously purchased. The cricket pitch cover has been great during the soccer season to prevent players getting injured, as well as the cricket pitch surface from damage.		
Total Beneficiaries	220	Total Project Cost	\$ 2,770.00
Knox Beneficiaries	200	Total Amount Requested	\$ 2,500.00

Income Description	Income Amount	Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
Council grant	\$ 2,500.00	Cricket pitch cover spindle applicator	\$ 2,500.00

Minor Grant Program Applications
July 2025

2526-MGP010

Wantirna South FC

Application ID	2526-MGP010
Organisation Name	Wantirna South FC
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	Gazebos
Project Start Date	21/07/2025
Project End Date	01/08/2025

Request Details	To purchase two gazebos to be used on match days by our volunteers running the BBQ and merchandise sales		
Community Benefit	Improved conditions for our volunteers to work in i.e. new gazebos that open and close easily, have side walls that protect from the elements.		
Total Beneficiaries	20	Total Project Cost	\$ 2,651.00
Knox Beneficiaries	20	Total Amount Requested	\$ 2,400.00

Income Description	Income Amount	Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
Council Grant	\$ 2,400.00	Gazebos	\$ 2,400.00
Cash Contribution	\$ 251.00	Cash Contribution	\$ 251.00

2526-MGP015

BORONIA ROAD UNITING CHURCH

Application ID	2526-MGP015
Organisation Name	BORONIA ROAD UNITING CHURCH
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	ADT SECURITY DURESS PENDANTS
Project Start Date	01/09/2025
Project End Date	31/12/2025

Request Details	To have 3 Duress Security Pendants connected to our ADT alarm system for volunteers who work from the church offices.		
Community Benefit	Boronia Road Uniting Church is a member of the Knox Emergency Relief Network currently opening our pantry twice a week to supply non-perishable food items to members of the local community who call on us for help. Most of our volunteers are elderly ladies. Having alarms worn as necklaces round their necks while they are volunteering will give them and their clients a degree of security, should any unsavoury persons barge their way into the premises, or should any of the clients become aggressive while they are being helped. Pressing the unobtrusive buttons on the pendant will immediately contact the security firm and the police. The safety of our volunteers is of paramount importance to us. While we only have 9 volunteers working in the Emergency Relief Office each fortnight there are upwards of 25 community members visit every 2 weeks - having direct access to security will benefit all.		
Total Beneficiaries	50	Total Project Cost	\$ 3,189.00
Knox Beneficiaries	45	Total Amount Requested	\$ 2,500.00

Income Description	Income Amount	Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
Church Council	\$ 689.00	Supply of emergency pendants	\$ 689.00
Knox Grant	\$ 2,500.00	Supply of emergency pendants	\$ 2,500.00

2526-MGP017

Life Activities Club Knox Inc. 2022

Application ID	2526-MGP017
Organisation Name	Life Activities Club Knox Inc. 2022
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	Upgrade Laptop
Project Start Date	20/07/2025
Project End Date	30/08/2025

Request Details	We need to purchase a laptop which is up to date with Windows 11 and increased memory capability so that we can better utilize the Audio visual equipment we have recently installed. Currently committee members are required to bring their personal laptops to the hall to do this. It is also beneficial to have club records on a specific club device and not on personal devices. Security and		
Community Benefit	Our club members will be entertained with movies, documentaries, and participate in presentations. All of these will enable our members to engage with other people, outside of their homes on a regular basis, which will reduce isolation in our community.		
Total Beneficiaries	200	Total Project Cost	\$ 1,297.00
Knox Beneficiaries	142	Total Amount Requested	\$ 1,297.00

Income Description	Income Amount	Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
Council grant \$1297.00	\$ 1,297.00	laptop	\$ 1,297.00
Volunteer hours for project (\$35 p/h x 5 hours)	\$ 175.00	Volunteer hours for project (\$35 p/h x 5 hours)	\$ 175.00

2526-MGP019

St John The Baptist Ferntree Gully

Application ID	2526-MGP019
Organisation Name	St John The Baptist Ferntree Gully
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	Defibrillator for Church use
Project Start Date	16/07/2025
Project End Date	31/10/2025

Request Details	We would like to purchase 2 defibrillators to be used by the parish community in an emergency. One would be situated in the church and one in the community center. We also plan to do fundraising activities to raise the extra funds needed which won't be covered by the grant.		
Community Benefit	The defibrillators will be life saving in the unforeseen event of a person having a heart attack on the church property. Having the defibrillators close by will save precious time in this emergency.		
Total Beneficiaries	3000	Total Project Cost	\$ 3,590.00
Knox Beneficiaries	2900	Total Amount Requested	\$ 2,500.00

Income Description	Income Amount	Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
Council Grant	\$ 2,500.00	defibrillator	\$ 2,500.00
Fundraising	\$ 1,090.00	defibrillator	\$ 1,090.00

2526-MGP022

Knox Obedience Dog Club Inc.

Application ID	2526-MGP022
Organisation Name	Knox Obedience Dog Club Inc.
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	Loop for Leaps
Project Start Date	14/08/2025
Project End Date	28/11/2025

Request Details	<p>Knox Obedience Dog Club (KODC) is seeking funding for the purchase of a professionally designed Agility Tyre to enhance our dog sport training infrastructure. This essential piece of agility equipment will enable the Club to train members and their dogs safely and to competition standard, while supporting participation in Dogs Victoria-sanctioned trials. The new tyre will complement our agility jump setup, removing the need to hire it and making our club trials more self-sufficient. Agility is one of the fastest-growing dog sports in Victoria, promoting physical fitness, mental alertness, and stronger bonds between dog and handler. As a volunteer-led organisation, KODC plays a significant role in fostering responsible pet ownership, social connectedness, and wellbeing in Knox. The addition of a new competition-grade agility tyre ensures our training remains up-to-date and inclusive for a broad cross-section of the community, including children, seniors, neurodiverse individuals, and culturally diverse participants.</p>		
Community Benefit	<p>The Agility Tyre will directly benefit over club members and their dogs who train annually at our Knox Park precinct. It supports Council priorities in the Knox Community and Council Plan by promoting active participation “beyond structured sport”, mental health through canine companionship, and responsible pet ownership in line with the Domestic Animal Management Plan. The equipment will be used in weekly classes and trial preparation, including for senior members and individuals with diverse needs. It will also be deployed for general public use during Knox Council's annual Pets in the Park event held at Knox Park. More importantly, it will enable KODC to independently conduct Dogs Victoria-sanctioned agility trials - eliminating reliance on hired equipment, building Club sustainability, and attracting visitors and partnerships. By investing in this infrastructure, the Council helps grow a vibrant, self-reliant, and community-driven club that aligns with shared goals for inclusion, wellbeing, and lifelong activity.</p>		
Total Beneficiaries	746	Total Project Cost	\$ 1,272.60
Knox Beneficiaries	372	Total Amount Requested	\$ 1,062.00

Income Description	Income Amount	Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
Cash contribution	\$ 210.60	Agility Tyre	\$ 1,180.00
Council Grant	\$ 1,062.00	Shipping	\$ 92.60

Emergency Relief Grant Applications
July 2025

2526-ERF004

Foothills Community Care Inc

Application ID	2526-ERF004
Organisation Name	Foothills Community Care Inc
Grant Program	Emergency Relief Fund

Project Title	Foothills Community Casseroles
Project Start Date	01/08/2025
Project End Date	31/07/2026

Request Details	<p>Foothills Community Casseroles delivers nutritious, home-cooked meals and care packages to Knox residents in need, thanks to our team of caring volunteer drivers.</p> <p>The program supports people facing food insecurity, the rising cost of living, or seeking help for the first time. We understand that many struggle silently, and asking for help can be overwhelming, especially during times of crisis.</p> <p>There are no eligibility requirements. We offer short-term support, providing a week's worth of dinners for up to two months, along with the reassurance that no one should go through tough times alone.</p> <p>Throughout the program, we walk alongside participants, helping connect them to other support services as needed, such as financial counselling, family violence services, housing, health care, and community connections.</p> <p>Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and kindness and to feel part of a caring, supportive community.</p> <p>This grant will help fund meals delivered to Knox residents</p>
Community Benefit	<p>This project provides vital support to Knox residents experiencing food insecurity due to rising living costs. By offering free, home-delivered meals, we provide immediate relief that allows individuals and families to focus on other pressing challenges such as homelessness, mental health, family violence, job loss, illness, and social isolation.</p> <p>Beyond food, the program builds community connections. Our volunteers, many of whom were once recipients themselves, offer care, encouragement, and warm referrals to other local services through our strong community networks.</p> <p>The program also creates meaningful volunteer opportunities, encouraging participation, purpose, and a sense of giving back. Some people volunteer to cook meals and some to deliver meals. This cycle of support fosters resilience, engagement, and belonging, helping people feel part of a safe and supportive community.</p>

Emergency Relief Grant Applications
July 2025

	By meeting immediate needs and strengthening long-term community ties, this project contributes significantly to local wellbeing and social cohesion in Knox.		
Demonstration of need	<p>We have been delivering meals to Knox residents for ten years, with demand rising significantly since March 2020. In the past 12 months alone, we've delivered over 20,000 meals to over 220 Knox households, and expect to match this in the year ahead.</p> <p>The current cost of living crisis has seen a broader range of people seeking food relief, many for the first time. We regularly receive referrals from local agencies connected through KERN along with Knox Council Short-term Support team as well as direct requests from residents themselves feeling overwhelmed and unsure where to turn.</p> <p>Our program offers quick, no-barrier access to home-delivered meals and a friendly point of connection. Volunteers and staff build relationships with recipients, often leading to advocacy and warm referrals to services such as housing, mental health, or family violence support, making this a vital, early-entry support for those doing it tough.</p>		
Total Beneficiaries	750	Total Project Cost	\$ 282,469.00
Knox Beneficiaries	720	Total Amount Requested	\$ 20,000.00

Income Description	Income Amount	Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
Collier Trust	\$20,000.00	Raw food costs for meals	\$17,000.00
Dandenong Ranges Community bank	\$10,000.00	Care package supplement	\$3,000.00
Ferntree Gully Community Bank	\$12,000.00		
Sisters of Charity	\$10,000.00		
CCVT Careworks	\$3,500.00		
in kind meal containers	\$9,500.00		
In kind labels	\$1,200.00		
In kind volunteer hours	\$155,772.00		
Foothills contribution	\$35,497.00		
fundraising	\$5,000.00		
KNOX COUNCIL ERF request	\$20,000.00		

Attachment 3

Excellence Grants for Individuals – Quarter 4 2024-2025

Application Date	Applicant	Request details	Grant
2025-04-23	Ferntree Gully resident	To represent Australia in the 74kg Weight Class at the IPF World Classic Open Powerlifting Championship being held in Germany in June	\$400
2025-05-13	Scoresby resident	To represent Australia as part of the U24 Mixed Ultimate Frisbee Team at the World U24 Ultimate Championships being held in Spain in June	\$400
2025-05-19	Ferntree Gully resident	To compete in the Victorian Masters Over 45 Indoor Cricket Tournament being held in Adelaide at the end of May	\$250
		Total	\$1,050

8.6 Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme 2025-2026

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Decision
Author:	Leisure Minor Contracts and Projects Officer, Rhonda Snijders
Manager:	Manager Active and Creative Communities, Nicole Columbine
Executive:	Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley

SUMMARY

This report presents the recommendations of the Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme (LMCWGS) Panel for Council's 2025-2026 program allocation for funding. The annual LMCWGS supports local community sporting and leisure organisations to undertake facility improvements on land owned or managed by Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to:

1. Approve a funding allocation of \$62,722.45 (including GST) from the 2025-2026 Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme Program to the applicant clubs nominated in Attachment 1.
2. Specify that additional grant conditions are required for the sporting organisations listed in Attachment 2.
3. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer (or such person as the Chief Executive Officer selects) to inform applicant Clubs of Council's decision.

1. DISCUSSION

The Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme (the Scheme) is an annually funded program that enables Council to financially assist community sporting and leisure organisations to undertake facility improvement projects on Council's recreation reserves, which they tenant.

The Scheme falls under the overarching Knox Grants Framework Policy which was implemented in June 2022. The Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme Procedure and Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme Terms of Reference which were endorsed at the April 2023 Council Meeting, have been followed during the 2025-2026 grant round. The Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme Procedure (the Procedure) directs the type and level of financial contribution that Council will provide to community sporting and leisure organisations for improvements on Council land.

The Procedure enables organisations to apply for a contribution from Council for the project cost. The maximum grant that Council will award under the Policy is \$10,000 excluding GST for any one project. The funding ratio is 50:50 - Council:organisation contribution.

Applications submitted to the Scheme are assessed by the Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme Assessment Panel (the Panel). The Panel for 2025-2026 comprised of three community representatives elected from the Recreation and Leisure Committee: Rosemarie Ackland, Craig Douglas and Mark Tyrrell; Council's Manager Active and Creative Communities, Nicole Columbine; and Council's Coordinator Capital Works Planning, John Bixby. Officers from Council's Leisure team participated in an administrative support capacity.

Following the assessment by the Panel, projects recommended to receive a grant are presented to Council for consideration and approval.

1.1 Applications

Requests for applications from the community for the 2025-2026 Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme opened on 1 February 2025, with applications closing on 15 March 2025.

An extensive campaign to advertise the Scheme was conducted, reaching groups in all Council Wards within the Knox municipality. All applicants were required to speak to Council’s Leisure team regarding their application and then use the Smarty Grants online grant management system to submit their applications.

1.2 Assessment

Eleven (11) applications were received and assessed by the Panel. The total value of the eligible projects is \$62,722.45 including GST.

The assessment criteria applied to the applications and as described in the Procedure comprises of the following:

Table 1 – Assessment Criteria Breakdown

The application clearly demonstrates the need for the project and the level of benefit to the community.	30%
The application demonstrates alignment with Council’s strategic priorities.	30%
The project addresses a risk or safety issue.	10%
The degree to which the applicant can demonstrate clear financial need.	10%
The degree to which the applicant has provided the required project documentation and can demonstrate the ability to deliver the project.	20%

Following the assessment process, the Panel recommends funding all eleven applications from the Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme budget.

All eleven projects recommended meet the current Sporting Reserve and Facility Development Guidelines (SRFDG) in line with the requirements of the Procedure.

The projects recommended by the Panel to receive a Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant in 2025-2026 are detailed in Attachment 1.

1.3 Conditions

Additional grant conditions have been developed for six (6) of the recommended applications to clarify project requirements that are additional and beyond the conditions of funding outlined within the LMCWGS Procedure, including appropriate building and planning permits and environmental health considerations, where applicable. These conditions are noted in Attachment 2.

1.4 Application by Sport/Activity

A range of activities were represented in the applications for the 2025-2026 Scheme. A breakdown of activities represented in the submitted applications is in Table 2 below.

Table 2 – Application by Sport/Activity

Sport	Number of Applications
AFL	2
Cricket	1
Tennis	4
Baseball	1
Netball	1
Leisure	2
Total	11

2. ENGAGEMENT

All sporting and leisure clubs and organisations within Knox were advised of the 2025-2026 Scheme through an awareness campaign over the period of October 2024 to March 2025, with the grant opening on the 1 February 2025 and closing on 15 March 2025. The campaign comprised inclusion in the fortnightly Leisure e-Newsletter, information on Council's website, social media communication with paid advertising across all digital platforms to target audiences, inclusion in the Knox Community Grants campaigns, consultation with the Recreation and Leisure Committee, internal consultation with the Leisure, Communications, Grants, Facilities and Parks teams to cross-promote the scheme.

Initial internal feedback and consultation of the project applications was undertaken by Council officers from Parks, Building, Facilities, Open Space, Biodiversity and Community Strengthening.

Consultation with the clubs regarding the uptake of the Scheme revealed the projects require a dedicated grant officer to apply for and deliver projects. Some clubs prefer to seek funding for larger projects and apply for the maximum funding amount. Funding requests for smaller projects are also popular with clubs who are taking advantage of grant opportunities wherever possible.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Scheme assists the local community to develop and improve facilities to enable participation in leisure and sporting pursuits. These facilities contribute to the development of the social environment and the health and wellbeing within Knox by developing community connections and facilitating and promoting active lifestyles.

This Scheme also often complements the works undertaken by Council as part of its annual capital works program.

4. CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS

The provision of the Leisure Minor Capital Works Grants Scheme allows local leisure and sporting clubs as tenants of Council's sporting reserves and leisure facilities to apply for a grant(s) to improve and/or address climate change issues at Council's facilities. Projects that have considered the effects of climate change have included renewable options, solar energy, energy efficiency, and low emissions from appliances.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The provision of the Leisure Minor Capital Works Grants Scheme allows local leisure and sporting clubs as tenants of Council's sporting reserves and leisure facilities to apply for a grant(s) to improve and/or address amenity issues at Council's facilities. Projects that have considered

environmental implications include outdoor furniture, heating and cooling, LED lighting, and biodiversity considerations.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The cost of \$62,722.45 (including GST) for the recommended allocations to local sporting and leisure organisations is provided within Council's LMCWGS 2025-2026 budget of \$100,000 (excluding GST).

The contingency will be \$37,277.55 (excluding GST).

As per the Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme Procedure any funds remaining in the budget following the assessment of applications and awarding grants, or notification of a rescinded, abandoned or withdrawn grant will be allocated in line with the priorities as outlined below:

6.1 Contingency

The funds are to be retained in the grant budget as a contingency sum. Grant recipients are able to apply for additional funding where costs have increased unexpectedly.

Applications for additional funds must be in writing and will be assessed by Council officers and recommendations presented to the Chief Executive Officer for approval.

6.2 Council Run Minor Capital Works Projects

Funds can be utilised for the purpose of upgrading and improving leisure and sporting facilities for the Knox community to be considered by Council officers and recommendations will be presented to the Chief Executive Officer to determine the projects to proceed.

Contingency funding has been utilised in the past for Council run minor capital works projects such as temporary lighting ahead of scheduled capital works delivery to reduce immediate risk and improve safety at facilities.

7. RISKS

An assessment of the risks associated with the Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme has been undertaken and will be managed as per Council's Risk Management Framework, Council's Grant Framework Policy and the Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme Guidelines. The risks taken into consideration include the ability of the club to pay the 50% contribution, the club's capacity to deliver the project and quality of work delivered, as well as conflicts of interest.

These risks are managed through the application process, evaluation process, submission of project documentation (plans, public liability insurance, safe work methods statement, building permits, schedule of works), signed funding agreement with Council which clearly defines accountability of the funded organisation for the achievement of agreed outcomes and specific terms and conditions of the grant. Grant monies are only paid upon signing the formal funding agreement and approval of project documentation. The projects are monitored and upon completion all receipts for expenditure, photographs of works, certificates of completion are to be submitted within one month of completion. Any unspent grant money must be returned to Council.

Council recognises there are specific fraud and corruption risks related to the administration of public funds through grant making. Council maintains a Fraud and Corruption Control Framework and Risk Register which provides guidance to all parties around fraud or corruption risk in the grant making process.

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.

Embracing connection, inclusion and diversity

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

Caring for and enhancing our environment

Strategy 3.4 - Energy consumption and the use of renewable energy resources are positively impacted through investment in assets, education, planning and advocacy.

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.

Being a strong voice for safety

Strategy 5.1 - Our community feels safer in public spaces and facilities through planning, maintenance, education, design and proactive program delivery for Council-owned or -managed spaces and via advocacy for others.

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 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.

Clubs are requested to include in their application their Gender Equity Self-Assessment and Action Plan. Clubs are required to address how the project would help the club to achieve the aims in the Action Plan.

Child Safety considerations are included in the application form for the club to respond to ensuring that the project provides a safe and supportive environment for children, young people and families with no barriers to access the facility.

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 - LMCWGS Recommended Projects 2025-26 [**8.6.1** - 1 page]
2. Attachment 2 - LMCWGS Projects with Funding Conditions 2025-26 [**8.6.2** - 1 page]

Attachment 1 - Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme - 2025-26

Organisation Name	Project Title	Project Description	Facility Reserve Name	Total Project Cost Inc GST	Total Amount Requested Inc GST	Funding Project Outcome	Total Grant Amount Allocated Inc GST	Total Grant Amount Allocated ex GST
Lysterfield Junior Football Club	Outdoor Heating and Blinds <i>Project modified to fund blinds only as heating has been completed by the club and now ineligible for funding.</i>	Installation of outdoor blinds.	Lakesfield Reserve	11,003.00	\$5,501.50	Recommended	\$5,501.50	
Upper Ferntree Gully Cricket Club	UFGCC Minor Infrastructure works	Scoreboard improvement and split system to canteen kitchen	Kings Park	\$5,417.50	\$2,708.75	Recommended	\$2,708.75	
Ferntree Gully Eagles Football Netball Club - Juniors	Picketts Reserve Netting	Construct Netting behind the goals on the Burwood Hwy end	Picketts Reserve	\$32,799.00	\$10,000.00	Recommended	\$10,000.00	
Knox BMX Club	Shelter	Building of a new shelter stand.	Knox BMX Club	\$7,000.00	\$3,500.00	Recommended	\$3,500.00	
4th Knox Scout Group - Scouts Victoria	4th Knox Scout Group shed	New shed behind scout hall	Egan Lee Reserve	\$69,200.00	\$10,000.00	Recommended	\$10,000.00	
Mountain District Netball Association	Climate Control for KRNC Canteen	Installation of a Split System in the Canteen Area to provide cooling during summer and heating during winter	Knox Regional Netball Centre	\$6,160.00	\$3,080.00	Recommended	\$3,080.00	
Scoresby Tennis Centre Inc	Benches and Court Screens	Install new benches and low court screens.	Scoresby Tennis Centre	\$9,550.00	\$4,775.00	Recommended	\$4,775.00	
Knox Gardens Tennis Club	New scoreboards and court nets	Replace the current small scoreboards with larger easier to see scoreboards and erect two new nets to replace two court nets.	Knox Gardens Tennis Club	\$4,004.40	\$2,002.20	Recommended	\$2,002.20	
Knoxfield Pickleball and Tennis Club	Knoxfield Pickleball Upgrade	4 new pickleball courts will be installed on existing tennis court/s	Knoxfield Pickleball and Tennis Club	\$29,750.00	\$10,000.00	Recommended	\$10,000.00	
Knox City Tennis Club	Courts 7 & 8 LED Lighting	Upgrade of current halogen court lights to LED on courts 7 & 8	Knox City Tennis Club - Coleman Reserve	\$27,676.00	\$10,000.00	Recommended	\$10,000.00	
Knox Baseball Club	New gate for dugout	Installation of a gate to the dugout	Gilbert Park	\$2,310.00	\$1,155.00	Recommended	\$1,155.00	
Total				\$204,869.90	\$62,722.45		\$62,722.45	
Budget 2025-26								\$100,000.00
Contingency*								37,277.55

* Refer to section 6 of report for explanation of contingency.

Attachment 2 - LMCWGS Projects with Funding Conditions 2025-26

Projects With Funding Conditions		
Organisation Name	Project Title	Funding Conditions
Lysterfield Junior Football Club	Outdoor Heating and Blinds Blinds only to be funded as club installed heating	Subject to location of blinds and project documentation approval by Council.
Upper Ferntree Gully Cricket Club	UFGCC Minor Infrastructure works	Subject to approval of size and location of air conditioner.
Ferntree Gully Eagles Football Netball Club - Juniors	Picketts Reserve Netting	Subject to Council recommendaton that netting extends to 30m length and 10m high and all other relevant permits and environmental considerations.
4th Knox Scout Group - Scouts Victoria	4th Knox Scout Group shed	Subject to building permit and any other necessary building requirements/permits and environmental considerations.
Scoresby Tennis Centre Inc	Benches and Court Screens	Newly installed seats to be moved/installed by contractor. Location of new 4m bench seat to be inspected before installing as near electrical pit.
Knoxfield Pickleball and Tennis Club	Knoxfield Pickleball Upgrade	Tennis Club are not to pay back the In Kind financial contribution to the financier.

8.7 Knox City Council Attendance at the Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly 2025

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Noting
Author:	Manager Governance & Risk, Andrew Dowling
Manager:	Manager Governance and Risk, Andrew Dowling
Executive:	Chief Executive Officer, Bruce Dobson

SUMMARY

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly (NGA) was held in Canberra from 24-27 June 2025. Over 1,300 local government leaders from across Australia attended the NGA, including representation from Knox City Council.

This report provides an overview to Council of the activities, learnings and outcomes from the 2025 NGA and will be complemented by Councillors' verbal reports to be provided at the meeting (during Item 5, Reports By Councillors).

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note:

1. This report on the Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly 2025.
2. Reports provided by Councillors at the Meeting on 28 July 2025.

1. DISCUSSION

ALGA is the peak body for local government nationally, representing councils across the country. ALGA operates in structure as a federation of state and territory local government associations, with the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) being the relevant Victorian body.

The NGA is convened by ALGA each year in Canberra and is the peak annual event for local government in Australia. The NGA provides the opportunity for representatives from Australia's 537 local governments to come together to meet with and hear from high profile and engaging speakers and Federal Government representatives, advocate on specific issues, share learnings and industry best practice, and shape the national local government policy and advocacy agenda.

The NGA was held from 24-27 June 2025, with over 1,300 local government leaders attending. Knox City Council was represented by Mayor Cr Lisa Cooper, Deputy Mayor Cr Glen Atwell, Cr Meagan Baker, Cr Chris Duncan, Cr Peter Lockwood, Cr Susan Pearce, and Chief Executive Officer Bruce Dobson.

The theme of the NGA was *National Priorities Need Local Solutions*, focusing on current and emerging issues and the opportunities councils have to work with the Federal Government to deliver local solutions in line with national priorities and objectives.

Advocacy

Attendance at the NGA provided the opportunity for Knox representatives to advocate for matters relevant to Knox in both formal and informal settings.

An important part of the NGA is the consideration of motions put forward by councils across Australia. Each council attending the NGA is able to vote on the motions submitted. Motions that are adopted by the NGA form part of the national local government advocacy agenda. In essence, this enables the support of ALGA as the national local government peak body in seeking action from the Federal Government on the issues raised.

In advance of the NGA, Council submitted three motions for consideration, having resolved on these motions at the Council meeting held on 14 April 2025. The three motions were as follows:

Topic	Motion
Grant programs for existing essential infrastructure	This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to explore and, where feasible, implement grant programs that address infrastructure needs, prioritising the renewal, upgrade, and maintenance of existing essential infrastructure.
National framework for waste and recycling management	This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to work with all States and Territories to implement a national framework for waste and recycling management, creating a harmonised approach, including but not limited to a nationally consistent Container Deposit Scheme (CDS).
National funding for an ‘earn and learn’ program	This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to fund an “earn and learn” program that targets areas of skills-shortage and attracts job seekers to access training and employment programs within the Local Government sector.

Each of these three motions were strongly supported and carried at the NGA, and so now form part of ALGA’s advocacy efforts. Council will continue to follow-up with ALGA regarding progression of actions arising from the motions.

A listing of all the motions considered at the NGA is included in the NGA Business Papers available here – [2025 National General Assembly Business Papers](#).

Meetings

In addition to considering motions, ALGA provided the opportunity for Knox representatives to raise and discuss advocacy matters particularly relevant to Knox. The NGA had originally been scheduled during a Parliamentary sitting week, however the Parliamentary Sitting calendar was adjusted after the May 2025 Federal election such that Parliament was ultimately not sitting during the NGA week. Practically, this meant less Ministers and MPs in Canberra than would ordinarily have been the case. Nonetheless, Knox was able to arrange a meeting with the Office of the Hon Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government. This provided an opportunity to advocate for key Knox infrastructure priorities, including:

- Roads and Transport - notably the trackless tram proposal between Rowville and Caulfield, the Route 75 tram extension from Vermont South and branching out to Ferntree Gully and Bayswater, and critical road projects including the Dorset Road extension, Napoleon Road upgrade and Wellington Road upgrade
- Sporting infrastructure – priority pavilion, lighting and sports ground upgrade projects across Knox; and
- Lewis Park – investment in the sports and play hub component of the masterplan, providing critical quality open space both for now and for the future with the Knox Central development in mind.

NGA Program

Outside of considering motions, the NGA provided a stimulating program of speakers and panel discussions. The program agenda is included in Attachment 1 and included:

- A Welcome to Country provided by Selina Walker, Co-chair, ACT Reconciliation Council.
- The ALGA President, Mayor Matt Burnett, discussed a number of issues facing councils and communities including financial stability, housing, road safety and disaster recovery & preparedness. Mayor Burnett highlighted advocacy being undertaken by ALGA with the Federal government on these important issues.
- A Ministerial address by the Hon Kristy McBain MP, Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories, and Minister for Emergency Management. Minister McBain noted the importance of Federal / State / Local government cooperation, and noted local governments' role in serving communities as having moved well beyond roads, rates and rubbish. She covered a range of topics including local government financial sustainability and the Federal inquiry currently underway, Federal government roads funding including Roads to Recovery, blackspot funding, and the safer local roads and infrastructure program, housing support, and the regional precincts and partnerships program.
- An address by Dr Anne Webster MP, Shadow Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories, and Shadow Minister for Regional Communications. Dr Webster discussed matters including local government financial sustainability, the important roles councils play in helping communities thrive, energy policy, communications and cultural heritage.
- Senator the Hon James McGrath, Shadow Special Minister for State, and Shadow Minister for Urban Infrastructure and Cities, presented and noted the importance of listening to local communities.
- An address by Her Excellency the Honourable Sam Mostyn AC, Governor-General. Ms Mostyn reflected on her first year as Governor-General, her learnings of the strength of local communities particularly in the face of disaster, and the importance of re-engaging people and particularly young people in building an understanding of civics from an early age.
- Dr Merriden Varrall, Partner KPMG, presented on the state of geopolitics and implications for Australian local governments.
- Mark Bouris AM, Australian Business Leader, provided an overview of the global economy and major inputs into the macroeconomic outlook over the next 12 months.
- Jason Clark, leadership and innovation consultant, discussed how councils can problem-solve, taking ideas and implementing them in a practical way for the benefit of local communities.

- The launch of a new ALGA research report – *Adapting Together: Local Government Leadership in a Changing Climate*. Presentations were given by a panel including Kieran Power (Senior Principal, Nation Partners), Lord Mayor Anna Reynolds (City of Hobart), Lord Mayor Kon Vatskalis (City of Darwin) and Amanda Pugh (Group Manager Community and Regional Prosperity, Lockyer Valley Regional Council).
- Stephen Scheeler (Founder, CEO & Senior Advisor, The Digital, Omniscient) and Tim Golsby-Smith (CEO and Co-founder, myLot) discussed Artificial Intelligence and how AI is shaping the future.
- A number of concurrent listening sessions were held, providing the opportunity for councils to engage with a number of expert panellists on the topics of Emergency Management, Safer Roads, Housing and Community Infrastructure, and Local Government Jobs & Skills.
- The opportunity to hear from and engage with a number of Federal Ministers and Members on a range of issues relevant to local government. Panellists included The Hon Kristy McBain MP, the Hon Julian Hill MP, the Hon Darren Chester MP, the Hon Kevin Hogan MP, and Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher.

A high-level summary of the NGA in the form of a communique prepared by ALGA is included in Attachment 2.

Other Benefits

In addition to the advocacy and learnings through the formal NGA program, the NGA provided Knox representatives with a unique opportunity to network and connect with colleagues from councils across Australia. This included sharing experiences, gaining intelligence on key issues and challenges being experienced in other localities, understanding how these issues are being addressed, and learning and discussing ideas more broadly.

Councillor Reports

In accordance with Council resolutions at the 24 February 2025 and 26 May 2025 Council meetings, each Knox Councillor attending the 2025 NGA is required to *'submit a report to Council outlining the key benefits and learnings derived from their attendance at ALGA's NGA including its impact in their role and the community in accordance with Section 6.4.1 of the Councillor Expenses and Support Policy.'* Section 6.4.1 of the Policy provides that Councillors can present their report in writing and/or verbally.

Reports from the Mayor, Cr Lisa Cooper, Cr Baker and Cr Pearce are included in Attachment 3 to this report, with verbal reports from Deputy Mayor, Cr Glen Atwell, Cr Chris Duncan and Cr Peter Lockwood to be provided at the Council meeting.

2. ENGAGEMENT

No public consultation was undertaken.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

By providing a synopsis of attendance at the National General Assembly, Councillors support transparency and community engagement, and demonstrate accountability to the community contributing to public confidence in Council's ongoing commitment to good governance.

Sharing insights from such events can also promote community awareness of issues impacting Council and of Council advocacy, supporting informed decision-making.

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

No direct environmental implications from this report.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The total cost of the Council's attendance at the General Assembly is expected to be approximately \$22,000, inclusive of travel, accommodation, meals and Conference Registration, and will be finalised once all expense claims are processed. Councillor expenses, including those associated with attending the ALGA, are reported to the community in Council Quarterly Performance Reports and the Annual Report.

7. RISKS

No direct risk implications from this report.

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 4.4 - 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.

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 NGA Program [**8.7.1** - 2 pages]
2. Attachment 2 - 2025 NGA Communique [**8.7.2** - 2 pages]
3. Attachment 3 - Councillor Reports [**8.7.3** - 20 pages]

NGA 2025 Program

New NGA Program Format

After the success of the new format in 2024, this year's NGA will feature the same changes to the sessions and breaks. Sessions have been extended in length to allow extra time for questions and answers. Break times are two 60 minute breaks on each day. These changes provide delegates greater value through better opportunities to ask questions in presentations, as well as more time to visit the exhibition hall, or conduct meetings during meal breaks.

TUESDAY 24 JUNE REGIONAL FORUM

8:00 AM Registrations Open

9:00 AM - Regional Forum
5:30 PM National Convention Centre

5:30 PM - **National General Assembly Welcome**
7:30 PM **Reception & Exhibition Opening**
Sponsored by Payble

WEDNESDAY 25 JUNE NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

8:00 AM Registrations Open

9:00 AM MC Welcome and Introduction
Welcome to Country
Selina Walker, Co-chair, ACT Reconciliation Council

9:20 AM ALGA President's Address
Mayor Matt Burnett, ALGA President

9:45 AM Minister Address
The Hon Kristy McBain MP, Member for Eden-Monaro, Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories and Minister for Emergency Management

10:00 AM Representative of the Opposition Address
(invited)

10:30 AM **MEAL BREAK ONE**
Sponsored by McArthur

11:45 AM Governor - General Address
Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC

12:00 PM Australia and the New Geoeconomic Landscape
Mark Bouris AM, Australian Business Leader, Entrepreneur, and Finance Expert
Dr Merriden Varrall, Partner | Geopolitics Australia Lead, KPMG

1:00 PM From Big Picture to Local Action
Jason Clarke

2:00 PM **MEAL BREAK TWO**

3:00 PM Debate on Motions

5:00 PM Close of Day One

**THURSDAY 26 JUNE
NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

9:00 AM	<p>Adapting Together: Local Government Leadership in a Changing Climate Kieran Power, Senior Principal, Nation Partners Lord Mayor Anna Reynolds, City of Hobart Lord Mayor Kon Vatskalis, City of Darwin Amanda Pugh, Group Manager Community and Regional Prosperity, Lockyer Valley Regional Council</p>
10:00 AM	<p>AI for Society: Shaping a Better Tomorrow Stephen Scheeler, Founder, CEO & Senior Advisor, The Digital, Omniscient Tim Golsby-Smith, CEO and Co-founder, myLot</p>
11:00 AM	MEAL BREAK ONE
12:00 PM - 2:00 PM	Concurrent Listening Sessions
SWAN/ TORRENS	<p>Emergency Management: Capability and Capacity Sponsored by JLT & Telstra Panellists: JLT Telstra Australian Red Cross Australasian Fire and Emergency Service National Emergency Management Agency The Local Government Association of Queensland Local Government Association South Australia</p>
MURRAY/ FITZROY	<p>Safer Roads Sponsored by Hyundai & Austroads Panellists: Hyundai Austroads Safe System Solutions National Transport Research Organisation Australasian College of Road Safety Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts</p>
ROYAL THEATRE	<p>Housing and Community Infrastructure Sponsored by Novoplan & Citygreen Panellists: Novoplan Citygreen Civil Contractors Federation Australia Department of Social Services Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts</p>
BALLROOM	<p>Local Government Jobs and Skills Sponsored by KPMG & Featured exhibitor; Australian Public Skills Panellists: KPMG Work+Stay Public Skills Australia Workforce Australia for Business, Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Jobs and Skills Australia Jobs and Skills Australia's Workforce Future Branch</p>

**THURSDAY 26 JUNE | CONTINUED
NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

2:00 PM	MEAL BREAK TWO
3:00 PM	Debate on Motions
5:00 PM	Close of Day Two
7:00 PM	<p>General Assembly Dinner <i>Sponsored by Telstra</i> Great Hall, Australian Parliament House</p> <p>Networking Event Louie Louie, Verity Lane</p>

**FRIDAY 27 JUNE
MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT FORUM**

9:00 AM	<p>National Priorities Need Local Solutions - Ministerial Engagement Forums Interactive panel sessions with federal government MC: David Speers</p>
10:30 AM	MEAL BREAK ONE
11:30 AM	National Priorities Need Local Solutions - Ministerial Engagement Forums continued
1:00 PM	MEAL BREAK TWO

Voting Desk

Collection Details

The first voting session is on Wednesday at 3:00 PM, please ensure you have collected your council's electronic voting keypad before this time. Voting keypads will be available from the voting desk at the ALGA booth in the foyer between the below times:

Wednesday 25 June
11:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Thursday 25 June
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Return Details

You can return the voting keypad by placing it in the return box at the registration desk before the end of Thursday's Sessions.

A fee of \$100 will apply if the keypad is not returned by the end of the assembly.



COMMUNIQUE

More than 1,300 local government leaders from across Australia gathered in Canberra from 24-27 June for the 31st National General Assembly of Local Government (NGA).

We were welcomed to country for the National General Assembly by Ngunnawal woman and Co-Chair of ACT Reconciliation Council, Selina Walker. The Assembly recognised the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognised any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. The Assembly paid its respects to their elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledged the vital and ongoing contributions First Nations peoples continue to make to our nation.

Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC, Governor-General of Australia, formally opened the Assembly and spoke about the role of community leadership and local engagement in building national resilience and unity, including the importance of teaching our younger generation the importance of civic governance.

We heard from a range of Federal Ministers across the Assembly including: The Honourable Kristy McBain MP, Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher, The Honourable Julian Hill MP, The Honourable Josh Wilson MP, The Honourable Darren Chester MP, Dr Anne Webster MP and the Honourable Kevin Hogan MP.

There was broad acknowledgement from Ministers that councils play a critical role in supporting their communities and that the role has expanded significantly, as has the financial pressure councils face. That is why local government is calling for urgent action to ensure the financial sustainability of councils.

Delegates heard from Mark Bouris AM and Dr Merriden Varrall who unpacked global economic forces shaping Australia's local economies, including trends in trade, security, and investment.

Jason Clarke, world leading consultant on issues of leadership and innovation, closed Day 1 of the NGA with an energising and practical presentation on how councils can take bold ideas and translate them into tangible, community-focused change.

Day 2 of the NGA featured the launch of ALGA's exciting new research "Adapting Together: Local Government Leadership in a Changing Climate". The report finds that Australia's councils are expected to spend more than \$2 billion over the next five years to future-proof their communities from the changing climate, resulting in up to \$4.7 billion in avoided costs to communities.



ALGA President Mayor Matt Burnett noted “Climate-resilient infrastructure is expensive and takes time to build, so we need sustainable funding from the Federal Government to implement long-term planning and adaptation now and into the future”. That is why “We are asking the Government for a new \$400 million climate adaptation fund, distributed to all Australia’s councils each year, to deliver ongoing and sustainable place-based climate solutions” Mayor Burnett said.

Councils considered the way AI is shaping the future with presentations from Stephen Scheeler, founder of The Digital CEO and co-founder and CEO of Omniscient, and Tim Golsby-Smith, co-founder and CEO of myLot.

The 2025 NGA saw the return of concurrent listening sessions providing an interactive platform for delegates to engage directly with federal agencies and sector experts on key policy issues. The listening sessions included:

- Housing and community infrastructure – where the discussion covered a range of challenges from housing affordability, the prohibitive cost of housing infrastructure, ideas around housing and homelessness.
- Emergency management capacity and capability – where attendees shared examples of what has worked in their communities and highlighted remaining challenges. This included the need for long-term funding certainty and better integration of local knowledge in disaster preparedness and recovery frameworks.
- Local government jobs and skills – where attendees highlighted key issues attracting workers to the regions, promoting council careers to young values-led workers, better access to local training, cost-shifting concerns, migrant workforce support, and housing shortages as a major staffing barrier.
- Safer roads - discussed infrastructure funding and general maintenance, speed management, driver behaviour, and the broader questions of regional vs urban specific problems.

Motions and Assembly Outcomes

- Almost 190 motions were debated across a range of policy areas including financial sustainability, roads, disaster resilience, health, housing, and climate. Motions passed by the NGA will be referred to relevant Ministers for response and also used by the ALGA Board to inform national policy positions.

ALGA National General Assembly – 24-27 June 2025

Report by: Mayor, Cr Lisa Cooper

In my role as Mayor, I had the privilege of attending the 2025 Australian Local Governance Association (ALGA) National General Assembly in Canberra, held under the theme “Empowering Local Communities for a Sustainable Future.” This national event brought together local government representatives from across the country to collaborate on common challenges, share innovative approaches, and help shape the future of local governance in Australia.

This was the second time I have attended the National General Assembly during my 10-year tenure as Councillor, with the first being in 2015. It was an honour to once again represent our Council on the national stage and to lead a delegation focused on advocacy, leadership, and learning - on behalf of our colleagues, our organisation, and our community.

Council was represented at the 2025 ALGA NGA by the following attendees:

- Mayor Lisa Cooper
- Deputy Mayor Glen Atwell
- Cr Chris Duncan
- Cr Peter Lockwood
- Cr Susan Pearce
- Cr Meagan Baker
- Chief Executive Officer Bruce Dobson, attending in a supporting and advisory role

This strong representation ensured that a broad range of Council interests were reflected across policy sessions, debates, and networking opportunities, most sessions running simultaneously.

The following Motions were presented by Knox City Council and supported at the National General Assembly:

- **Motion number 7 Knox City Council VIC**
This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to explore and, where feasible, implement grant programs that address infrastructure needs, prioritising the renewal, upgrade, and maintenance of existing essential infrastructure.
- **Motion number 36 Maroondah City Council VIC**
That this National General Assembly calls upon the Federal Government to:
 - Lead the development of a nationally consistent Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) - in collaboration with all states and territories - to harmonise regulations,

refund values, and operations across Australia, creating a uniform approach to container recycling; and

- Ensure that the National CDS is to include all glass beverage containers such as wine and spirit bottles, whilst exploring the expansion of the scheme to include glass jars used for food - thereby ensuring these containers are covered by deposit/refund incentives for recycling.

Motion number 36.1 Shire of Campaspe VIC

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to support all states and territories to provide container deposit schemes and include glass containers for wine and spirits as refundable within the scheme.

Motion number 36.2 Knox City Council VIC

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to work with all States and Territories to implement a national framework for waste and recycling management, creating a harmonised approach, including but not limited to a nationally consistent Container Deposit Scheme (CDS).

- **Motion number 114 Knox City Council VIC**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to fund an “earn and learn” program that targets areas of skills-shortage and attracts job seekers to access training and employment programs within the Local Government sector.

Federal Engagement and Advocacy

While in Canberra, I, along with the Deputy Mayor and CEO, held a constructive meeting with Mr Joel Tuckwell from the office of the Hon. Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.

During this meeting, we advocated for Knox City Council’s (KCC) significant investment in local infrastructure, particularly in the areas of:

- Transport and road infrastructure
- Community reserves and open space
- Sporting pavilions and recreation facilities

We highlighted the growing pressure on these assets due to rapid housing growth targets (47,000 new homes by 2051 - a nearly 75% increase on the current housing stock of 63,000 dwellings), a rising population, and increased participation in community and organised sport. These factors are placing increasing demand on our infrastructure and services, and we emphasised the need for sustained federal investment to help meet the evolving needs of our community.

What I took away: Direct engagement with federal representatives remains vital in positioning Knox for future funding opportunities. The meeting was both positive and productive, and we will continue to strengthen these relationships as part of our broader infrastructure advocacy strategy.

Affordable Housing and Planning Reform

The Assembly addressed the national housing crisis, with examples of councils using planning tools and incentives to drive housing diversity and affordability.

What I took away: We have a real opportunity to help unlock local housing supply through smarter planning controls and targeted partnerships. I will be advocating for further exploration of these approaches at the local level.

First Nations Engagement

Presentations by Indigenous leaders reinforced the need for sustained respectful partnerships and the importance of co-designed decision-making in reconciliation.

What I took away: As Mayor, I am committed to strengthening our engagement with Traditional Owners and embedding cultural awareness and inclusion into Council's work.

Digital Innovation and Smart Communities

Councils shared how they are using smart technology and digital platforms to enhance service delivery, community engagement, and operational efficiency.

What I took away: Even modest digital investments can make a meaningful difference. There are opportunities for us to modernise systems in ways that directly benefit our residents.

National Advocacy and Representation

Participating in policy debates and observing the resolution process underscored the importance of unified local government advocacy. It was incredibly interesting and insightful to hear advocacy from other councils, along with their engaging and robust debates.

What I took away: National forums like the NGA amplify our voice. We must continue to actively engage with federal stakeholders to ensure our needs are heard and acted upon. As they say – the squeaky wheel gets the most oil!

Conclusion

Attending the 2025 ALGA National General Assembly - my second in a decade of service as Councillor/Mayor - was a powerful reminder of the importance of collaboration, leadership,

and forward-thinking governance. It was a privilege to represent Knox alongside a dedicated delegation of Councillors and our CEO, and to advocate strongly for our region on a national platform.

The insights and relationships gained during this conference will help inform our future planning, strengthen our advocacy efforts, and ultimately support better outcomes for the Knox community. I look forward to sharing what I have learned with my colleagues and incorporating these ideas into our strategic priorities moving forward.

ALGA National General Assembly – 24-27 June 2025

Report by: Cr Meagan Baker

My report outlines the key benefits, learnings, and impacts from my attendance at the recent Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly held in Canberra from 24th to 27th June 2025. This was my first time attending the Assembly since being elected in 2020.

The theme of the event, “**National Priorities Need Local Solutions,**” reflected the vital role local governments play in addressing national challenges. The conference brought together over 1,000 delegates from across Australia, including local government leaders, national politicians, and leading experts and academics whose work relates to local government.

Summary of Key Exhibitors

During the Assembly, I engaged with a variety of exhibitors providing valuable insights that may be relevant to our community.

- **Moma Solar:** a provider of lighting solutions, specialising in solar LED street lighting products including permanent and temporary lighting solutions for various projects including Local Government. I was shown various products available from the staff at Moma including Solar Smiley Speed Sign, solar product range, vandal resistant solar bollards and solar street lights with an aim to address common challenges faced by local councils in public space lighting. Consideration of such products could be a valuable addition ongoing effort to enhance public space lighting while reducing energy consumption.
- **Snap Send Solve:** A widely adopted app used to report local issues. Reporting has increased to various agencies on issues in their local community.
- **Disaster Relief Australia:** a veteran-led not-for-profit, offers skilled volunteer assistance for disaster preparedness and recovery efforts.
- The **Heart Foundation’s** Healthy Active by Design evidence-based toolkit supports the planning and delivery of healthier, more active, and liveable neighbourhoods.
- Discussions with **NBN** focused on NBN connectivity across Knox,
- **myLot** discussed AI applications in urban planning.
- **Bannerconda** highlighted advanced street pole banner systems

- **Alliance for Gambling Reform** – national advocacy organisation working to reduce gambling reform and discussed the financial losses in Knox as a result of gambling.
- **Australian Government's Safer Local Roads and Infrastructure Program (SLRIP)** provides funding opportunities for road infrastructure projects.
- **National Emergency Management Agency** – leads Australia's disaster and emergency management efforts.
- **EcoTeq Outdoor**- 100% electric outdoor maintenance equipment with an aim to supporting Council's net zero goals.

Potential Community Benefit

The knowledge I gained from these exhibitors presents several considerations to enhance Knox's local environment and wellbeing. Solar lighting solutions could improve safety and sustainability in public spaces, while digital tools like Snap Send Solve may boost community engagement and notifications of issues across Knox. Collaboration with Disaster Relief Australia may strengthen disaster preparedness and recovery capabilities. Implementing Healthy Active by Design principles may assist with providing more information of more inclusive and active neighbourhoods. Understanding NBN connectivity and leveraging AI in planning. Efforts to be aware of gambling harm and access to infrastructure funding programs further support Knox's social, environmental, emergency and economic resilience. Together, these insights offer an understanding on issues and innovations across Knox.

Noteworthy Sessions

Her excellency, the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn Governor General of Australia, formally opened the highlighting the critical role of community leadership and local engagement in strengthening national resilience and unity, while also emphasising the importance of civic governance in our younger generation.

I heard from **Federal Ministers** across the conference including:

- The Honourable Kristy McBain MP,
- Senator the Honourable Katy Gallagher MP
- The Honourable Julian Hill MP
- The Honourable Josh Wilson MP
- The Honourable Darren Chester MP,
- Dr Anne Webster MP and
- The Honourable Kevin Hogan MP

Federal Ministers broadly acknowledged the vital and expanding role of Councils in supporting their local communities. They acknowledged the increasing financial pressures faced by Councils and the importance ongoing financial sustainability at a local level.

Potential benefit to the local community

This recognition by national leaders highlights the importance of securing stable funding and resources for local Councils. Ensuring financial sustainability to continue delivering essential services, infrastructure, and community programs that meet the growing needs of our residents effectively and sustainably.

Australia and the New Geoeconomic Landscape:

Mark Bouris AM and Dr. Merriden Varrell presented on the new geoeconomic landscape, explaining how global economic forces—such as trade dynamics, security concerns, and investment trends—are shaping Australia’s local economies.

Potential benefit to the local community:

This allowed me to better understand global economic trends and valuable insights to better understand possible challenges and opportunities impacting local economy. This knowledge may assist with informing strategic planning and policymaking to foster economic resilience, attract investment, and support sustainable growth locally.

From Big Picture to Local Action

Jason Clarke’s session focused on the evolving role of local councils in a rapidly changing world. He highlighted the need for councils to lead with purpose, embrace innovation, and foster creative problem-solving at the community level. Clarke urged delegates to move beyond small, incremental changes and instead pursue bold, visionary strategies that empower local transformation. I found this session engaging and provided a new dimension of thinking in my role as Councillor.

Potential Benefit to the Local Community

This session reinforced the importance of innovation and community-led solutions in local government. For Knox, considering this mindset could lead to more forward-thinking policies and projects that directly address local needs, promote collaboration, and support long-term resilience. Embracing bold, transformative ideas can help ensure the community remains adaptable, inclusive, and well-positioned for future challenges.

Adapting Together: Local Government Leadership in a Changing Climate

This examined how councils are playing a frontline role in responding to climate change. Presenters from Hobart, Darwin, and Lockyer Valley shared insights on building community

resilience through local leadership, tailored adaptation strategies, and cross-sector collaboration.

Potential Benefit to the Local Community

This session highlighted the importance of proactive, locally driven climate planning. For Knox, consideration of place-based climate strategies and advocating for reliable funding and tools could enhance long-term community safety, protect local infrastructure, and support a more sustainable future.

AI for Society – Shaping a Better Tomorrow

This session presented by Stephen Scheeler, CEO & Senior Advisor, The Digital Omniscient and Tim Goldsby-Smith, Co-Founder & CEO, myLot examined the growing role of artificial intelligence in shaping the cities and communities of the future. Presenters outlined how AI is transforming urban development and governance through improved planning processes, data-driven decision-making, and streamlined workflows.

Potential Benefit to Knox

Consideration on how this may enhance efficiency and support more sustainable and inclusive development. Thoughtful consideration on the use of this technology might assist in making informed decisions that reflect local needs and services.

There were 4 concurrent listening sessions, and I attended the **Emergency Management Capacity and Capability session**

This interactive session allowed delegates to engage with federal agencies and emergency sector leaders on challenges and best practices in building resilient local emergency management systems. Discussions highlighted key barriers such as funding certainty, integration of local knowledge, and coordination across services.

Key Themes:

- Gaps in early warning systems, community communication and community support
- Barriers to accessing disaster recovery funding
- The role of insurance and risk mitigation
- Sharing of knowledge across councils to strengthen collective response
- The growing mental health impacts on communities and volunteer shortages
- Long-term strategies for strengthening community and system resilience

Potential Benefit to Knox:

Insights from this session reinforce the need for well-integrated, locally informed emergency frameworks. Consideration for these learnings could possibly enhance preparedness, foster

stronger community resilience, and ensure more effective responses to possible future natural disasters. Improved collaboration and investment in early warning systems and mental health support may be essential in building long-term safety and wellbeing for our community.

Motions and Assembly Outcomes

I also attended the two half day motions where Knox City Council submitted three motions to the 2025 National General Assembly, which were debated among almost 190 motions covering key issues such as financial sustainability, disaster resilience, health, housing, roads, and climate. All three motions from Knox were successfully passed, reflecting strong alignment with national priorities.

Passed Motions:

- **Motion 7** - Calls on the Australian Government to explore and, where feasible, implement grant programs that address infrastructure needs, prioritising the renewal, upgrade, and maintenance of existing essential infrastructure.
- **Motion 36.2** – Calls on the Australian Government to work with all States and Territories to implement a national framework for waste and recycling management, creating a harmonised approach, including but not limited to a nationally consistent Container Deposit Scheme (CDS)
- **Motion 114** – The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to fund an “earn and learn” program that targets areas of skills-shortage and attracts job seekers to access training and employment programs within the Local Government sector.

Potential Benefit to Knox:

The 3 motions were carried at the National General Assembly and presents possible tangible opportunities for Knox. Improved access to infrastructure funding can help address asset renewal needs across the municipality. A nationally consistent recycling framework will support more efficient waste management locally, while the proposed earn-and-learn initiative could strengthen Knox’s workforce by creating new training and employment opportunities in areas of critical skills shortage. Together, these outcomes contribute to a more sustainable, skilled, and future-ready community in Knox.

Material obtained

- Vendor brochures (Moma Solar, Australian Government, Disaster Relief Australia)
- ALGA program booklet and motion summary
- Session notes, presentation slides and website links
- Business information from key contacts
- Healthy Active by Design Training Certificate

ALGA National General Assembly – 24-27 June 2025

Report by: Cr Susan Pearce

I attended the ALGA National Assembly on the 24th of June 2025 where the first function was a Welcome reception in the exhibition hall. I networked with councilors from across Australia concerning issue such as road, rail, and waste. The exchange of ideas was an important process, especially for a new Councilors.

I also visited a few different sponsors to hear ideas about new technologies and different ways of providing services to our ratepayers. The sponsors which I found useful are as follows:

Simoco is based in Scoresby and is a firm that produces communication equipment that allows the operating officer to talk to employees in the field. What is especially important about this type of equipment concerns where an employee is in trouble due to a medical emergency, as they can alert the office to request assistance. This is essential where there is only one employee working in the field. I have attached the information to the report.

The other sponsor is Perola and in particular a parklet which could be used to regenerate activity by providing outside dining. The Parklet is 100% transportable by forklift. The plants around the parklet have their own water system and require less watering. The individual parklets cost is around \$50K and could be rented out by Council to provide another income stream. The parklets comply with all the building requirements and are self-sufficient for lightening. They also sold temporary garden beds and self-watering hanging baskets which could be hung on light poles.

On the 25th of June 2025 first full day of the conference I attended the opening address by ALGA President and then the ministerial address by Hon Kristy McBain. The most interesting part was the question from other councilors concerning the issues they are having in their own Councils. The representative Opposition address was also interesting, especially the questions.

The next seminar was a new economic landscape which was interesting, but it was not as enlightening as expected.

After a break there was a debate of various motions. The debate was in most cases not really a formalized debate. The motions were basically presented and voted on with no real debate.

Dinner this evening was a networking event with councils in the region. This was a chance to catch up and exchange ideas. It was interesting to speak to Councilors about how they are managing waste and roads. I found as a new councilor interesting to hear what the challenges are for other councils.

Thursday 26th June 2025: The seminar on adapting climate change together was interesting but was not a highlight. The second seminar on AI society was really informativity about how AI can be used to assist society in medial treatment and preventative medical issues.

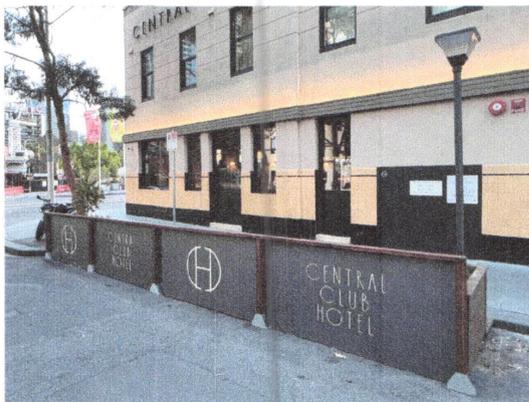
After the break I attended with Councilors Duncan a forum concerning safer roads. The feeling I got from the panelist is that there is less grant money for local councils for roads and this is creating a look of stress on Rural and Regional councils. I raised the issue of our light rail and that we have been waiting a considerable time for it to be built. The view I was given is that it is unlikely that the infrastructure will be built.

I missed the motion to have further discussion with other councilors along with previous Knox Council CEO Graham Edmonson and Tony Doyle who I have met previously. I had a discussion with other councilors.

That evening, I attended the General assembly Dinner which was held at the Parliament house. I was sitting with Mayor Albany WA and discussing various issues they are having such as waste and roads. I was a nice to have a chance to relax and meet up with people I had previously met prior to this conference.

On the 27th of June 2025 I attended the seminar on National Priorities need local solutions. It was interesting to hear the different views, especially the questions from other councilors. Overall, the most important thing I found was networking with other councilors and hearing from the panelists. Being able to discuss ideas with various councilors from all around Australia means I can bring back new ideas back to Knox. I would like to thank Cr Lockwood for introducing me to different councilors and helping me to network to get the most out of the experience.

MODULAR PARKLET



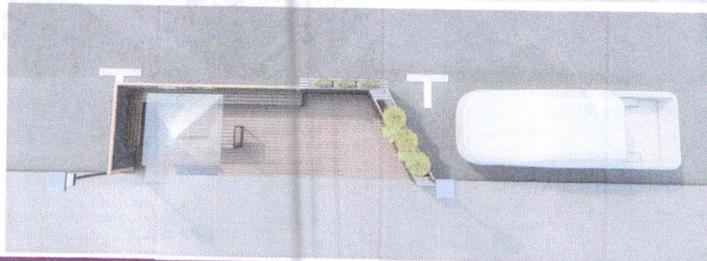
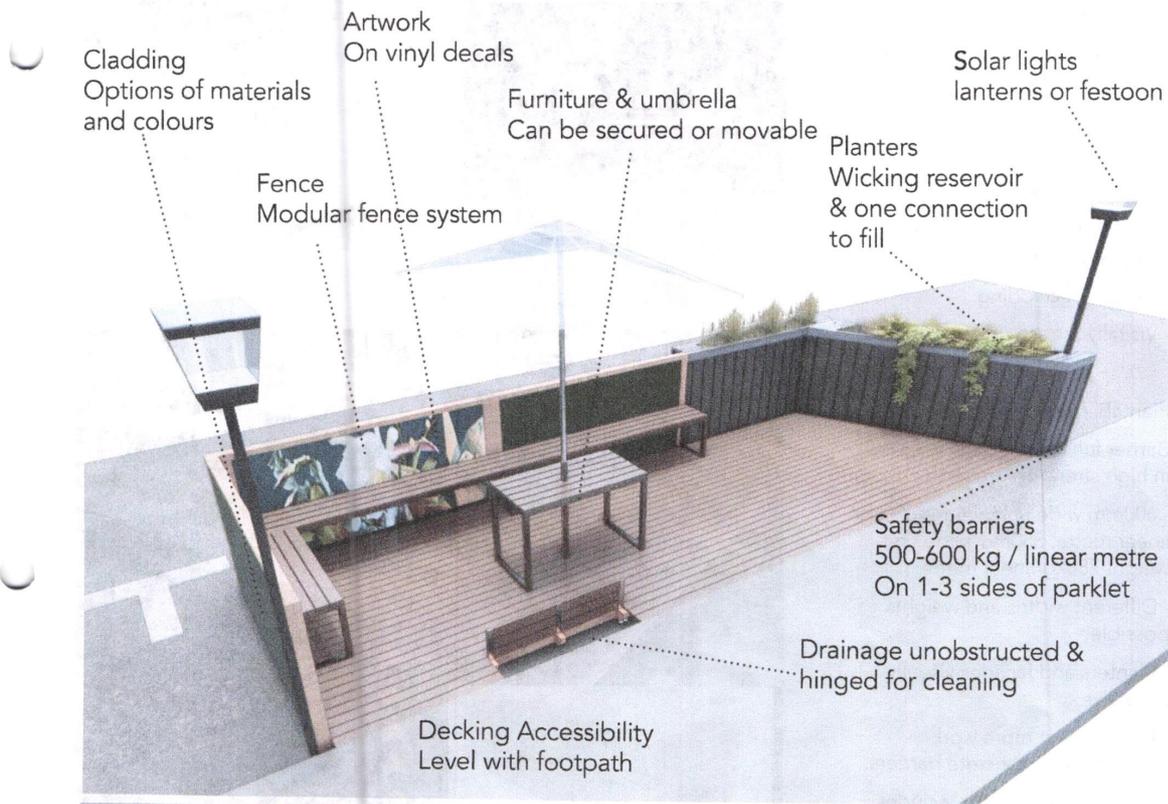
MODULAR PARKLET



Free standing: re-locatable.

Custom size: cover one or more parking spaces.

Made from modular components put together in different configurations.



MODULAR PARKLET



PAVILION ROOF

Pavilion roof system for modular parklets connects to Large Planter.

- Customisable lengths.
- On road or flat surfaces.



SAFETY BARRIERS

Safety barriers from moving traffic and errant vehicles must be appropriate for road conditions.

Council traffic engineers assess a site based on traffic speeds, sight lines, intersections, etc.

Barrier options include concrete barriers, PlantabARRIER, Sandstone sleepers and/or planters.



Concrete barrier

- With Future Village custom designed barrier planters
- Choice of cladding
- Visually attractive

PlantaBarrier

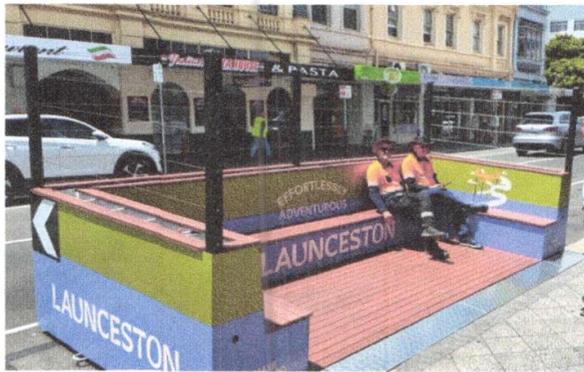
Barrier full of sandbags encased in high strength wire rope armour.

- 600mm wide unit weighs 600kg/linear metre, 350mm wide unit weight 280kg/linear metre.
- Different widths and weights possible.
- Planters and façades visually attractive.
- Modular but more work installing than concrete barriers.
- Future development includes crash testing.



PERGOLA & PATIO PARKLET

Transportable Parklet



PERGOLA & PATIO PARKLET



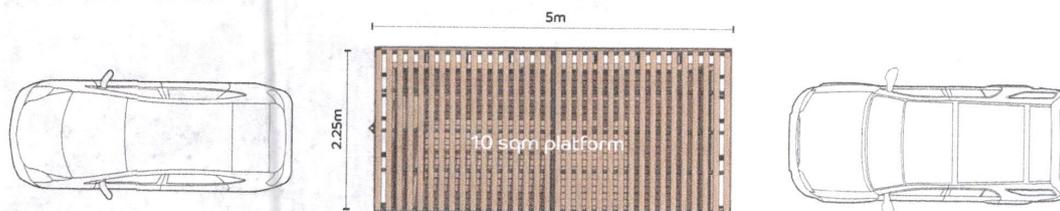
Transportable Parklet

Our premium Pergola and Patio Parklets makes a large stylish parklet out of one parking bay. It provides space for the community and increases dwell time and in-turn local café or restaurant revenue. Easily moved for permanent or temporary installations.

The 9 metres of fixed benches plus placing additional table and chairs gives seating for 10-20 people (Can also be made without benches). The low maintenance water reservoirs and wicking planters provides greenery that increases biodiversity, cools whilst softening the edge between road and public space.



Pergola Parklet



PERGOLA & PATIO PARKLET



Transportable Parklet

ACCESSIBILITY + GUTTER UNOBSTRUCTED

Level aluminium ramps from parklet to footpath.

Ramps hinged for gutter access and cleaning.



WEIGHT

Pergola	Patio
1250kg	1000kg
1800kg*	1500kg*

*with planters



LIGHTING

Solar Powered or mains festoon or fairy lighting. (optional)

COMBINING & CONFIGURING

Option to combine two parklets together. Optional benches and side planters.



FACADING

Probond colour range for cladding. Vinyl wrap (optional).

PLANTERS & PLANTS

- 20 large Planters with 30 - 50 plants
- 200mm wicking reservoirs
- Fill with one garden hose connector



TRANSPORT

- Transport via tilt tray truck.
- Two adjacent parking spots for unloading.
- Jockey wheels for final placement.
- No road closure required.



~~Adam Burrige~~ **SIMOCO**

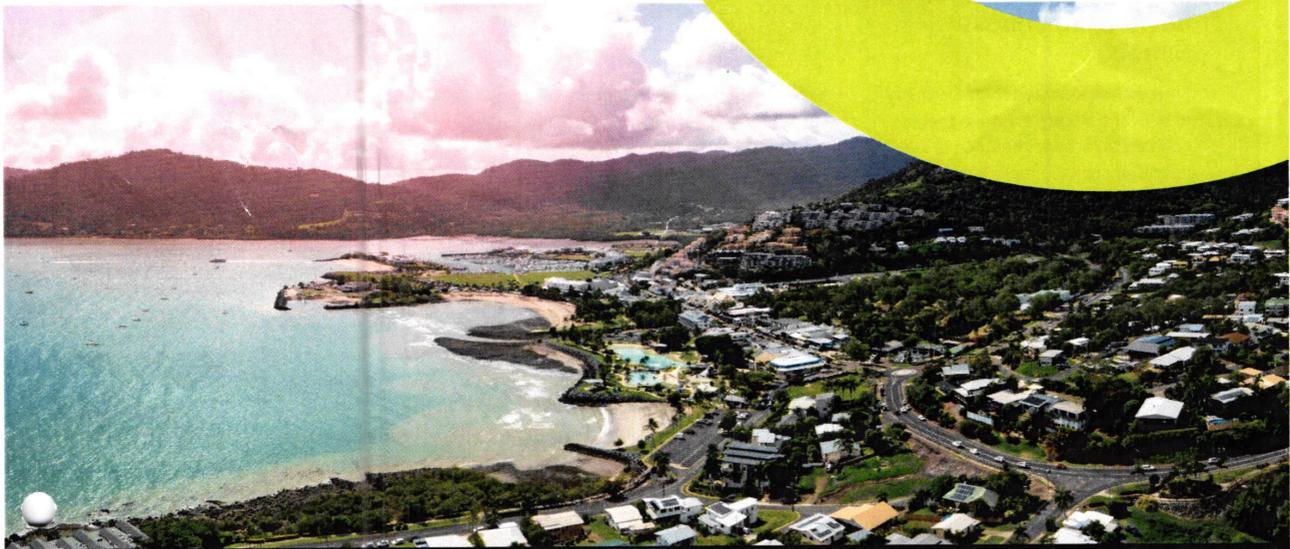
1270 Ferntree Gully Road,
Seaford VIC 3179

adam.burridge@simocowireless.com

+61 (0) 3 9730 3911

+61 (0) 488 770 259

www.simocowirelessolutions.com



**MODERNISING EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS
WHITSUNDAY REGIONAL COUNCIL'S JOURNEY TO INFRASTRUCTURE-FREE
RESILIENCE**

Background and challenges

The 2019–20 bushfire season had a devastating impact across more than 100 Local Government Areas (LGAs), including Whitsunday Regional Council, leading to the loss of life, destruction of property, and widespread environmental damage. In light of these events, the Council identified an urgent need to strengthen the safety of both the public and council staff, ensure the resilience of infrastructure, and support the economic recovery of the region in the aftermath of adverse events.

The Council's ageing analogue radio system, operating in the 70MHz band, suffered from poor coverage, limited functionality, and scarce replacement parts, creating unsafe conditions for field staff during emergencies. Communication during recent events relied heavily on mobile and satellite phones, which proved unreliable in critical situations.

With limited LTE coverage and unsuitable radio tower infrastructure, the Council faced significant challenges in implementing a modern, resilient communication system to better manage emergencies and support proactive disaster planning.

Solution

Following initial consultations and site audits, Simoco proposed a unique Infrastructure-free solution. A traditional multisite DMR Tier III radio network was ruled out due to limited access to radio towers and their poor condition. Instead, Simoco developed a hybrid communications solution utilising the Velocity EC-830 mobile edge computing platform and SDM mobile radios, which integrate both LTE and Starlink satellite networks.

This innovative approach eliminated the need for traditional radio towers, offering a flexible, scalable, and highly resilient system. It allowed the Council to maintain communications across the entire LGA, even during emergencies when LTE coverage may be compromised.

These are some of the challenges Whitsunday Council faced:

Limited and unreliable radio coverage

The legacy analogue system lacked the capacity to provide consistent communications, especially in remote and high-risk areas.

Outdated infrastructure

The 70MHz frequency radio network was aging, with parts difficult to source and limited support for modern features.

Inadequate emergency communication

During critical events like bushfires, floods, or storms, the reliance on mobile and satellite phones was inefficient and unsafe.

Disaster management and resilience planning gaps

Council lacked integrated systems to anticipate risks, prepare adjustments, and ensure public and staff safety during disasters.

Secure. Reliable. Adaptive.



Key aspects influencing the decision to choose Simoco

Simoco was selected for their ability to deliver a bespoke, future-proof solution tailored to the Council's unique operational challenges. Their extensive experience in critical communications and their flexibility in designing a solution that avoided the constraints of existing infrastructure made them the ideal partner. Simoco's approach ensured resilient, reliable communications, regardless of geography, weather, or network disruption.

Hybrid RF and LTE communication
The solution integrates traditional UHF radio with LTE-based voice capabilities, providing council staff with seamless communication options across the entire region. This dual-mode system ensures continuity even when one network experiences disruption, making it ideal for unpredictable emergency conditions.

Intelligent mobile edge computing platform with Velocity EC-830
Acting as a central communication hub, Velocity intelligently determines the best available path for transmitting voice and data, whether through LTE or satellite. This ensures optimal performance and cost-efficiency, even in remote or dynamically changing environments.

Satellite backup via Starlink
To address gaps in LTE coverage and ensure resilience during critical situations, the solution includes Starlink satellite connectivity. This enables continuous operation during natural disasters or outages, providing a dependable lifeline for emergency coordination and public safety communications.

Infrastructure-free deployment
Unlike traditional radio systems that rely on fixed towers, this solution requires no permanent infrastructure. By eliminating the need for radio towers or base stations, it significantly reduces deployment complexity and ongoing maintenance, while increasing flexibility and reach in geographically challenging areas.



Result

Whitsunday Regional Council now benefits from a modern, resilient communication system that enables effective coordination during emergencies. Staff safety has been significantly improved, coverage blackspots have been eliminated, and the Council is far better prepared for future disaster events. By leveraging both LTE and satellite technologies without relying on fixed infrastructure, the Council has strengthened its disaster response capabilities and overall operational resilience.

8.8 Response to Notice of Motion 176 - Service Planning Information

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Discussion
Author:	Acting Head of Business Improvement, Amar Singh Manager Community Access and Support, Gail Power Manager Early Years, Sarah Kleine
Manager:	Manager Strategy Transformation, Liesl Westberry
Executive:	Director, Customer & Performance, Greg Curcio

SUMMARY

At the Council Meeting on 24 March 2025, the Council determined in response to Notice of Motion 176 - Service Planning Information:

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

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

This report provides the information requested in the Notice of Motion.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes this report in response to Notice of Motion 176 - Service Planning Information.

1. DISCUSSION

The purpose of the Service Planning and Review Program is to enable Council to deliver efficient, fit-for-purpose, value-for money, services that meet evolving community needs whilst supporting financial efficiency.

At Knox, the delivery of service planning and reviews is guided by the Service Planning and Review Framework, which was developed in late 2023. It provides a structured approach to how service planning and reviews are undertaken and implemented, balancing speed, resources available (labour and budget), organisation priorities and effective governance.

Over the past three years, Council has undertaken four service reviews, with a focus on responding to changing external conditions and driving organisational financial sustainability.

With the development of the new framework, a deliberate shift was made in 2024-25 to focus on service planning and accelerate the development of Service Plans for all 34 Services Knox delivers. This shift aimed to:

- Identify opportunities to contribute to 2025-26 budget savings through a customer-first (service based) approach.

- Align development of Service Plans and four-year service goals to Council and Health and Wellbeing Planning cycle, to enable us to translate organisational goals and strategies into actions at the operational level - ensuring alignment across all departments and functions.
- Build better foundational knowledge and understanding of our services to support annual planning and budgeting, community engagement, service review prioritisation and expedite the current state assessment phase of reviews.

Over the past 12 months, the following activities were undertaken to develop the initial service plans for all 34 services the Council delivers internally and externally:

- Phase 1 - Work was undertaken to consider and incorporate recent service insights and community feedback to build upon the foundational work already completed.
- Phase 2 - An extensive program was conducted to identify budget savings for the 2025-26 financial year- using a customer first, service-based approach.
- Phase 3 - Service plans for all 34 services were completed, including the development of four-year (2025-29) service goals and actions for 2025-26.

Service Planning

The purpose of service planning is to design services that best meet the needs of our customers now and into the future and support better, more informed resource planning over the coming years.

Service planning enables Knox to:

- Put the community (customer) at the heart of every service Knox delivers.
- Monitor and respond to external changes.
- Respond to our community's needs and wants as articulated in the Community Vision and Council and Health and Wellbeing Plan.
- Support efficient and effective, value-for-money services and organisational financial sustainability.
- Increase transparency and accountability for Knox's services.
- Better integrate planning across departments, including service, workforce and asset planning.

Service Review

The purpose of service reviews is to help ensure that Knox has the right mix of services, delivered through an appropriate delivery model and meeting the objectives outlined in the Council and Health and Wellbeing Plan. A service review is a governance mechanism that ensures Knox is delivering value for money to the community.

Although all services have a service plan, not all services require a service review. Service reviews may also be conducted either for an entire service or on a specific feature/s (sub-service) within a service.

Service reviews may be triggered by key changes in the service's strategic environment or through a prioritised program of work. Each review differs in terms of size, scale, and complexity, and therefore it can take anywhere from 12 weeks to 6 months or more to complete a review.

Implementation of recommendations often requires additional time and investment. Service reviews enable Knox to:

- Undertake a detailed assessment of a service to determine whether Council is best placed to deliver it, and whether the current delivery model supports delivery of efficient and effective service.
- Further understand community and customer needs and gather feedback from people using or affected by Knox's services.
- Where identified, uplift or re-design the delivery model to not only meet the ongoing needs of our community, but also to deliver value for money.

Service reviews provide a mechanism for undertaking deeper level assessment of our services and are more strategic and selective. As service reviews are highly resource intensive, a schedule of two to three service reviews are undertaken each year, in addition to the service planning that occurs across all services annually.

The following four services have undergone service reviews in the past three years (2022-2025):

1. Kindergarten Service Review (concluded in August 2023)
2. Occasional Care at the Netball Centre Review (concluded in November 2023)
3. Youth Counselling Service Review (concluded in April 2024)
4. Youth Service Review (concluded in June 2024)

A summary of each service review, including the recommendations made, the actions taken to implement them and expected completion timelines where applicable is provided in Attachment 1.

2. ENGAGEMENT

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

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report has no social impact.

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 has no environmental implications.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

This report has no financial or resource implications.

7. RISKS

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

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

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 - Response to Notice of Motion 176 [**8.8.1** - 11 pages]

Response to Notice of Motion 176 - Service Planning Information

Below is a summary of service reviews undertaken in the past three years, including the recommendations made, implementation actions undertaken, and expected completion timelines where applicable.

1 Kindergarten Service Review

The Kindergarten Service Review concluded in August 2023, after considering the impact of the State Government Early Year Reforms in three separate yet connected phases commencing in 2019.

In Phase 1, concluding in April 2021, Council determined to expand its existing 4-year-old kindergarten service to include five hours of kindergarten for 3-year-olds from 2022 and developed the Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan (KISP) in partnership with the Department of Education (DE).

In Phase 2, Council considered the challenges posed by its existing suite of early years facilities and the considerable investment in infrastructure required to support 15 hours for 3 and 4-year-old from 2029. In November 2021 Council resolved that the funding required was beyond the organisation's financial capacity and that fully implementing the reform in Knox will require significantly increased State Government investment in early years infrastructure.

In Phase 3, which commenced in June 2022, Council determined to undertake a review of the kindergarten service and Council's role as kindergarten service provider and Early Years Manager, inclusive of community consultation and a Community Panel process. This review concluded in August 2023 with Council resolving the following recommendations.

Implementation Status

Recommendation	Current Status and Actions Taken	Date Completed/Expected Completion Timeline
<p>Refocus Council’s role as Municipal Planner, while balancing the operational and financial risks of being a provider with the social benefits and returns of investing in early learning by remaining a sessional kindergarten provider within its two Early Years Hubs only and cease to be a provider for all other sessional kindergartens from 1 January 2025.</p>	<p>Complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council ceased being the approved provider for all 18 sessional stand-alone kindergartens as of 31/12/2024 and surrendered the service approvals held with the Department of Education (DE). Two sessional kindergarten programs remain in operation at the two Early Years Hubs. • DE were notified that Council has ceased being an Early Years Manager as at 31/12/2024 for kindergarten services due to the reduction to two sessional kindergarten services. • The Family and Children’s Services Department underwent a restructure in late 2024 and is now known as the Early Years Department. The Early Years department supports Council’s role as a municipal planner, managing the ongoing support for kindergarten providers (tenants) leasing Council early years sites. This municipal support also includes the provision and administration of central registration for all participating kindergartens. 	<p>01/01/2025</p>

<p>Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person as the Chief Executive Officer selects) to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Notify the Department of Education of Council’s decision in accordance with the current kindergarten service agreement. b. Notify the affected employees of Council’s decision and the impact of the change, in accordance with Council’s relevant industrial agreements. c. Notify all active kindergarten families and children (current service users), including new families that have enrolled for 2024, as well as the broader Knox Community, of Council’s decision and the impact of the change. 	<p>Complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacted staff were notified on 14/08/2023 and 15/08/2023. • Active kindergarten families were notified on 15/08/2023. • Broader Knox Community were notified on 15/08/2023. • Officers met with DE to provide notification of Council’s decision on 16/08/2023. 	<p>15/08/2023</p>
<p>Note that officers will progress discussions and work with the Department of Education to identify alternate providers, with the option of Council leasing sessional kindergarten stand-alone facilities to such providers from January 2025 onwards.</p>	<p>Complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council undertook a comprehensive two stage procurement process which resulted in the successful sourcing of 5 kindergarten providers to provide sessional kindergarten across 18 sites (those previously in operation by Council) from January 2025. Council resolved to enter into lease agreements with those 5 providers on 22/07/2024. • Officers met regularly with DE to keep them informed of the process and to seek their support as needed. • A project control group was formed inclusive of senior executive officers from across the organisation to support the transition process. 	<p>29/01/2025</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All services were successfully transitioned and began delivering kindergarten from Term 1 2025. 	
<p>Note that officers will provide Councillors with periodic updates regarding the implementation of the above resolutions; including the progress of services transitioning to new providers and capacity to meet ongoing demand for sessional kindergarten in Knox.</p>	<p>Complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updates were provided throughout the procurement and transition process. In July 2024, at a Council meeting, Council resolved to accept and execute leases to non-for-profit kindergarten providers for the leasing of Council kindergarten facilities under Contract 3299: Provision of Sessional Kindergartens in Council Facilities. <p>In Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers are currently working with DE to finalise an update of Knox’s Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan, with a report anticipated to come to Council in 2025. 	<p>22/07/2024</p> <p>Report will be prepared for Council in 2025.</p>
<p>Note that officers will continue to update service users and impacted staff as the process of identifying alternate providers progresses.</p>	<p>Complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacted staff - communication and support continued until 31/12/2024 to either transition to employment with an alternative kindergarten provider or complete their service with Council. Supports provided to staff included provision of information (meetings and written correspondence) throughout Council’s process to source alternate kindergarten providers and subsequent transition, various well-being supports, team workshops and factsheets to support conversations with families. 	<p>31/12/2024</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Active kindergarten families - regular communication continued throughout Council's process to source alternate kindergarten providers and subsequent transition.• Broader Knox Community - communication continued throughout Council's process to source alternate kindergarten providers and subsequent transition.	
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2 Occasional Care at the Netball Centre Review

The review of Occasional Care Services provided by Council was undertaken over two phases. Following the initial review of occasional care services offered at three sites, Council resolved on 23 May 2022 to:

1. Cease to provide occasional care at Knox Family and Children’s Centre (KCFC) Wantirna South and Rowville Community Centre on and from 30 June 2022.
2. Continue to be a service provider of occasional care at Knox Regional Netball Centre subject to:
 - a. a service review undertaken approximately in the next 12 months; and
 - b. a further report being presented to Council to determine the longer-term future of this service.

A subsequent review of the occasional care services at Knox Regional Netball Centre was undertaken and a final report was presented at a Council meeting on 27 November 2023.

Implementation Status

Recommendation	Current Status and Actions Taken	Date Completed/Expected Completion Timeline
Having completed a service review of the occasional care (limited hours) service and Council’s role in occasional care service provision; as well as community consultation (July 2023) and consideration of their feedback provided, resolve to cease to be a provider for the occasional care (limited hours) service at Knox Regional Netball Centre.	Complete	08/12/2023

<p>Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person as the Chief Executive Officer selects to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Notify the Department of Education of Council’s decision and to surrender the Service Approval. b. Notify the affected employees of Council’s decision and the impact of the change, in accordance with Council’s relevant industrial agreements. c. Notify all active netball players and children, and the broader Knox Community, of Council’s decision and the change’s impact. 	<p>Complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service approval was surrendered on 08/12/2023 as notification to DE that the service would not resume operation (the service had been suspended since November 2022 due to the redevelopment works being undertaken at the site). • Affected employees were notified on 30/11/2023. • Active netball players and children were notified on 30/11/2023. 	<p>30/11/2023</p>
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3 Youth Counselling Service Review

The review of Youth Counselling service, a sub-service of Youth Services, concluded in April 2024. This review involved an independent review completed in April 2023, followed by further analysis and industry benchmarking completed in November 2023.

The council was presented with three options for consideration at the 26 February 2024 Council Meeting, with the recommendation to formally consider cessation of direct service provision of youth counselling. This was recommended as it would facilitate improved healthcare for clients, remove risks associated with the lack of clinical governance; and given the minimal client caseloads, was not expected to affect sector performance or disadvantage clients concluding their service or transitioning to another provider.

At the Council Meeting on 25 March 2024, Council resolved to cease direct service provision of youth counselling prior to 30 June 2024.

Implementation Status

Recommendation	Current Status and Actions Taken	Date Completed/Expected Completion Timeline
Note the feedback and insight provided as part of the consultation process from the Youth Services staff.	<p>Complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillors were provided with the client feedback collected as part of the service review from March 2023, as well as the formal feedback received from Youth Services team members as part of the change management process undertaken from 27/02/2024 to 12/03/2024 in accordance with Council's Enterprise Agreement #11 2023-2026. This information helped to inform the final decision by Council. 	25/3/2024
Having completed a comprehensive review of Youth Counselling Service, a sub service of Youth Services and Council's role in direct service provision; as well as staff consultation and consideration of feedback	<p>Complete</p>	30/4/2024

<p>provided, resolve to cease direct youth counselling service provision prior to 30/06/2024.</p>		
<p>Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person as the Chief Executive Officer selects) to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Notify the affected employees of Council’s decision and the impact of the change, in accordance with Council’s Enterprise Agreement #11 2023-2026. b. Notify all current clients and their parents/guardians as applicable (all current service users) of Council's decision and the impact of the change. 	<p>Complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After Council made a final decision, officers notified affected employees, clients and their parents/guardians of this outcome – late March to mid April. • Appropriate support including Council’s Employee Assistance Program and outplacement services was provided to impacted staff members. • Officers worked with existing clients to support them to transition to appropriate service providers to ensure continuity of counselling support, and/or managed the conclusion of the counselling service as deemed appropriate by the client. <p>The transition processes ensured compliance with Council’s industrial obligations and legislative requirements.</p>	<p>30/4/2024</p>
<p>Note that officers will progress conversations and work with alternate service providers to transition current clients as required.</p>	<p>Complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council officers worked with key providers of youth counselling services including Knox Headspace and EACH during this time to ensure clients received person-centric care. 	<p>30/4/2024</p>
<p>Note that officers will continue to update Councillors, service users and impacted staff as implementation of the above resolution is progressed.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>30/6/2024</p>

4 Youth Service Review

With the comprehensive review completed of the sub service – youth counselling – in 2023, it was opportune to complete the review of the Youth Services team function early 2024. This service review was undertaken from February 2024 to June 2024 and was the first review undertaken in line with the Service Planning and Review Framework. In March 2024, the Youth Hive within the Knox library also opened – a key catalyst that changed service delivery requirements.

As part of the service review, stakeholder engagement resulted in approximately 500 submissions from young people, parents and care givers and service providers. This information helped identify the three pillars of focus for the future service model – broadening programming for young people and parents, supporting local service providers and advocating with and on behalf of young people.

Upon endorsement from ELT and the Youth Service Review Steering Committee, implementation of the review outcomes commenced which has three key deliverables: proposed structure change, develop service delivery foundations, and develop ongoing service performance monitoring and customer feedback mechanisms. The implementation is planned over the period from July 2024 until September 2025.

Implementation Status

Recommendation	Current Status and Actions Taken	Date Completed/Expected Completion Timeline
Proposed Structure change of Youth Services team.	Complete <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacted staff were notified in August and September 2024. 	01/10/2024
Develop Service delivery foundations.	In Progress This deliverable extends from July 2024 to September 2025 and involves:	30/09/2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The integration of actions into the Youth Service Plan 2024-25 and 2025-26 (Complete). • Development of an annual season program of events focusing on participation, social connection and personal development (In Progress). • Development of a program assessment and evaluation framework and development templates (Complete and being piloted). • Prioritisation, review and update of policies and procedures relating to service delivery (In Progress). • Refinement of local service provider information and Outer East Youth Service Provider network (In Progress). • Completion of post implementation evaluation (Not started). 	
<p>Develop ongoing service performance monitoring and customer feedback mechanisms.</p>	<p>In Progress</p> <p>This deliverable extends from January 2025 to September 2025 and involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of an interim approach to capture customer feedback and performance measures (Complete). • Development of a tool to assist with program/activity performance data capture (In Progress). • Establishment of a Voice of Customer Program (Not Started). • Development of a performance data dashboard using Power BI or similar (Not started). 	<p>30/09/2025</p>

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.
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, 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.

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
<p>1. Three Major Activity Centres Only*</p> <p>* major centres are listed in Attachment 2, which reflects the hierarchy of centres based on classifications outlined in the</p>	<p>This package includes three major activity centres (MACs): Boronia, Mountain Gate & Bayswater.</p> <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 	<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</p>

OPTIONS	SUMMARY	RISKS
<p>Knox Planning Scheme.</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>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 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>

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>

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>

OPTIONS	SUMMARY	RISKS
<p>4. Red Bows Only - Large, Medium & Small Activity Centres + a Community Learning Centre *</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> <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>

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>

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.

- 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.

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

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

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.

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

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

Economic Development



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	Alchester Village, Boronia	Chandler
	Ferntree Gully Village	Dobson
	Knox Gardens, Wantirna South	Scott
	Knoxfield	Friberg
	Rowville Lakes, Rowville	Taylor
	The Basin	Chandler
	Upper Ferntree Gully	Dobson
Small neighbourhood activity centres	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

9 Supplementary Items
Nil.

10 Notices Of Motion

11 Urgent Business

12 Questions Through the Chair

13 Confidential Items

13.1 Knox Central Program Working Position Update

A confidential report is circulated under separate cover as it contains confidential information pursuant to Council's Governance Rules and Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2020, as it relates to:

- Land use planning information regarding property zoning or likely property sales that might encourage or enable speculation in land values if prematurely released.
- Private commercial information, that if released, would unreasonably expose a business to disadvantage because it would release information about the business that is not generally available to their competitors.
- Confidential meeting information, being the records of the Strategic Planning Committee held on 10 March 2015; along with the subsequent purchase price of land that was confidential information for the purposes of section 77 of the Local Government Act 1989;