MINUTES

Mid Month Meeting of Council

Held at the

Civic Centre

511 Burwood Highway

Wantirna South

On

Monday 12 October 2026

The Agenda for the Mid Month Meeting of Council, Monday 12 October 2026, 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 Mid Month Meeting of Council.

The meeting commenced at 7.12pm.

PRESENT:

Cr Paige Kennett (Chairperson)	Chandler Ward
Cr Chris Duncan (Deputy Mayor)	Collier Ward
Cr Peter Lockwood	Baird Ward
Cr Robert Williams	Dinsdale Ward
Cr Meagan Baker	Dobson Ward
Cr Lisa Cooper	Scott Ward
Cr Susan Pearce	Taylor Ward
Cr Glen Atwell	Tirhatuan Ward
Bruce Dobson	Chief Executive Officer
Grant Thorne	Director Infrastructure
Jonathan McNally	Director City Liveability
Judy Chalkley	Director Connected Communities
Matt Kelleher	Director Customer & Performance
Navec Lorkin	Chief Financial Officer
Andrew Dowling	Manager Governance & Risk
Saskia Weerheim	Head of Governance

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1 Apologies And Requests For Leaves Of Absence

An apology was received from Councillor Parisa Considine.

2 Declarations Of Conflict Of Interest

Councillor Baker foreshadowed declaring a material conflict of interest in Item 4.1 Minor Grants Program 2026-27 Monthly Report and Excellence Grants for Individuals Quarter 1 2026-27 report.

Councillor Duncan foreshadowed declaring a general conflict of interest in Item 4.1 Minor Grants Program 2026-27 Monthly Report and Excellence Grants for Individuals Quarter 1 2026-27 report.

3 Confirmation Of Minutes

The Chairperson, Councillor Paige Kennett invited Councillors to raise any opposition to the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 14 September 2026. There being none, the Chairperson declared the Minutes be confirmed.

4 Officer Reports

4.1 Minor Grants Program 2026-27 Monthly Report and Excellence Grants for Individuals Quarter 1 2026-27 report

SUMMARY
This report summarises the grant applications recommended for approval in October 2026 for the 2026-2027 Minor Grants Program. All applications have been assessed against the criteria set out in the Knox City Council Community Grants Guidelines 2026-2027 (Guidelines).

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

This report also summarises the Excellence Grants for Individuals awarded in Quarter 1 of the 2026-2027 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 in full, nine applications under the Minor Grants Program for a total of $17,722.09 as detailed below:

Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
Boronia Buffaloes Basketball Club	Boronia Basketball Club Uniform Bank Funding for 28 basketball uniforms for Under 8 and new players, reducing cost barriers to joining community basketball. Branding and logos not included.	$2,492.00	$2,265.45
St Jude's Parish Scoresby	Establishment of a Men's Club Funding to establish a community Men's Club (equipment, furniture, program materials) to reduce social isolation and support men's wellbeing.	$2,500.00	$2,272.73
Society of St Vincent de Paul (Victoria), Boronia Conference	Christmas Hampers Purchase of Christmas items for hampers, benefiting Knox families in need by easing Christmas expenses.	$2,500.00	$2,272.73

Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
Knox Athletics Club	Knox Track Classic Funding for the 2026 Knox Track Classic, a World Athletics recognised event, boosting local sport, tourism, and community pride.	$1,105.00	$1,105.00
Rowville Tennis Club	Update RTC Purchase of new tennis court nets (full-sized and mini courts) and tennis balls to replace old/worn equipment.	$2,472.00	$2,472.00
Ferntree Gully Falcons Basketball Club	Volunteer First Aid and CPR Training Funding for First Aid and CPR training for 15 club volunteers to strengthen emergency response capacity across basketball venues.	$1,455.00	$1,455.00
Knoxfield Cricket and Sporting Club Inc.	Electronic Equipment Replacement of essential club laptops and iPads stolen during a significant break-in, enabling the club to continue its operations and activities.	$2,500.00	$2,500.00
Rowville Senior Citizens Centre	Purchase of electronics Purchase of a laptop, printer, laptop carry bag and Microsoft office program to update all records from paper to computer.	$1,561.00	$1,561.00
Rowville Baptist Cares Inc.	Community Hub development Purchase of display resources for the Community Corner, helping clients access information about relevant local services and community support.	$2,000.00	$1,818.18
Total		$18,585.00	$17,722.09

2. Partially approve one application under the Minor Grants Program for a total of $2,300.00 as detailed below:

Applicant Name	Project Title	Reason for Partial	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
Hello Zindagi Inc.	A Multicultural Fashion Show Celebrating Melbourne's Cultural Pride A multicultural celebration bringing Knox communities together through cultural fashion, music, performances, storytelling and food to strengthen inclusion and community connection.	Partial funding is recommended as formal quotes were not provided for all requested items before the grant round closed. Funding is therefore limited to the items supported by appropriate quotes submitted within the application period.	$2,500.00	$2,300.00
Total			$2,500.00	$2,300.00

3. Note that should the recommended Minor Grants be approved by Council, the remaining budget for 2026-27 will be $80,006.25 .
4. Note the Excellence Grants for Individuals awarded in Quarter 1 of the 2026-2027 financial year as set out in Attachment 2, with a total value of $2,900.00.

Councillor Baker, declared a material conflict of interest in relation to Item 4.1 and noted a family member is on the governing body of one of the applicants being the Ferntree Gully Falcons basketball club.

Councillor Duncan, declared a general conflict of interest in relation to Item 4.1 noting he is a member of a committee of one of the organisations that was subject to a grant application.

Councillor Baker and Councillor Duncan left the Chamber at 7.17 pm before discussion on Item 4.1.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Williams
SECONDED: Councillor Atwell

RECOMMENDATION
That Council resolve to:
1. Approve in full, nine applications under the Minor Grants Program for a total of $17,722.09 as detailed below:

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St Jude's Parish Scoresby	Establishment of a Men's Club Funding to establish a community Men's Club (equipment, furniture, program materials) to reduce social isolation and support men's wellbeing.	$2,500.00	$2,272.73
Society of St Vincent de Paul (Victoria), Boronia Conference	Christmas Hampers Purchase of Christmas items for hampers, benefiting Knox families in need by easing Christmas expenses.	$2,500.00	$2,272.73
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Ferntree Gully Falcons Basketball Club	Volunteer First Aid and CPR Training Funding for First Aid and CPR training for 15 club volunteers to strengthen emergency response capacity across basketball venues.	$1,455.00	$1,455.00
Knoxfield Cricket and Sporting Club Inc.	Electronic Equipment Replacement of essential club laptops and iPads stolen during a significant break-in,	$2,500.00	$2,500.00

Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
	enabling the club to continue its operations and activities.		
Rowville Senior Citizens Centre	Purchase of electronics Purchase of a laptop, printer, laptop carry bag and Microsoft office program to update all records from paper to computer.	$1,561.00	$1,561.00
Rowville Baptist Cares Inc.	Community Hub development Purchase of display resources for the Community Corner, helping clients access information about relevant local services and community support.	$2,000.00	$1,818.18
Total		$18,585.00	$17,722.09

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Total			$2,500.00	$2,300.00

3. Note that should the recommended Minor Grants be approved by Council, the remaining budget for 2026-27 will be $80,006.25 .

4. Note the Excellence Grants for Individuals awarded in Quarter 1 of the 2026-2027 financial year as set out in Attachment 2, with a total value of $2,900.00.

CARRIED

Councillor Baker and Councillor Duncan returned to the Chamber at 7.20 pm following the vote on Item 4.1

4.2 Knox Winter Shelter Program Proposed Process

SUMMARY
Through the 2026-2027 Council Budget process, funding was allocated to investigate and establish a Winter Shelter Program within Knox in response to increasing homelessness and the absence of any overnight winter accommodation service operating within the municipality. The nearest established Winter Shelter Programs currently operate in Maroondah and Yarra Ranges.

Through the 2026-2027 Council Budget, $80,000 was allocated to investigate, establish and support the Winter Shelter Program. Approximately $26,000 of this allocation will support internal staffing and program administration, leaving up to $54,000 available for delivery in the first year. It is proposed that the Program be established over three years through an initial two-year Service Agreement, with the option to extend the Agreement for a third year subject to the achievement of agreed outcomes and Council's annual budget process.

Officers have undertaken a review of Winter Shelter Programs operating across Victoria, including desktop research, discussions and visits with specialist providers and consideration of previous Council investigations. The research demonstrates that there is no single model for delivering a successful Winter Shelter Program. Programs vary depending on local partnerships, available infrastructure, volunteer capacity, and funding.

Officers recommend Council undertake a targeted Expression of Interest (EOI) process to identify a suitably qualified organisation to establish and deliver a Winter Shelter Program in Knox.

The EOI would outline Council's objectives, minimum service expectations and available funding, allowing organisations to propose the approach they consider best suited to local community needs. Applicants would be responsible for identifying proposed venues and securing all necessary planning, building, occupancy and other regulatory approvals. This report presents a summary of the research, the proposed approach, and the draft Expression of Interest.

RECOMMENDATION
That Council resolve to:

1. Endorse the proposed approach of undertaking a targeted Expression of Interest process to identify a suitably qualified organisation to establish and deliver a Winter Shelter Program in Knox.
2. Endorse the provision of up to $54,000 in 2026–2027 through an initial two-year Service Agreement, with the option to extend the agreement for a third year subject to the achievement of agreed outcomes and Council’s annual budget process, noting that the amount available in subsequent years will be the balance remaining from Council’s annual $80,000 Winter Shelter Program allocation after staffing costs.
3. Endorse the draft Expression of Interest documentation (Attachment 2).

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Cooper
SECONDED: Councillor Baker

That Council resolve to:

1. **Endorse the proposed approach of undertaking a targeted Expression of Interest process to identify a suitably qualified organisation to establish and deliver a Winter Shelter Program in Knox.**
2. **Endorse the provision of up to $54,000 in 2026-2027 through an initial two-year Service Agreement, with the option to extend the agreement for a third year subject to the achievement of agreed outcomes and Council's annual budget process.**
3. **Receive a report following completion of the first year of the Service Agreement summarising the outcomes achieved and the budget required to deliver the second year of the program inclusive of the Service Agreement funding and staffing costs, noting Council's operating budget includes an annual allocation of $80,000 for the Winter Shelter Program.**
4. **Endorse the draft Expression of Interest documentation (Attachment 2).**

PROCEDURAL MOTION

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED: Councillor Williams
SECONDED: Councillor Atwell

That Council resolve to adjourn for five minutes.

CARRIED

The Meeting was adjourned at 7:22 pm and resumed at 7:40 pm with all Councillors present.

The substantive motion was PUT and CARRIED

5 Notices Of Motion

Nil.

6 Supplementary Items

6.1 Recruitment and Appointment of Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

SUMMARY
In August 2026 Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Bruce Dobson, advised Mayor Paige Kennett, and Councillors, of his decision to resign from his position of CEO, effective mid-end January 2027.

The Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Policy states that:

- The Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Committee will identify an Executive Search Consultant to run the recruitment process; and
- The Committee will make a recommendation to Council in relation to recommending the identified Executive Search Consultant.

The Policy also confirms that Council will appoint the Executive Search Consultant by resolution at a Council meeting.

This report provides a recommendation to appoint an executive search and recruitment firm.

RECOMMENDATION
{recommendation-start-do-not-remove}
That Council:

1. Acknowledges the resignation of Mr Bruce Dobson as Council's Chief Executive Officer, and notes that the resignation is effective from mid-January 2027.
2. Records its appreciation to Mr Dobson for his services to Council and the Knox community in his capacity as Council's Chief Executive Officer since September 2021.
3. In accordance with the Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Policy, appoints Gem Executive Pty Ltd as the Executive Search Consultant for the recruitment of Council's next Chief Executive Officer.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Atwell
SECONDED: Councillor Pearce

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Acknowledges the resignation of Mr Bruce Dobson as Council's Chief Executive Officer, and

notes that the resignation is effective from mid-January 2027.

2. **Records its appreciation to Mr Dobson for his services to Council and the Knox community in his capacity as Council's Chief Executive Officer since September 2021.**
3. **In accordance with the Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Policy, appoints Gem Executive Pty Ltd as the Executive Search Consultant for the recruitment of Council's next Chief Executive Officer.**

CARRIED

7 Urgent Business

Nil.

8 Confidential Items

Nil.

MEETING CLOSED AT 7.48 PM

Minutes of Meeting confirmed at the
Mid Month Meeting of Council
held on Monday, 9 November 2026

……
Chairperson

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

AGENDA

Mid Month Meeting of Council

To be held at the

Civic Centre

511 Burwood Highway

Wantirna South

On

Monday 12 October 2026 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 Mid Month Meeting of Council on Monday 14 September 2026

4 Officer Reports

4.1 Minor Grants Program 2026-27 Monthly Report and Excellence Grants for Individuals Quarter 1 2026-27 report

Final Report Destination: Mid Month
Paper Type: For Decision
Author: Community Grants Officer, Bryony Lee
Senior Community Grants Officer, Kim Johnstone
PA to Mayor and Councillors, Eleonore Smith
Manager: Manager Community Strengthening, Kerryn Jansons
Manager Governance and Risk, Andrew Dowling
Executive: Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley
Director Customer and Performance, Matt Kelleher

SUMMARY
This report summarises the grant applications recommended for approval in October 2026 for the 2026-2027 Minor Grants Program. All applications have been assessed against the criteria set out in the Knox City Council Community Grants Guidelines 2026-2027 (Guidelines).

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Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
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Total		**$18,585.00**	**$17,722.09**

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Total			**$2,500.00**	**$2,300.00**

3. Note that should the recommended Minor Grants be approved by Council, the remaining budget for 2026-27 will be $80,006.25 .
4. Note the Excellence Grants for Individuals awarded in Quarter 1 of the 2026-2027 financial year as set out in Attachment 2, with a total value of $2,900.00.

1. DISCUSSION

1.1 Minor Grants Program

1.1.1 Background

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 April 2026), 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

Ten applications have been assessed this month, requesting grants totaling $21,085.00. Of the ten applications, ten are recommended for approval, with nine recommended for full funding and one for partial funding. A summary of the projects recommended is in Attachment 1.

1.2 Excellence Grants for Individuals

This report also presents to Council for noting, expenditure under the Excellence Grants for Individuals Program for Quarter 1 of 2026-2027.

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 1, 2026-2027, there have been 9 successful applications for a total value of $2,900.00. Excellence grants were awarded for five international, three interstate and one Victorian event. A summary of the grants is included at Attachment 2.

2. ENGAGEMENT

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

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

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

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 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 2026-27 budget provides $160,614.00 for the Minor Grants Program plus returned grants of $373.34 which increased the budget to $160,987.34.

Funding commitments to date are summarised below:

Yearly Summary 2026-2027	Total Amount Approved at Council Meeting
July 2026	$29,324.54
August 2026	$14,196.28
September 2026	$17,438.18
October 2026	$
November 2026	$
December 2026	$
January 2027	$
February 2027	$
March 2027	$
April 2027	$
May 2027	$
Totals (Year to Date)	$60,959.00

Recommended applications for the October period total $20,022.09.

If approved as recommended, the remaining Minor Grants budget for 2026-27 will total $80,006.25

6.2 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 remaining Excellence Grants budget for 2026-2027 will total $7,100.00.

7. RISKS

Any risks associated with administering the Minor Grant Program, and Excellence Grants for Individuals Program are managed through the implementation of Council's Grant Framework Policy Grant Guidelines and Excellence Grants for Individuals Procedure. All Minor Grants and Excellence for Individuals 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 1.5 - 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 2.4 - 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.

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 - Mid Month Minor Grant Council Report Applications - October 2026 [**4.1.1** - 10 pages]
2. Attachment 2 - Quarter 1 2026-2027 - Excellence Grants for Individuals Applications [**4.1.2** - 1 page]

Attachment 1 - Minor Grant Program Applications
October 2026

Boronia Buffaloes Basketball Club

Application Number	2627-MGP013		
Organisation Name	Boronia Buffaloes Basketball Club		
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program		
Project Title	Boronia Basketball Club Uniform Bank		
Project Start Date	01/01/2027	**Project End Date**	20/12/2027
Knox Beneficiaries	150		
Total Amount Requested	$2492.00		
Request Details	Our project will provide basketball uniforms for Under 8 teams and new players, reducing financial barriers that can prevent families from joining community sport. By ensuring every child has access to a team uniform, we create a more inclusive environment where children can participate regardless of their family's circumstances. No grant funding will be used towards branding costs.		
Community Benefit	This initiative supports Knox Council's Healthy Living objectives by: -Increasing participation in physical activity by removing a cost barrier for children and families. -Promoting inclusion and equity by ensuring all Under 8 and new players have access to a uniform. -Strengthening community connection by helping children and families engage in a welcoming team environment. -Supporting health and wellbeing through regular physical activity, confidence, and belonging. -Improving participation and retention by fostering team identity and positive first experiences. -Building a stronger community by attracting new families to basketball and increasing involvement in local sport.		

Attachment 1 - Minor Grant Program Applications
October 2026

St Jude's Catholic Church Rowville

Application Number	2627-MGP041		
Organisation Name	St Jude's Parish Scoresby		
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program		
Project Title	Establishment of a Men's Club		
Project Start Date	02/11/2026	**Project End Date**	31/08/2027
Knox Beneficiaries	50		
Total Amount Requested	$2500.00		
Request Details	St Jude the Apostle Church is seeking funding to establish a community Men's Club that will provide a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive environment for men of all ages within the Knox community. The Men's Club will offer regular opportunities for social connection, guest speakers, skills-sharing, recreational activities, and wellbeing-focused events designed to reduce social isolation, promote positive mental health, and strengthen community relationships. The program will encourage friendship, peer support, and active participation in community life while fostering a sense of belonging. Grant funding will be used to purchase equipment, furniture and activity resources required to establish and operate the club, including a microwave, fan, heater, kettle, fridge/freezer and dining table. Funding will also support program materials, workshops, guest presentations and community activities. The project aims to create a sustainable community initiative that enhances wellbeing, encourages volunteering and community participation, and provides a welcoming space where men can connect, share experiences, and support one another.		
Community Benefit	The establishment of the St Jude the Apostle Parish Men's Club will provide a valuable opportunity for men across Scoresby and the wider Knox community to come together in a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive environment. The Men's Club will help reduce social isolation by providing regular opportunities for men to build friendships, share experiences, and participate in social, educational, and recreational activities. It will be open to men of all ages and backgrounds, including those who may be retired, living alone, new to the area, or seeking greater social connection. The project will promote positive mental health and wellbeing by encouraging meaningful social interaction, peer support, and participation in activities that foster purpose, confidence, and community engagement. Regular guest speakers, workshops, and community projects will provide opportunities for learning, personal development, and healthy lifestyle discussions.		

Attachment 1 - Minor Grant Program Applications
October 2026

Society of St Vincent de Paul (Victoria), Boronia Conference

Application Number	2627-MGP050		
Organisation Name	Society of St Vincent de Paul (Victoria), Boronia Conference		
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program		
Project Title	Christmas Hampers		
Project Start Date	12/10/2026	**Project End Date**	12/10/2027
Knox Beneficiaries	300		
Total Amount Requested	$2500.00		
Request Details	For the purchase of Christmas items to add to our Hampers.		
Community Benefit	Knox families in need will receive a Hamper which eases the burden of Christmas expenses. The Hampers are greatly appreciated.		

Attachment 1 - Minor Grant Program Applications
October 2026

Knox Athletics Club

Application Number	2627-MGP058		
Organisation Name	Knox Athletics Club		
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program		
Project Title	Knox Track Classic		
Project Start Date	05/11/2026	**Project End Date**	05/11/2026
Knox Beneficiaries	50		
Total Amount Requested	$1105.00		
Request Details	Following the success of our inaugural event last year, grant funding will assist with the delivery of the Knox Track Classic, a World Athletics recognised athletics event held in Knox. The grant funding will be used towards the following event costs: • Officials – $330.00 • Livestream – $850.00 • Athletics Victoria Event Cost – $775.00 As a result, any additional revenue we generate allows us to reinvest in infrastructure, community participation activities, volunteer support, athlete services and promotion, helping to deliver a safe, inclusive and high-quality event that benefits local residents, visitors, businesses and sporting organisations. Please note that Athletics Victoria (AV) is the sole governing body of athletics in Victoria and is the only organisation allowed to provide officials associated with athletics meet. As such, we are only able to provide one quote for the officials, as they are the only provider.		
Community Benefit	The Knox Track Classic delivers significant community benefits by providing local residents with access to a world class sporting event within the City of Knox. The event inspires participation in athletics and healthy, active lifestyles by showcasing elite athletes alongside emerging local talent. It also creates opportunities for local athletes, volunteers, officials and community groups to be directly involved in event delivery and competition. The event attracts visitors from across Victoria, generating economic activity for local businesses including accommodation, hospitality and retail providers. In addition, the Knox Track Classic raises the profile of Knox as a destination for sport and recreation, strengthens community pride, and supports the ongoing development of local sporting pathways by connecting community members with high-performance athletics in an accessible and inclusive environment.		

Attachment 1 - Minor Grant Program Applications
October 2026

Rowville Tennis Club

Application Number	2627-MGP069		
Organisation Name	Rowville tennis club		
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program		
Project Title	Update RTC		
Project Start Date	02/11/2026	**Project End Date**	02/12/2026
Knox Beneficiaries	45		
Total Amount Requested	$2472.00		
Request Details	Purchase of new tennis court equipment, including two 12.3 metre nets for full-sized courts and four custom nets for mini courts (two 8.8 metre, one 6.95 metre and one 5.92 metre). All nets include double mesh across the top six rows and a webbing material headband. The request also includes the purchase of tennis balls. Note: The nets are not considered a fixed asset and are therefore eligible under the grant guidelines. The purchase of tennis balls is also eligible under the guidelines, up to a maximum of $500.		
Community Benefit	Will assist in the operation of Rowville tennis club. Existing nets are old and of need of replacement. Balls required for competition and social tennis		

Attachment 1 - Minor Grant Program Applications
October 2026

Ferntree Gully Falcons Basketball Club

Application Number	2627-MGP070		
Organisation Name	Ferntree Gully Falcons Basketball Club		
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program		
Project Title	Volunteer First Aid and CPR Training		
Project Start Date	28/11/2026	**Project End Date**	30/06/2027
Knox Beneficiaries	15		
Total Amount Requested	$1455.00		
Request Details	The Ferntree Gully Falcons Basketball Club is seeking support to increase the number of volunteers with current First Aid and CPR qualifications. The club operates basketball activities across a range of facilities, and the availability of trained first aid personnel varies between venues. At larger facilities, venue-based first aid support may be available but may not be immediately beside the court. At other facilities, there may not be a first aid-capable person immediately available. Grant funding will be used to provide First Aid and CPR training for 15 club volunteers, including HLTAID009 Provide Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and HLTAID011 Provide First Aid. Training 15 club volunteers will create a broader pool of people equipped to respond to injuries and medical incidents while emergency or venue-based assistance is being arranged. This will strengthen the club's first aid capacity across its basketball activities and provide volunteers with valuable skills that can also benefit the wider community.		
Community Benefit	The project will benefit the community by increasing the number of trained volunteers who can respond to injuries and medical incidents during basketball activities. This will provide an additional level of support for players, coaches, volunteers and families across the different facilities used by the club. Training volunteers also builds skills that can be used outside the club, increasing first aid and CPR capability within the broader community.		

Attachment 1 - Minor Grant Program Applications
October 2026

Hello Zindagi Inc

Application Number	2627-MGP072		
Organisation Name	Hello Zindagi Inc		
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program		
Project Title	A Multicultural Fashion Show Celebrating Melbourne's Cultural Pride		
Project Start Date	24/10/2026	**Project End Date**	24/10/2026
Knox Beneficiaries	90		
Total Amount Requested	$2500.00		
Request Details	A multicultural community celebration by Hello Zindagi Inc. to strengthen social connection, inclusion and cultural understanding in Knox. The project will bring people from diverse cultural backgrounds together through a Multicultural Fashion Show, cultural music and performances, storytelling, food and community networking. Participants will be invited to proudly present their cultural attire and share a short story about their heritage, traditions, values, festivals or food. Music representing different cultures will accompany the presentations, creating an engaging and inclusive experience for audiences of all ages. Grant funding will support venue hire, photography, performances, partial food costs and DJ/AV hire. The venue has been booked in advance; however, payment has not yet been made. The event will provide a welcoming platform for multicultural community organisations, families, volunteers, emerging performers and community leaders to connect, learn from one another and build meaningful relationships. The project will also promote community solidarity through a voluntary fundraising initiative supporting the Nepalese community following the recent crisis. The initiative celebrates diversity while reinforcing a shared sense of belonging, respect, participation and community connection in Knox.		
Community Benefit	The event will provide an inclusive platform for people from diverse cultural backgrounds to connect, participate, celebrate and learn from one another. Through multicultural fashion, music, cultural storytelling, food and networking, residents will be encouraged to share their heritage while developing greater understanding and respect for other cultures. It will: * Strengthen community connection, belonging and social inclusion in Knox. * Give multicultural communities and individuals a platform to showcase their culture, identity. * Create networking and collaboration opportunities among multicultural organisations, volunteers and community leaders. * Reduce cultural barriers and social isolation by providing a free, welcoming and accessible community experience. The event also marks Hello Zindagi Inc.’s 2nd Anniversary, celebrating two years of community service and growth from a community radio initiative into an incorporated organisation creating opportunities for multicultural dialogue, cultural exchange and connection.		

Knoxfield Cricket Club

Attachment 1 - Minor Grant Program Applications
October 2026

Application Number	2627-MGP073		
Organisation Name	Knoxfield Cricket and Sporting Club INC		
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program		
Project Title	Electronic Equipment		
Project Start Date	01/11/2026	**Project End Date**	03/11/2026
Knox Beneficiaries	60		
Total Amount Requested	$2500.00		
Request Details	We are applying for a grant following a significant break-in at the end of the previous cricket season. During the incident, offenders gained access to our equipment shed where club electronics and equipment were stored throughout the off-season. As a result of the break-in, several essential club assets were stolen, including iPads, a laptop, and our FrogBox live-streaming and recording system. The total value of the stolen items exceeded $10,000, creating a substantial financial burden on our volunteer-run community sporting club. We are applying for this grant as the cost of the laptop and ipads will be $2544 so this minor grant is ideal if we are successful.		
Community Benefit	By securing grant funding to cover the cost of replacing part of these electronic goods, the club will be able to minimise the financial impact of the theft and continue investing in the growth and development of our women's and junior cricket programmes as planned. This support will ensure that we can maintain our commitment to providing inclusive sporting opportunities, developing young players, and strengthening community participation without diverting funds away from these important initiatives.		

Attachment 1 - Minor Grant Program Applications
October 2026

Rowville Seniors Citizens Centre

Application Number	2627-MGP074		
Organisation Name	Rowville Seniors Citizens Centre		
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program		
Project Title	Purchase of electronics		
Project Start Date	01/11/2026	**Project End Date**	30/06/2027
Knox Beneficiaries	Approximately 110		
Total Amount Requested	$1561.00		
Request Details	Purchase of laptop, printer, laptop carry bag and Microsoft office progress to update all of our records from paper to computer.		
Community Benefit	These purchases will enable us to more accurately store and keep private all member details. our club prides itself on making all members feel important and valued so being able to quickly and accurately pull up members details (including emergency contacts) when accidents or illnesses occur, check on members who are unwell, recognise birthdays, reminders for meetings or changes of plans, etc.		

Attachment 1 - Minor Grant Program Applications
October 2026

Rowville Baptist Cares Inc

Application Number	2627-MGP076		
Organisation Name	Rowville Baptist Cares Inc		
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program		
Project Title	Community hub development		
Project Start Date	01/11/2026	**Project End Date**	31/01/2027
Knox Beneficiaries	55		
Total Amount Requested	$2000.00		
Request Details	Grant funding will be used to purchase a brochure rack, two display boards and an A3 laminator to create and maintain the Community Corner. These resources will allow information from local services and community organisations to be clearly displayed and regularly updated. This will help clients identify and access other support services that may be relevant to their needs and strengthen connections between the program, local services and the wider community.		
Community Benefit	Greater awareness of locally available supports across a broad range of areas, e.g. financial, health-based, social connection, skill development etc. Also provides greater avenues for service among our team of volunteers who may be unaware of other opportunities to support their local communities		

Attachment 2

Excellence Grants for Individuals – Quarter 1 2026-2027

Application Date	Applicant	Request details	Grant
July			
2026-07-23	Wantirna resident	Daughter selected to represent Victoria at the 2026 School Sport Australia Swimming Championships being held in Melbourne in July	$150
August			
2026-07-29	Lysterfield resident	To defend world title at the 2026 UCI Gran Fondo Cycling World Championships being held in Niseko, Japan in August	$400
September			
2026-07-20	Rowville resident	To represent Australia in the Australian Indoor Cricket Masters Touring Team competing at the 2026 Trans-Tasman Tournament being held in Auckland, New Zealand, in September	$400
2026-07-23	Rowville resident	To represent Australia in the Australian Indoor Cricket Masters Touring Team competing at the 2026 Trans-Tasman Tournament being held in Auckland, New Zealand, in September	$400
2026-07-29	Lysterfield resident	Son selected to compete in the Knox Raiders U14 Boys Team at the Basketball Australia 2026 U14 Club Championships being held in Perth in September	$250
2026-08-10	Ferntree Gully resident	Son selected as member of the Knox Raiders U14 Boys Team to compete at the U14 Boys National Basketball Championship in Perth in September	$250
1016-08-17	Wantirna South resident	Selected to compete at the International Laser Class Association (ILCA) 6 Sailing Women's World Championships being held in Dun Laoghaire, Ireland, in September	$400
October			
2026-07-20	Rowville resident	Daughter selected to represent Australia at the World Skate Games 2026 – Artistic Skating (Senior Ladies Solo Dance) to be held in Paraguay in October	$400
2026-08-21	Wantirna South resident	Daughter selected to compete in the School Sport Victoria U12 Girls Hockey Team competing at the National Championships being held in Newcastle in October	$250
		Total	**$2,900**

4.2 Knox Winter Shelter Program Proposed Process

Final Report Destination: Council
Paper Type: For Decision
Author: Coordinator Community Partnerships and Inclusion, Steph Ashby
Manager: Manager Community Strengthening, Kerryn Jansons
Executive: Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley

SUMMARY
Through the 2026-2027 Council Budget process, funding was allocated to investigate and establish a Winter Shelter Program within Knox in response to increasing homelessness and the absence of any overnight winter accommodation service operating within the municipality. The nearest established Winter Shelter Programs currently operate in Maroondah and Yarra Ranges.

Through the 2026-2027 Council Budget, $80,000 was allocated to investigate, establish and support the Winter Shelter Program. Approximately $26,000 of this allocation will support internal staffing and program administration, leaving up to $54,000 available for delivery in the first year. It is proposed that the Program be established over three years through an initial two-year Service Agreement, with the option to extend the Agreement for a third year subject to the achievement of agreed outcomes and Council's annual budget process.

Officers have undertaken a review of Winter Shelter Programs operating across Victoria, including desktop research, discussions and visits with specialist providers and consideration of previous Council investigations. The research demonstrates that there is no single model for delivering a successful Winter Shelter Program. Programs vary depending on local partnerships, available infrastructure, volunteer capacity, and funding.

Officers recommend Council undertake a targeted Expression of Interest (EOI) process to identify a suitably qualified organisation to establish and deliver a Winter Shelter Program in Knox.

The EOI would outline Council's objectives, minimum service expectations and available funding, allowing organisations to propose the approach they consider best suited to local community needs. Applicants would be responsible for identifying proposed venues and securing all necessary planning, building, occupancy and other regulatory approvals. This report presents a summary of the research, the proposed approach, and the draft Expression of Interest.

RECOMMENDATION
That Council resolve to:
1. Endorse the proposed approach of undertaking a targeted Expression of Interest process to identify a suitably qualified organisation to establish and deliver a Winter Shelter Program in Knox.
2. Endorse the provision of up to $54,000 in 2026–2027 through an initial two-year Service Agreement, with the option to extend the agreement for a third year subject to the achievement of agreed outcomes and Council’s annual budget process, noting that the amount available in subsequent years will be the balance remaining from Council’s annual $80,000 Winter Shelter Program allocation after staffing costs.
3. Endorse the draft Expression of Interest documentation (Attachment 2).

1. DISCUSSION

1.1 Background

Homelessness continues to increase across Victoria, with outer metropolitan municipalities experiencing some of the highest rates of growth. Like many Councils, Knox is experiencing increasing demand for homelessness services as a result of housing affordability pressures, cost-of-living increases, and a shortage of affordable housing.

While a range of homelessness support services operate within Knox, there is currently no overnight Winter Shelter Program available within the municipality during the winter months. Through the 2026-2027 Budget process, Council allocated funding to investigate and establish a local Winter Shelter Program.

To inform this work, Officers undertook a review of Winter Shelter models, previous Council investigations and existing homelessness responses. The findings are detailed in Attachment 1.

1.2 Review Findings

The review conducted confirms there is no single model for delivering a Winter Shelter Program across Victoria. Existing programs differ in their operating arrangements, funding sources, partnerships and venues.

The nearest established programs are located in the Maroondah and Yarra Ranges municipalities. There is currently no equivalent overnight Winter Shelter Program operating within Knox. Several common themes emerged across programs reviewed:

- Programs are often led by charitable organisations with experience working with people experiencing homelessness, and access to volunteers;
- Partnerships between community organisations, volunteers, venue providers, and homelessness services are fundamental to program success;
- Councils typically act as funders, facilitators and contract managers rather than service providers;
- Funding is often provided by Council and other philanthropic sources;
- Dedicated coordination is important to support volunteers, governance and day-to-day operations;
- Securing suitable venues and completing the required approvals can take considerable time;
- Operating models need to reflect the availability and suitability of venues, volunteer capacity and available funding; and
- Winter Shelter Programs are most effective when they operate as part of the broader homelessness service system, connecting guests with housing, health and support services.

1.3 Proposed Approach

It is recommended that Council undertake a targeted Expression of Interest (EOI) process to identify a suitably qualified organisation to establish and deliver a Winter Shelter Program within Knox. The EOI process outlines Council's desired outcomes, funding parameters and minimum service expectations, allowing applicants to propose the delivery model they believe will best respond to local needs.

Council's role would be to:

- Provide funding through a Service Agreement;
- Establish reporting expectations and monitor performance and outcomes;
- Support collaboration across the homelessness sector where appropriate; and
- Administer the EOI and contract management processes.

Applicants would be asked to demonstrate how they propose to:

- Provide safe overnight accommodation during winter (Beginning of June through to end of August, with flexibility due to weather);
- Identify the proposed venue and/or venues intended to host the program and intended operating nights;
- Establish partnerships with relevant homelessness and community organisations;
- Recruit, train and support volunteers, including the number required and skills/experience required;
- Secure all necessary regulatory approvals, including planning, building, local laws and/or any other required approvals;
- Have access to the necessary expertise to secure required regulatory approvals, if applicable;
- Ensure and provide evidence that venue(s) are compliant with regulatory requirements, including safety and amenity requirements, or alternatively provide a clear plan with timeframes and actions outlining how compliance, safety and amenity will be achieved;
- Connect guests with appropriate support services; and
- Monitor and evaluate program outcomes.

Responsibility for investigating venue suitability and obtaining all necessary approvals is the responsibility of the successful applicant and/or participating venue operators. Applicants may choose to use the funding for venue upgrades to meet compliance. Council funding or endorsement of an application does not constitute regulatory approval for the proposed use of any building or property.

The successful organisation may choose to partner with experienced providers where this supports successful program establishment. The lead organisation may also distribute funding to participating venues or delivery partners, subject to appropriate agreements, financial controls and reporting requirements.

Applicants may propose a staged or smaller-scale model, such as operating from a single venue or on selected nights. This recognises that developing partnerships, recruiting volunteers, securing venues and obtaining approvals can take considerable time. Applicants will be required to clearly identify the number of venues, operating nights, and guests they realistically expect to support.

Applications received through the EOI process would be assessed by Council Officers against the published eligibility requirements and assessment criteria. Following assessment, Officers would prepare recommendations for Council’s consideration at the 14 December 2026 Council Meeting.

Further information on the proposed EOI process is provided in Attachment 2.

1.4 Benefits of an Expression of Interest (EOI) Process

A targeted EOI process is considered the preferred approach because it:

- Provides a transparent and equitable process;
- Enables organisations to demonstrate different approaches to delivering the program;
- Allows Council to identify the organisation best placed to achieve the desired outcomes;
- Supports value for money; and
- Establishes clear accountability through a formal Service Agreement.

The EOI will also encourage organisations to leverage existing relationships, additional funding opportunities and community partnerships to maximise the impact of Council's investment.

1.5 Program Expectations

The proposed Winter Shelter Program is intended to be established as a community-based initiative delivered by a suitably qualified external organisation. Council would enter into an initial two-year Service Agreement with the successful organisation, with the option to extend the agreement for a third year subject to the achievement of agreed outcomes and Council's annual budget process.

Through the 2026-2027 Council Budget, Council allocated $80,000 per year to support the investigation, establishment and ongoing administration of the program. Approximately $26,000 of this allocation will support internal staffing and program administration, leaving up to $54,000 available through a Service Agreement in the first year.

Funding available through the Service Agreement in the second year, and in the third year if the extension option is exercised, will be the balance remaining from the annual $80,000 allocation after internal staffing costs. Based on an estimated annual salary increase of 3%, together with progression through the relevant salary band, staffing costs are expected to increase by approximately $1,000 per year. Service Agreement funding will therefore reduce accordingly each year, with the final amount to be confirmed through Council's annual budget process.

Before the conclusion of the initial two-year Service Agreement, Council will review the Program's delivery, performance, outcomes and future funding requirements. The review will inform whether Council exercises the option to extend the Service Agreement for the third year.

Council funding may support program planning, coordination, partnership development, volunteer recruitment and support, venue readiness, program delivery, guest support and referral pathways, monitoring, reporting and other reasonable costs associated with delivering the program. The successful organisation will be accountable to Council for the appropriate use, management and acquittal of all funding.

Research indicates that Winter Shelter Programs across Victoria are typically supported through a combination of local government funding, philanthropy, grants, donations, in-kind contributions and volunteers. Council's contribution is therefore expected to provide a stable funding base while enabling the successful organisation to leverage additional resources and develop a broader, sustainable community response.

The Program's initial operating scale will depend on the availability of suitable venues, completion of necessary approvals, partnership readiness, volunteer capacity and available funding. It may not be realistic for the program to operate every night during its first winter. Applicants will therefore be encouraged to propose an achievable staged model, with the potential for the number of venues and operating nights to increase over time.

2. ENGAGEMENT

Development of the proposed EOI approach has been informed through desktop research, previous Council investigations and consultation with organisations experienced in delivering Winter Shelter Programs, including Stable One and Maroondah Winter Shelter. Site visits have also occurred at both of these shelters to enable officers to understand how the program operates.

A targeted promotion process will be undertaken to promote the Winter Shelter Fund opportunity to suitable organisations who may be interested to apply.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposal supports Council's commitment to strengthening community wellbeing by improving local responses to homelessness during periods of extreme weather.

A Winter Shelter Program has the potential to improve safety and wellbeing for people experiencing homelessness while strengthening pathways into housing, health and support services. The proposed approach also encourages collaboration across the community sector and promotes volunteering and community participation.

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 significant environmental implications associated with the recommendation.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Funding of $80,000 has been allocated through the 2026-2027 Council Budget to support investigation and establishment of a Winter Shelter Program. Approximately $26,000 of this allocation will support internal staffing and program administration, leaving up to $54,000 available for delivery for the first year through a Service Agreement in 2026-2027.

Subject to Council approval, funding would be provided through a Service Agreement with the successful organisation. Council Officers will provide contract management and monitor delivery against agreed outcomes and reporting requirements.

7. RISKS

The proposed approach reduces operational risk by engaging a suitably qualified organisation to establish and deliver the program.

Key risks include:

- No suitable organisations responding to the EOI;
- Delays in securing suitable venues or obtaining required approvals;
- Insufficient volunteer capacity;
- Community expectations exceeding available funding; and
- Long-term sustainability following the pilot period.

These risks will be managed through the EOI assessment process, clearly defined Service Agreement requirements and ongoing contract management and evaluation.

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

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 - Draft Knox Winter Shelter Program - Scoping and Research Paper - C M-2026-10-02 (D [**4.2.1** - 8 pages]
2. Attachment 2 - Draft Knox Winter Shelter Program - Expression of Interest Process - CM - 2026-10-02 [**4.2.2** - 8 pages]

Attachment 1

Winter Shelter Program 2026

Scoping and Research Paper

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1. Background

1.1 Homelessness in Knox

Like many municipalities across Victoria, Knox has experienced increasing rates of homelessness, housing stress and rough sleeping over recent years. In Knox, the number of people experiencing homelessness increased from 365 people in 2016 to 427 people in 2021 (ABS Census). Across Victoria, homelessness increased by approximately 24% between 2016 and 2021, with outer metropolitan areas experiencing some of the fastest growth.

Rising housing costs, limited affordable and social housing, cost-of-living pressures and increasing demand for specialist homelessness services continue to place significant pressure on our community, with disproportionate impacts experienced by people on low incomes, women and children escaping family violence, young people, older people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and people living with complex needs. Demand for social housing continues to outstrip supply, with more than 57,000 households on Victoria's Housing Register as of March 2026, including over 32,000 priority households. By comparison, only around 10,000-12,000 social housing properties become available for allocation each year, meaning demand far exceeds the number of homes that can be offered.[1]

Homelessness extends beyond rough sleeping. Many people experiencing homelessness are living in insecure or temporary accommodation, including couch surfing, rooming houses, crisis accommodation or severely overcrowded housing. This 'hidden homelessness' is often less visible than rough sleeping but represents the largest proportion of people experiencing homelessness.

While specialist homelessness services operate within Knox, current service responses primarily focus on outreach, case management, emergency relief and referral pathways. Council has also identified a gap in assertive outreach services within the municipality and has recently commenced work on a proposed Homelessness Outreach stream to strengthen local responses. Despite these initiatives, there is currently no dedicated overnight winter shelter operating within Knox, leaving people experiencing homelessness particularly vulnerable during periods of extreme cold.

A Winter Shelter Program would complement, rather than duplicate, existing homelessness responses. Winter Shelter Programs are not intended to solve homelessness. Rather, they provide immediate protection during periods of extreme weather while creating opportunities for positive engagement, relationship building and connection with specialist services. Evidence from established programs indicates that providing a safe, welcoming and stable environment can improve engagement with support services and reduce the social isolation often experienced by people sleeping rough.

[1] Homes Victoria

A local Winter Shelter Program would provide temporary shelter during periods of cold, winter weather while supporting participants to access specialist homelessness services, health care and pathways into longer-term housing.

As part of the 2026-27 Councillor Budget process, the Mayor, Cr Paige Kennett, submitted a proposal seeking Council funding to investigate and establish a Winter Shelter Program in Knox. The proposal highlighted increasing homelessness locally, the absence of overnight shelter options, and interest in exploring contemporary partnership models such as those supported by Stable One. Through the 2026-27 budget process, Council allocated funding to investigate and establish a Winter Shelter Program.

1.2 The Role of Local Government

Although homelessness is primarily the responsibility of the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments, local government plays an increasingly important role in responding to homelessness through advocacy, partnership development, service coordination and place-based responses. Recent Victorian local government research found that 86% of councils reported homelessness is worsening within their municipality, while 93% recognised that councils have an important role despite limited dedicated funding.[2]

Across Victoria, councils are increasingly partnering with specialist homelessness providers and community organisations to deliver locally tailored initiatives, including assertive outreach, Winter Shelter Programs, coordinated governance arrangements and advocacy for increased housing supply. These collaborative approaches recognise that while councils are not homelessness service providers, they are well placed to convene partners, identify local service gaps and facilitate community-based responses, in addition to continued advocacy to state government for adequate funding.

2. Objectives

A Winter Shelter Program would seek to:

- Provide safe overnight accommodation during the coldest months of the year for people experiencing homelessness;
- Reduce health and safety risks associated with sleeping rough;
- Improve connections between guests and specialist homelessness, health and community support services;
- Strengthen collaboration between Council, homelessness services, community organisations and community volunteers; and
- Provide an opportunity to better understand local demand for overnight accommodation and inform future service planning.

[2] Homelessness in Victoria, Local Government Insights, MAV

3. Research and Environmental Scan

3.1 Winter Shelter Programs across Victoria

Winter Shelter Programs have operated across Victoria for more than a decade, although delivery models differ depending on local partnerships, available funding and community capacity. Many are funded through a combination of philanthropic and government funding.

Many Victorian programs have evolved over time from volunteer-led initiatives into more structured partnership models with dedicated coordination and stronger governance arrangements. Stable One has played a role in supporting many local communities to establish winter shelters by providing resources, operational guidance and mentoring.

Officers conducted desktop research and met with Stable One and Maroondah Winter Shelter to discuss their operations and governance in detail. Officers have also attended both these programs in person to see how they operate.

3.2 Examples of Victorian Models

Area	Delivery Model	Council Role	Typical Program Timeframe	Cost
Maroondah	Seasonal overnight Winter Shelter operated by local churches and volunteers. Provides overnight accommodation, meals and referrals to support services.	Council promotes the service, facilitates referrals through local networks and supports homelessness partnerships. Service is community operated.	1 June - 31 August (3 months annually), men only program. Community meals operate year-round.	Operating cost is not publicly disclosed. Community, church and volunteer funded. Small council grant is provided annually ($6-7K)
Yarra Ranges	Yarra Valley Winter Shelter (Stable One) provides rotating overnight accommodation through churches, with dinner, breakfast, showers, laundry and service referrals.	Council promotes the service and works with local homelessness partners. Stable One manages program delivery.	1 June - 31 August (3 months annually).	Operating cost is not publicly disclosed. Primarily funded through churches, donations and grants.

Area	Delivery Model	Council Role	Typical Program Timeframe	Cost
Frankston	Church-led Winter Shelter based on the Stable One model, providing overnight accommodation, meals and connections to housing and support services.	Council provides ongoing funding through its Community Service Partnership funding. The service was selected through an EOI process and has a funding agreement.	13-week program (approximately June - August each year). In 2026 the program commenced 1 June.	Council provides $16,520 per annum (plus CPI in years two and three). The program is supplemented through community partnerships, donations and volunteer contributions.
Bendigo	Bendigo Winter Night Shelter (BWNS) provides overnight accommodation, meals and support through a Stable One model, operating from a central venue rather than rotating churches.	Council supports homelessness partnerships.	Winter season annually (typically June-August).	Operating cost is not publicly disclosed. Funded through grants, donations, churches and volunteers.
Banyule	Warm WARM (Warm Winter Accommodation Resource Movement) provides temporary winter accommodation alongside coordinated outreach and housing support through churches and homelessness services.	Council contributes limited funding. Local church agencies coordinate the initiative with specialist homelessness providers and community partners.	Winter accommodation program (approximately June-August annually), with outreach and coordination occurring throughout the year.	Operating cost is not publicly disclosed. Banyule City Council proposing contributing 30K for 26/27 year.

3.3 What model is needed in Knox

The environmental scan demonstrates there is no single model for delivering Winter Shelter Programs across Victoria. However, the most successful programs share several characteristics:

- A specialist lead organisation responsible for overall program coordination;
- Strong partnerships between homelessness services, community organisations, Councils, community facilities and churches;
- Volunteer-supported service delivery with a funded coordinator role;
- Clear governance, policies and risk management arrangements; and
- Referral pathways into specialist homelessness, housing and health services.

Research also indicates that Winter Shelter Programs are most effective when they are viewed as part of a broader homelessness response rather than as a standalone accommodation service.

While overnight shelter provides immediate relief from extreme weather, the longer-term value comes from connecting guests with housing, health and support services that assist them to move towards more stable housing outcomes.

Previous investigations undertaken by Council identified many of these success factors, particularly the need for a specialist organisation to coordinate program delivery, manage volunteers, undertake guest assessment and ensure appropriate governance and risk management.

Collectively, this research suggests that any program in Knox should adopt a partnership model, with Councils role being to contribute funds to the program, while a specialist local organisation leads operational delivery.

4. Potential Delivery Options for Knox

4.1 Option 1: Targeted Expression of Interest (EOI) Process (Preferred)

Under this option, Council would undertake a targeted Expression of Interest (EOI) process to identify a suitably qualified local community organisation to lead the establishment and delivery of a Winter Shelter Program. The successful organisation would enter into a Service Agreement with Council, outlining funding arrangements, program requirements, governance, reporting obligations and performance expectations.

Council's role would be to provide funding, manage the Service Agreement, monitor program delivery and outcomes, and support partnerships across the homelessness sector. The lead organisation would be responsible for establishing and delivering the program, including identifying and securing suitable host venues (such as churches), ensuring these venues are appropriately prepared for overnight accommodation, coordinating volunteers, managing intake

and support, providing or coordinating case management, and meeting all operational and reporting requirements.

This would include establishing governance arrangements, recruiting and training volunteers, implementing operational policies and procedures, undertaking guest assessment processes, ensuring appropriate building compliance, coordinating referrals with specialist homelessness services, and monitoring program outcomes. These functions align with contemporary Victorian Winter Shelter models and reflect the expertise required to safely operate an overnight accommodation service.

The successful organisation may choose to commence with a smaller-scale pilot during the first season before expanding in future years, depending on local demand, volunteer capacity and available venues.

This model builds on the expertise and local knowledge of community organisations while allowing Council to maintain appropriate governance and oversight. It provides a transparent and equitable process for selecting a delivery partner, reduces operational risk for Council, and establishes clear accountability through a formal Service Agreement. It also enables Council to clearly define service expectations and evaluation requirements while allowing flexibility for the lead organisation to develop a model that responds to local needs and available community resources.

4.2 Option 2: Direct funding allocated to Specialist Provider (no EOI)

Under this option, Council would directly allocate funding to one or more previously identified local organisations, without undertaking an EOI process. As with Option 1, Council would enter into a Service Agreement with the selected organisation, who would be responsible for establishing and delivering the Winter Shelter Program, including identifying suitable host venues, coordinating volunteers and managing day-to-day operations.

This approach could enable the program to be established more quickly by leveraging existing relationships and local knowledge. However, it would not provide the same level of transparency or opportunity for other capable organisations to express interest and may limit Council's ability to assess different delivery approaches or identify the organisation best placed to lead the program.

Attachment 2

DRAFT EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

Knox Winter Shelter Program 2026
Establishment and Delivery

1. Background

Knox City Council is seeking Expressions of Interest from suitably qualified organisations to establish and deliver a Winter Shelter Program within the City of Knox.

Through the 2026-27 Council budget process, Council has allocated funding to investigate and establish a local Winter Shelter Program in response to increasing homelessness and the absence of dedicated overnight winter accommodation within the municipality. The nearest established Winter Shelter Programs currently operate in the Maroondah and Yarra Ranges municipalities.

Council recognises that homelessness is primarily the responsibility of the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments. However, local government has an important role in working collaboratively with community organisations, specialist homelessness services and local partners to strengthen local responses and improve outcomes for people experiencing homelessness.

Council is seeking proposals from organisations with the expertise and capacity to design and deliver a Winter Shelter Program that responds to local need and reflects best practice.

Establishing a Winter Shelter Program, including identifying suitable venues and obtaining all necessary approvals can take time. Applicants are therefore encouraged to propose a realistic and achievable delivery model. This may include staged implementation, operation from a limited number of venues or accommodation being provided on selected nights during the initial years of the program.

2. Funding available

Council intends to establish the Knox Winter Shelter Program over three years and enter into an initial two-year Service Agreement with the successful organisation. The Service Agreement will include an option for Council to extend the agreement for a third year, subject to satisfactory performance, achievement of agreed outcomes and Council's annual budget process.

Up to $54,000 is expected to be available in the first year to support the establishment and delivery of the Knox Winter Shelter Program.

Funding available through the Service Agreement in the second year, and in the third year if the extension option is exercised, will be the balance remaining from the annual $80,000 allocation after internal staffing costs. Based on an estimated annual salary increase of 3%, together with progression through the relevant salary band, staffing costs are expected to increase by approximately $1,000 per year. Service Agreement funding will therefore reduce accordingly each year, with the final amount to be confirmed through Council's annual budget process.

Funding may support:

- Program planning and coordination;
- Partnership development;
- Volunteer recruitment, training and support;
- Venue preparation and operational readiness;
- Program delivery;
- Guest support and referral pathways;

- Monitoring, reporting and evaluation; and
- Other reasonable costs directly associated with delivering the program.

Funding will be provided annually, subject to the execution of a Service Agreement and satisfactory performance and reporting.

The successful organisation will be responsible for managing the Council funding and may distribute funding to participating venues or delivery partners where this forms part of the approved delivery model. Any such arrangements must be supported by appropriate agreements, financial controls, accountability requirements and reporting to Council.

Council encourages applicants to demonstrate how they will leverage additional funding, donations, volunteers or community partnerships to strengthen and sustain the program.

3. Objectives

Council is seeking proposals that will:

- Provide safe overnight accommodation for people experiencing homelessness during winter;
- Improve connections to housing, health and support services;
- Build partnerships across the homelessness and community sectors;
- Encourage community participation through volunteering and local partnerships; and
- Generate evidence to inform future homelessness responses within Knox.

4. Scope of the EOI

Applicants are invited to propose a delivery model that best achieves the program objectives. At a minimum, proposals should demonstrate how the organisation will:

- Establish and operate a Winter Shelter Program;
- Identify the proposed venue or venues where overnight accommodation would be provided;
- Demonstrate that proposed venues meet all relevant legislative, regulatory, planning, building, health and safety requirements, or provide a clear and achievable plan for securing compliance and approvals within a specified timeframe;
- Manage and support participating venues and delivery partners;
- Recruit, train and support volunteers;
- Work collaboratively with local homelessness and support services;
- Provide appropriate governance and risk management;
- Connect guests with appropriate housing, health and support services; and
- Monitor and report on program outcomes.

All investigations, applications, permits, approvals and compliance requirements associated with the proposed venues and operating model, including associated costs, will be the responsibility of the successful applicant and participating venue operators. Council funding or endorsement of a proposal does not constitute planning, building, occupancy, public health or other regulatory approval.

Applicants should seek their own professional advice and allow sufficient time to obtain any necessary approvals before services commence.

Council welcomes innovative approaches, including staged implementation or smaller-scale models where these demonstrate a realistic, safe and sustainable response. Applicants must clearly identify the number of venues, nights per week, operating period and approximate number of guests they realistically expect to accommodate during each winter season.

5. Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Be an incorporated not-for-profit organisation;
- Have demonstrated experience working with people experiencing homelessness or vulnerable communities;
- Hold appropriate insurance;
- Demonstrate sound governance and financial management;
- Comply with Child Safe Standards and relevant legislation;
- Have the capacity to enter into a Service Agreement with Council;
- Demonstrate the capacity to manage any funding distributed to participating venues or delivery partners; and
- Deliver services that are inclusive, accessible and non-discriminatory, regardless of a person's religion, beliefs, gender, sexuality, ethnicity or background.

Partnership applications are encouraged. The lead applicant will remain responsible for the performance, compliance, financial management and reporting obligations of the overall program.

6. Assessment Process and Criteria

Organisations will have four weeks, from 13 October to 10 November 2026, to submit an application through the SmartyGrants online portal.

Applications will be assessed by Council officers against the eligibility requirements and assessment criteria outlined in this EOI. Recommendations will be presented to Council for consideration at the Council Meeting on 14 December 2026.

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

Criteria	Weighting
Understanding of the project objectives and local need	15%
Proposed delivery approach	30%
Organisational experience and capability	20%
Partnerships and collaboration	15%
Governance, risk management and compliance	10%
Detailed budget, project costs and demonstrated value for money	10%

Council may invite shortlisted applicants to participate in an interview or provide further information before a final recommendation is made.

Council reserves the right not to award funding if no application sufficiently demonstrates the experience, capacity, compliance arrangements or service model required to achieve the program objectives.

7. EOI Application requirements

Applicants should provide the following information through SmartyGrants:

Organisation overview:

- Organisational background and relevant experience.
- Experience delivering homelessness, crisis accommodation or related programs.
- Organisational governance and financial management arrangements.

Proposed delivery approach:

- How the Winter Shelter Program will operate.
- The proposed number of operating nights, venues, beds and guests.
- How the proposed scale reflects the time, funding and resources available.
- Proposed partnerships (if applicable) and the responsibilities of each partner.
- Volunteer recruitment, training, supervision and support.
- Guest eligibility, intake, safety, support and referral pathways.
- How the program will connect with the broader homelessness service system.

Proposed venues and compliance:

- The address or location of each proposed venue, where known.
- The venue owner or operator and evidence of their support.
- The activities proposed at each venue, including expected operating nights and capacity, where known.
- Evidence that each venue is compliant and suitable for the proposed use.
- Where approvals or compliance requirements have not yet been completed, a detailed plan identifying:
  - the outstanding requirements;
  - the party responsible for completing them;
  - the professional or regulatory advice that will be obtained;
  - expected costs; and
  - the timeframe for achieving compliance before operations commence.

Implementation plan:

- Key milestones leading to the first winter season (1 June 2027).
- A realistic schedule for venue confirmation, approvals, recruitment, training and operational readiness.
- Contingency arrangements if a proposed venue or approval is unavailable or delayed.

Governance and risk:

- Approach to compliance, safety and risk management.
- Proposed governance and program oversight arrangements.
- Approach to safety, incident management, emergency management and risk, including insurance arrangements.
- Management of volunteers, participating venues and partner organisations.

Budget:

- Detailed budget and project costs.
- Proposed distribution of Council funding between the lead organisation, participating venues and partners.
- Additional funding sources, donations or in-kind contributions.

8. Reporting requirements

The successful organisation will enter into a two-year Service Agreement with Knox City Council and will be required to provide:

- Implementation and progress reports;
- Evidence that all necessary venue approvals and compliance requirements have been met before overnight accommodation commences;
- Annual financial acquittals, including reporting on funding distributed to participating venues or partners;
- Program outcome reporting;
- Participation and service data;
- Information on operating nights, accommodation provided, referrals and service connections;
- Incident and risk reporting where required; and
- An evaluation of the program's effectiveness and opportunities for improvement.

Continued annual funding will be subject to Council's budget processes, satisfactory performance, compliance with the Service Agreement and achievement of agreed milestones and outcomes.

9. Timelines

Milestone	**Timing**
EOI opens for 4 weeks	13 October 2026
EOI closes	10 November 2026
Assessment	November 2026
Recommendations taken to Council meeting	14 December 2026
Successful organisation appointed	21 - 24 December 2026
Service agreement commences	December 2026
Program establishment, venue preparation and operational readiness commence	December 2026 – 25 May 2027
Program readiness review completed, including evidence of venue compliance and approvals.	26 May 2027
First Winter Shelter season: Facility opens for overnight homelessness accommodation	Winter 2027 (1 June – 31 August)
Mid-point check-in	November 2027
Second Winter Shelter season: Facility opens for overnight homelessness accommodation	Winter 2028 (1 June – 31 August)
Program review and decision on whether to exercise the option to extend the Service Agreement for year	By November 2028

three	
Initial two-year Service Agreement ends or is extended for year three	December 2028
Third Winter Shelter season, subject to Council exercising the extension option: facility opens for overnight homelessness accommodation	Winter 2029: 1 June–31 August
Extended Service Agreement ends, if the option is exercised	December 2029

5 Notices Of Motion

6 Supplementary Items

7 Urgent Business

8 Confidential Items