# MINUTES

Meeting of Council

Held at the

Civic Centre

511 Burwood Highway

Wantirna South

On

Monday 26 October 2026

The Agenda for the Meeting of Council, Monday 26 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 Meeting of Council.

The meeting commenced at 7:05pm.

**PRESENT:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Cr Paige Kennett (Mayor) | 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 Parisa Considine | Friberg 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 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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*The Chairperson, Councillor Kennett, briefly paused the Council Meeting to ensure the livestream was operating correctly.*

**PROCEDURAL MOTION**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOVED:** **Councillor Atwell**
**SECONDED:** **Councillor Williams**

**That Council adjourn the Meeting for a couple of minutes to ensure the livestream of the Council Meeting is operating correctly.**

**CARRIED**

*The Meeting was adjourned at 7:08 pm and resumed at 7:11 pm with all Councillors present.*

# 1 Apologies And Requests For Leaves Of Absence

Nil.

# 2 Declarations Of Conflict Of Interest

Councillor Pearce foreshadowed declaring a material conflict of interest in Item 8.4 - Knox Community Development Fund 2026-2027 and Community Partnership Fund 2027-2030 Grants Assessment Panel Recommendations.

Councillor Duncan foreshadowed declaring a material conflict of interest in Item 8.4 - Knox Community Development Fund 2026-2027 and Community Partnership Fund 2027-2030 Grants Assessment Panel Recommendations.

Councillor Baker foreshadowed declaring a material conflict of interest in Item 8.4 - Knox Community Development Fund 2026-2027 and Community Partnership Fund 2027-2030 Grants Assessment Panel Recommendations. Cr Baker also foreshadowed making a transparency statement for Items 8.2 - Annual Budget 2027-2028 Community Engagement Report and Public Submissions and 8.8 - Ferntree Gully Cemetery - Masterplan Progression.

Councillor Cooper foreshadowed declaring a general conflict of interest in Item 8.4 - Knox Community Development Fund 2026-2027 and Community Partnership Fund 2027-2030 Grants Assessment Panel Recommendations.

# 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 Monday 28 September 2026. There being none, the Chairperson declared the Minutes be confirmed.

# 4 Presentations, Petitions And Memorials

The Mayor noted that there were no Presentations, Petitions or Memorials.

The Mayor acknowledged Dr Helen Haines following the horrific attack she experienced while carrying out her duties as the Federal Member for Indi.

The Mayor expressed Council's thoughts for Helen, her family, staff and community during this incredibly difficult time, noting that no one should have to face violence while serving the community. The Mayor emphasised that elected representatives must be able to undertake their work, engage with the public and participate in democratic life without fear for their safety.

On behalf of Knox City Council, the Mayor extended heartfelt support to Helen and wished her strength and the very best for her recovery.

# 5 Reports By Councillors

## 5.1 Councillor Pearce

Councillor Pearce reported attending the following:

- Knox United Soccer Club Presentation Day at the Italian Club in Rowville where she congratulated their players, coaches and volunteers.
- Knox Recreation and Leisure Committee Meeting, acknowledging the contributions of the committee members and the valuable feedback they provide.
- Knox Business Awards with Councillor Kennett, noting it was wonderful to network with local businesses who were recognised for their hard work.

Councillor Pearce also:

- Received enquiries from residents relating to parking, trees, footpaths and rubbish collection which have been followed up with Council officers.

## 5.2 Councillor Williams

Councillor Williams reported attending the following:

- Bayswater Strikers Senior Presentation Dinner.
- Knox Historical Society Annual General Meeting with Councillor Kennett, Councillor Duncan and Councillor Baker.
- The Pavilion at Marie Wallace Park in Bayswater with Council staff.
- Knox Community Day at Westfield Knox with Rotary and the Police.
- Integrated Transport Strategy Pop-Ups at Bayswater Train Station and Knox Library regarding transport in Knox.
- Human Advantage Network breakfast at Waverley Social Enterprises which explored the importance of maintaining a human-centred approach to projects involving artificial intelligence.
- Glen Park Community Centre Meeting with Councillor Kennett.
- Knox Infolink's Annual General Meeting and 5th Birthday of the Boronia Community Breakfast Program, congratulating their Board.

Councillor Williams also:

- Noted the Youth Advisory Committee is currently undertaking recruitment for 2027.

### 5.3 Councillor Atwell

Councillor Atwell reported attending the following:

- CEO Recruitment Meetings, acknowledging the Mayor's stewardship through the process.
- A joint meeting of the Knox Disability Advisory Committee and the Early Years Advisory Committee with Councillor Kennett, Councillor Considine and Councillor Baker where the 'Thriving Kids' Commonwealth-funded program was considered along with consultation on Council's draft Public Toilet Management Policy. The committees provided practical insights on light, visibility and handwashing.

Councillor Atwell also:

- Acknowledged the work of Councillor Kennett as Mayor over the past 12 months.
- Acknowledged that an application for a proposed 36 metre telecommunications tower in the Tirhatuan Wetlands has been withdrawn following objections from the Department of Transport, residents and the City of Greater Dandenong, while recognising that revised applications may be sent through.

### 5.4 Councillor Considine

Councillor Considine reported attending the following:

- Opening Ceremony for the Knox Little Athletics 2026/27 Season.
- Carrington Park Pavilion site.
- Joint Meeting of the Knox Disability Advisory Committee and Early Years Advisory Committee.
- Meetings with various residents to hear their concerns and discuss local issues.

### 5.5 Councillor Lockwood

Councillor Lockwood reported attending the following:

- Boronia Probus 50th Anniversary at the Boronia Bowls Club.
- Knox Multicultural Advisory Committee Meeting.
- MAV State Council Meeting with the Chief Executive Officer, covering resolutions on local government funding, infrastructure, community safety, open space, artificial intelligence, homelessness, animal management and other local government priorities.

Councillor Lockwood also:

- Apologised unreservedly for some inappropriate comments he made.
- Noted the attack on Helen Haines MP highlights the importance of kindness and the risks of public life.
- Outlined that the new walkway and green spines near Boronia Mall has been created across Dorset Road which joins Boronia together through the redevelopment of the Boronia Train Station.

**5.6 Councillor Duncan**

Councillor Duncan reported attending the following:

- Knox Recreation and Leisure Committee Meeting.
- Knox Historical Society Annual General Meeting.
- Meeting the State Election Candidates Session at Monbulk with local members.
- Westfield Knox Community Day with Councillor Williams.
- Opening of Outer East Foodshare's new walk-in freezer at Templeton Reserve with Councillor Kennett, made possible through successful grant funding and donations to increase meal storage capacity.
- Attended the Eastern Regional Group of Councils' Meeting, which included the release of a report analysing future community infrastructure needs and projected infrastructure deficits across the outer east over the next 30 years.

**5.7 Councillor Baker**

Councillor Baker reported attended the following:

- CEO Recruitment Meetings.
- Knox Historical Society Annual General Meeting.
- Knox Disability Advisory Committee Meeting.
- Meeting with State Election candidates in Monbulk.
- Knox Historical Society tour of Ferntree Gully Cemetery.

Professional Development – Customer Service Training for Councillors.

### 5.8 Councillor Cooper

Councillor Cooper reported attending the following:

- Professional Development – Customer Service Training for Councillors

### 5.9 Councillor Kennett

Councillor Kennett reported attending the following:

- MAV Local Leaders Series.
- Youth Photography Award Ceremony at Knox Library.
- CEO Recruitment.
- Site Tour of Selectronic Australia.
- ABC Radio – Meet The Mayor Segment.
- Knox Seniors Festival 2026 Opening.
- Knox Historical Society Annual General Meeting.
- Radio Eastern 98.1FM Mayoral Segment.
- Site Visit at the Carrington Pavilion.
- Early Years Advisory Committee Meeting.
- Recreation and Leisure Committee Meeting.
- ALGWA Meeting.
- Launch of the newly built walk-in freezer at Outer East Foodshare.
- Meeting at Rotary Club of Rowville-Lysterfield.
- Eastern Regional Group of Councils Meeting.
- Meeting with Glen Park CEO and Executive Committee.
- Site Visit at Albert Avenue, Boronia with Steve Dimopoulos MP.
- Integrated Transport Strategy Pop-up at Bayswater Train Station and Westfield Knox.
- Knox Community Chess Enthusiasts – ‘Every Move Matters’ Event.
- Westfield Local Hero Winner Announcement.
- Mabels Strategic Review Launch.
- Ongoing Councillor Professional Development – Customer Service Training.
- Knox Historical Society tour of Ferntree Gully Cemetery.
- Knox Infolink Annual General Meeting and 5$^{th}$ Birthday Celebration for the Boronia Community

Breakfast.

Councillor Kennett also:

- Encouraged residents to report any potholes on Council-managed roads through Council's website (noting this does not include state-managed roads). This assists Council in monitoring the effectiveness of its Road Management Plan, which appears to be responding well to reported issues.
- Noted that seven potholes had been reported on Council-managed roads, with five repaired within 41 hours and the remaining two undergoing repair or investigation. Thanked residents for reporting the issues and Council officers for their prompt response.

**PROCEDURAL MOTION**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOVED:** **Councillor Baker**
**SECONDED:** **Councillor Williams**

**That Council adjourn the Meeting for 5 Minutes.**

**CARRIED**

**The Meeting was adjourned at 7:33pm and resumed at 7:37pm with all Councillors present.**

# 6 Planning Matters

## 6.1 Report of Planning Applications Decided Under Delegation 1 September 2026 to 30 September 2026

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 from 1 September 2026 to 30 September 2026 as set out in the officers' report.

**RESOLUTION**

**MOVED:** **Councillor Baker**
**SECONDED:** **Councillor Pearce**

**That Council note the planning applications decided under delegation from 1 September 2026 to 30 September 2026 as set out in the officers' report.**

**CARRIED**

## 6.2 Knox Planning Scheme Review 2026

SUMMARY
The purpose of this report is to advise Council on the Knox Planning Scheme Review 2026 and its recommendations contained in Attachment 1 (the Review). Background information that informed the Review is contained in the Background Report provided at Attachment 2.

RECOMMENDATION
That Council:
1. Endorse the Knox Planning Scheme Review 2026 in accordance with Attachments 1 and 2.
2. Authorise the Chief Executive Office or such person as nominated by the Chief Executive Officer:
    a) to make minor administrative changes as deemed necessary; and
    b) to submit the Knox Planning Scheme Review 2026 to the Minister for Planning in accordance with section 12B(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

*Prior to consideration of this item, the Mayor advised that minor administrative errors had been identified in the funding references in Attachment 1 of the report. The relevant entries in Table 1 (Item 14) and Table 3 (Items 10, 11 and 14) incorrectly referred to projects as "not yet funded" and would be amended to "budget allocated within existing budget". The Mayor noted the corrections were considered minor administrative changes and could be made in accordance with Officer Recommendation 2 with no amendment to the recommendation required.*

**RESOLUTION**

**MOVED: Councillor Atwell**
**SECONDED: Councillor Pearce**

**That Council:**
1. **Endorse the Knox Planning Scheme Review 2026 in accordance with Attachments 1 and 2.**
2. **Authorise the Chief Executive Office or such person as nominated by the Chief Executive Officer:**
    a) **to make minor administrative changes as deemed necessary; and**
    b) **to submit the Knox Planning Scheme Review 2026 to the Minister for Planning in accordance with section 12B(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.**

**CARRIED**

# 7 Public Question Time

Question Time commenced at 7:49pm.

The following questions were raised with Council:

## 7.1 Question One - Jye Batham

**Is Knox City Council considering adopting the IHRA definition of antisemitism or the associated antisemitism toolkit/action plan?**

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- At this time, Knox City Council is not participating in, or considering, the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism or the associated toolkit or action plan. As there is no proposal currently before Council, there are no plans for the matter to be considered or decided by Council.

## 7.2 Question Two - Jye Batham

**If Knox Council were to consider adopting the controversial IHRA definition of antisemitism, how would Council ensure adequate community consultation?**

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- Knox City Council is not considering the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism at this time. Should any consideration be given to community consultation in relation to this matter in the future, it would be undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy 2024–2028.

## 7.3 Question Three - Gillian Wright

**Can the Knox Council give an assurance that residents, employees or groups within Knox that are peacefully advocating for the liberation of Palestinians and an end to the genocide will not be disciplined, sanctioned, silenced or obstructed from peaceful advocacy?**

The Director City Liveability, Jonathan McNally responded:

- Victorians have a legal right to peaceful assembly and public protest under Section 16 of the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act* 2006 (Charter). However, these rights are not absolute and can be legally limited if the limitation is reasonable, necessary, justified, and proportionate in a free and democratic society. Examples of such limitations are placing strict regulations on behaviour, face coverings, and specific disruption tactics during demonstrations.
- Knox City Council cannot give an absolute assurance that no resident, employee or community group will ever face consequences in any circumstance. However, Knox City Council, as a local government authority in Victoria, must act consistently with the Charter and allows a person or group to exercise their right to peaceful assembly and public

protest. The current Amenity Local Law 2020 has no clause regulating a peaceful protest, demonstration, or rally and a person or group does not need a permit. The recently adopted Local Law 2026 includes clauses relating to behaviour on Council controlled land and these clauses are consistent with the Charter.

## 7.4 Question Four - Elizabeth Toscano

**Have the Knox Councillors or any of Knox Council employees been invited to the Local Government Summit against Antisemitism and Social Cohesion conference in Sydney next month, which falls on the 26-27th of November, hosted by the combat antisemitism movement?**

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- Yes. An invitation to attend the 2026 Local Government Summit Against Antisemitism and Social Cohesion was circulated to all local governments, including Knox City Council.

## 7.5 Question Five - Elizabeth Toscano

**If so, will anyone from Knox Council be attending and who would be funding their attendance?**

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

While the invitation was received by Knox City Council, no Council officer will be attending the 2026 event on behalf of Council. Accordingly, there will be no Council funding associated with attendance at the 2026 Summit.

## 7.6 Question Six - Sandra Rolff

**If the plan for a single entity to be given the lease goes ahead in relation to the HV Jones Reserve Community Hall, will there be an opportunity for the community to object before it is set in concrete?**

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- A public Expression of Interest process was undertaken to identify a proposed new not-for-profit tenant for the property. Unlike a planning permit process, leasing and licensing decisions are governed by Council's Leasing and Licencing Policy and do not include a formal public objection process. The proposal will be presented to Council for consideration and a decision at the November 2026 Council meeting. As part of that process, Councillors will consider the relevant information before making a decision.

*Councillor Cooper left the Chamber at 8:03pm during Public Question Time.*

## 7.7 Question Seven - Sandra Rolff

**Why has it been necessary for Knox Council to be so lacking in transparency regarding the planning of the use of the HV Jones Reserve Community Hall, unless they are concerned about community response?**

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- Council has sought to be transparent throughout the process for identifying a future tenant for the HV Jones Reserve Community Hall. A public Expression of Interest process was undertaken in accordance with Council's Leasing and Licencing Policy to identify potential not-for-profit tenants for the facility.
- At this stage, no final decision has been made. A preferred option has been identified through the Expression of Interest process; however, the proposal must still be presented to Council for consideration and a formal decision at the November 2026 Council Meeting.
- Existing user groups have been advised that changes to hall access arrangements may be required depending on the outcome of Council's decision-making process.

*Councillor Cooper returned to the Chamber at 8:05pm during Public Question Time.*

## 7.8 Question Eight - Glenda King

**Although a final decision has not been made yet, is the plan being worked on by Council for the HV Jones Reserve Community Hall to be used by a not-for-profit organisation with the exclusion of other groups in the community?**

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- No final decision has been made about the future use of the HV Jones Reserve Community Hall. A preferred not-for-profit community organisation has been identified through a public Expression of Interest process and it may see a change or impact on the tenants currently using that centre.

## 7.9 Question Nine - Glenda King

**Will Council consider the number of groups that will be affected socially and economically by taking away the general community use of HV Jones Reserve Community Hall?**

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- Should Council approve the proposed lease, the Hall would continue to be used by a not-for-profit community organisation delivering services and benefits to the Knox community, although its use could differ from the current arrangements.
- Officers have been in contact with groups who may be impacted by a change of tenant and would continue to work with and support these groups based on Council’s future decisions.

Public Question Time Concluded at 8:11pm.

# 8 Officer Reports

## 8.1 Knox City Council 2025-2026 Annual Report

SUMMARY
Knox City Council's 2025-2026 draft Annual Report is presented to Council for consideration, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020.

The Annual Report provides an overview of Council's services, achievements, performance and financial position for the 2025-2026 financial year. It supports public transparency with Council's operations and shares the achievements and challenges faced during the financial year.

The Annual Report 2025-2026 includes the financial and performance information achieved for that year. Upon completion of the external audit of the Financial and Performance Statements, the Victorian Auditor-General's Office report was received on 22 September 2026 and have received an unqualified report with the Financial Statements or the Performance Statement.

RECOMMENDATION
That Council resolve to:
1. Endorse the 2025-2026 Annual Report (Attachment 1) in accordance with Sections 98 and 99 of the Local Government Act 2020.
2. Note the 2025-2026 Annual Report will be made available via Council's website.

The Mayor spoke to the Annual Report, noting the following:

- Our Knox community has much to be proud of as we reflect on the achievements of 2025-26 through the adoption of the Annual Report. A significant milestone was the launch of the Council and Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029, shaped by feedback from more than 1,100 community members and setting out our shared priorities for the future.
- Throughout the year, Council continued to deliver essential services and invest in the infrastructure our community relies on. Through the Annual Budget, more than $115 million has been invested in services and facilities, alongside a capital works program of almost $49 million.
- We continued to improve local infrastructure through investments in roads, footpaths, cycling networks, sporting facilities, parks, playgrounds and drainage infrastructure. These projects support an active, connected and accessible community.
- Supporting people at every stage of life remained a priority. This included delivering the biennial Youth Summit, providing young people with an opportunity to share their views on issues important to them and helping inform future youth programs and services.

- Council continued to strengthen community connection through intergenerational programs that brought together residents of different ages through technology support, playgroups, life skills workshops and other community activities designed to reduce social isolation and promote inclusion.
- Responding to climate change remained a focus. During the year, Council delivered energy efficiency upgrades across Council facilities and continued transitioning its fleet towards zero and low-emission vehicles.
- Increasing access to social and affordable housing remained a key advocacy priority. Council continued to work with government and sector partners to support residents and advocate for additional housing and homelessness support services.
- We continued to promote gender equality and focus on an inclusive community through initiatives recognising International Women's Day and the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign.
- Despite ongoing financial pressures, rising costs and the impacts of rate capping, Council remained focused on delivering services, maintaining infrastructure and advocating for the issues that matter most to our community.
- The achievements of 2025-26 year reflect the dedication of Councillors, staff, volunteers, community organisations and residents. On behalf of Council, thank you for your ongoing contribution to making Knox a vibrant, inclusive and resilient community.

**RESOLUTION**

**MOVED:** **Councillor Kennett**
**SECONDED:** **Councillor Atwell**

**That Council resolve to:**

1. **Endorse the 2025-2026 Annual Report (Attachment 1) in accordance with Sections 98 and 99 of the Local Government Act 2020 subject to an amendment on Page 96 to reflect Deputy Mayor Councillor Duncan attended all four meetings of the CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee.**
2. **Note the 2025-2026 Annual Report will be made available via Council's website.**

**CARRIED**

## 8.2 Annual Budget 2027-2028 Community Engagement Report and Public Submissions

SUMMARY
The Annual Planning Cycle for 2027-2028 is currently underway. For a four-week period through July-August 2026, a community engagement program was undertaken to offer insights into the services most valued by the community and actions required to best meet the needs of our community, supporting Council's future 2027-2028 annual budget development.

Engagement activities included an online survey, pop-ups at locations across the municipality, and a targeted engagement from all ten Advisory Committees through a Multi-Advisory Committee Workshop.

The 2027-2028 Annual Plan and Budget engagement process received feedback from 413 participants, providing valuable insights into community priorities and perceptions of Council services. There were eight written submissions, with six community members requesting to attend the Public Submission Meeting held on Monday 5 October 2026.

The Community Engagement Outcome Report (Attachment 1) and public submissions (Attachment 2) will provide input into the current Annual Planning Cycle, including the Annual Budget 2027-2028, the Council and Health and Wellbeing Plan Year Three Actions and Performance Measure targets and annual service planning.

RECOMMENDATION
That Council resolve to:
1. Receive and note the Annual Plan and Budget 2027-2028 Community Engagement report (included as Attachment 1).
2. Receive and note the eight public submissions (included as Attachment 2).

*Councillor Baker made a transparency statement in relation to Item 8.2, noting that she is known to members of the family of one of the submitters of this Report.*

**RESOLUTION**

**MOVED: Councillor Atwell**
**SECONDED: Councillor Baker**

**That Council resolve to:**
**1. Receive and note the Annual Plan and Budget 2027-2028 Community Engagement report (included as Attachment 1).**
**2. Receive and note the eight public submissions (included as Attachment 2).**

**CARRIED**

**PROCEDURAL MOTION**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOVED:** **Councillor Cooper**
**SECONDED:** **Councillor Pearce**

**That Council adjourn the Meeting for 10 Minutes.**

**CARRIED**

**The Meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm and resumed at 8:41pm with all Councillors present.**

## 8.3 Community engagement for Knox Central - future arts, culture and community services

SUMMARY
The 'Heart of Knox' project is at an important point where community and stakeholder engagement will help inform future Council decisions on arts and cultural services and activities and community services that a civic and cultural precinct could offer. The engagement is part of an arts and cultural needs analysis and community services needs analysis, which have both commenced. Consultants have been engaged to undertake the arts and cultural analysis, including targeted stakeholder engagement.

The community engagement has been designed using the information gathered at the Multi-Advisory Committee meeting in July.

This report seeks the Council's approval to commence community engagement for four weeks from Wednesday 4 November to Tuesday 1 December 2026.

RECOMMENDATION
That Council:

1. Approves the commencement of community engagement on arts and culture participation and interests; and community services needs;
2. Notes that key stakeholders will also be engaged as part of the arts and cultural needs analysis and community services needs analysis; and
3. Notes that the results of the engagement and analyses will be reported to Council in 2027 to inform future Council decisions on the Knox Central 'Heart of Knox' civic and community precinct.

**RESOLUTION**

**MOVED:** **Councillor Williams**
**SECONDED:** **Councillor Pearce**

**That Council:**

1. **Approves the commencement of community engagement on arts and culture participation and interests; and community services needs;**
2. **Notes that key stakeholders will also be engaged as part of the arts and cultural needs analysis and community services needs analysis; and**
3. **Notes that the results of the engagement and analyses will be reported to Council in 2027 to inform future Council decisions on the Knox Central 'Heart of Knox' civic and community precinct.**

**CARRIED**

# 8.4 Knox Community Development Fund 2026-2027 and Community Partnership Fund 2027-2030 Grants Assessment Panel Recommendations

SUMMARY
This report presents the recommendations of the Community Grants Assessment Panel for:

- The 2026-2027 Community Development Fund (CDF) Grants Program; and
- The 2027-2030 Community Partnership Fund (CPF) Grants Program.

The recommendations relate to funding for not-for-profit community organisations delivering programs, services and initiatives that benefit the Knox community.

For the CDF, a total of 61 applications were received. Of these:

- Thirty-four applications are recommended for full funding (refer Attachment 1);
- Eight applications are recommended for partial funding (refer Attachment 2);
- Eight applications are not recommended for funding (refer Attachment 3);
- Seven applications did not meet eligibility requirements to proceed to Panel assessment; and
- Four applications were withdrawn.

The total CDF funding recommended is $308,541.98 ($317,148.70 minus the GST adjustment of $8,606.72). This leaves $75,182.02 within the CDF budget. Similar to the approach taken last year, it is proposed that the remaining funds be redirected to other areas of community grant demand.

The Minor Grants Program has awarded approximately $80,000.00 in the first four months of this financial year, with a remaining allocation of $80,000.00 for this financial year, indicating that this grant stream is in high demand. The Grants team is continuing to actively target sporting clubs, seniors' groups and other community groups, providing information on the Minor Grant stream and encouraging groups to apply, which has resulted in a higher than usual uptake of this grant stream. It is recommended that $35,182.02 of the CDF surplus be redirected to this grant stream.

As outlined in the separate Emergency Relief Fund (ERF) report presented to Council, the existing ERF allocation is proposed for emergency relief, with a recommendation that officers investigate opportunities for alternative funding options for a homelessness outreach program with a report presented to a future Council meeting. Officers have identified the remaining CDF allocation as an alternative funding source to support a 12-month pilot Homelessness Outreach Program (HOP).

It is proposed that the remaining $40,000.00 CDF surplus be transferred to the ERF, specifically to support the pilot HOP. This additional funding would enable the outreach pilot to proceed. Officers will continue to advocate to the Victorian Government for increased and sustainable homelessness funding.

For the CPF, a total of 20 applications were received. Of these:

- Two applications are recommended for full funding (refer Attachment 4);
- Five applications are recommended for partial funding (refer Attachment 5);
- Ten applications are not recommended for funding (refer Attachment 6); and
- Three applications did not meet eligibility requirements to proceed to Panel assessment.

The seven applications recommended for CPF funding total $456,011.00 representing the full annual allocation available for the Program.

RECOMMENDATION
That Council:

1. Approve the Community Grants Assessment Panel's recommendations for:
    a. The 2026-2027 Community Development Fund Grants Program, as detailed in Attachments 1-3; and
    b. The 2027-2030 Community Partnership Fund Grants Program, as detailed in Attachments 4-6.
2. Approve the transfer of the remaining $75,182.02 from the 2026-2027 Community Development Fund allocation as follows:
    a. $35,182.02 to the Minor Grants Program; and
    b. $40,000.00 towards the Emergency Relief Fund to support a pilot Homelessness Outreach Program for 12 months, while Officers continue to advocate to the Victorian Government for increased and sustainable funding. A future report will be presented to Council with Guidelines and Selection Criteria.

*The Mayor, Councillor Kennett, noted that a number of conflicts of interest had been foreshadowed in relation to Item 8.4 and advised that, consistent with the conflict of interest exemptions under the Local Government Act 2020 and the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020, following declaration of those conflicts, the motion would be divided to separately consider the relevant grant applications giving rise to those conflicts.*

*Pursuant to Section 130 of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act) and Chapter 5 of the Governance Rules of Knox City Council, Councillor Pearce declared a material conflict of interest in relation to Item 8.4, noting that a full disclosure had been made to the Chief Executive Officer prior to the meeting.*

*Councillor Pearce left the Chamber at 8:52 pm before the discussion and vote on Item 8.4.*

*Pursuant to Section 130 of the Local Government Act 2020 and Chapter 5 of the Governance Rules of Knox City Council, Councillor Baker declared a material conflict of interest in relation to Item 8.4 as her husband is part of the governing body of an applicant, the Ferntree Gully Falcons Basketball Club.*

*Pursuant to Section 130 of the Local Government Act 2020 and Chapter 5 of the Governance Rules of Knox City Council, Councillor Baker declared a general conflict of interest in relation to Item 8.4 as she has a personal connection with a volunteer of the Outer East Honorary Justices who are an applicant in this item.*

*Pursuant to Section 130 of the Local Government Act 2020 and Chapter 5 of the Governance Rules of Knox City Council, Councillor Duncan declared a general conflict of interest in relation to Item 8.4 as he is a member of the Committee of Management of the Ferntree Gully Falcons Basketball Club, who are an applicant in this item.*

*Pursuant to Section 130 of the Local Government Act 2020 and Chapter 5 of the Governance Rules of Knox City Council, Councillor Cooper declared a general conflict of interest in relation to Item 8.4 as she is the Outer East Network Manager of Community Houses, as some of the houses she manages are applicants under this item.*

*Councillor Cooper left the Chamber at 8:53 pm before the discussion and vote on Part One of Item 8.4.*

**RESOLUTION – PART ONE**

**MOVED: Councillor Baker**
**SECONDED: Councillor Duncan**

**That Council approve the Community Grants Assessment Panel's recommendations for:**

1. **The Community Development Fund 2026-27 for:**
    a. **The following applicants, as detailed in Attachment 1: Applications Recommended for funding in full for:**
        i. **Coonara Community House Inc. for:**
            - **Coonara 50th Anniversary Community Festival; and**
            - **Mahjong Connections C/O Coonara Community House Inc. for Coonara Mahjong Connections.**
        ii. **The Basin Community House for:**
            - **Safe Homes, Safe Community, Tag It. Test It. Trust It; and**
            - **40 Years of Community Connection: The Basin Community House Story.**
        iii. **Orana Neighbourhood House for Learn It, Fix It, Save It - Building Financial Resilience in Knox.**
        iv. **Mountain District Learning Centre for CHL Community Gardening.**
    b. **The Basin Community House Inc for Living Well with Diabetes - Knox Community Support Program as detailed in Attachment 3: Applications not recommended for funding.**
2. **The 2027-2030 Community Partnership Fund Grants Program for Coonara Community House for Volunteer Resourcing and Support, as detailed in Attachment 5: Applications Recommended for funding – Partial.**

**CARRIED**

*Councillor Cooper returned to the Chamber at 8:58 pm after the vote on Part One of Item 8.4.*

*Councillor Baker left the Chamber at 8:58 pm before the discussion and vote on Part Two of Item 8.4.*

**RESOLUTION - PART TWO**

**MOVED: Councillor Duncan**
**SECONDED: Councillor Atwell**

**That Council approves the Community Grants Assessment Panel's recommendation for the Community Development Fund 2026-27 for Outer Eastern Honorary Justices Inc. for JP Stamp Supply, as detailed in Attachment 1: Applications Recommended for funding in full.**

**CARRIED**

*Councillor Duncan left the Chamber at 9:00 pm before the discussion and vote on Part Three of Item 8.4.*

**RESOLUTION – PART THREE**

**MOVED: Councillor Atwell**
**SECONDED: Councillor Cooper**

**That Council approves the Community Grants Assessment Panel's recommendations for the Community Development Fund 2026-27 for Ferntree Gully Falcons Basketball Club for Girls Basketball Skills and Participation Program, as detailed in Attachment 3: Applications not recommended for funding.**

**CARRIED**

*Councillor Baker returned to the Chamber at 9:01 pm following the vote on Part Three of item 8.4.*

*Councillor Duncan returned to the Chamber at 9:01 pm following the vote on Part Three of item 8.4.*

*Councillor Cooper left the Chamber at 9:07 pm during the discussion on Part Four of item 8.4.*

**RESOLUTION – PART FOUR**

**MOVED: Councillor Williams**
**SECONDED: Councillor Baker**

**That Council:**

**1. Approve the remaining Community Grants Assessment Panel's recommendations for:**
   **a. The 2026-2027 Community Development Fund Grants Program, as detailed in Attachments 1-3; and**

**b. The 2027-2030 Community Partnership Fund Grants Program, as detailed in Attachments 4-6.**

**2. Approve the transfer of the remaining $75,182.02 from the 2026-2027 Community Development Fund allocation as follows:**

**a. $35,182.02 to the Minor Grants Program; and**

**b. $40,000.00 towards the Emergency Relief Fund to support a pilot Homelessness Outreach Program for 12 months, while Officers continue to advocate to the Victorian Government for increased and sustainable funding. A future report will be presented to Council with Guidelines and Selection Criteria.**

**CARRIED**

*Councillor Pearce returned to the Chamber at 9:11 pm following the vote on item 8.4.*

*Councillor Cooper returned to the Chamber at 9:11 pm following the vote on item 8.4.*

## 8.5 Knox Emergency Relief Fund Grants

SUMMARY
This report presents the preliminary outcomes of the 2025-2026 Emergency Relief Fund (ERF) and seeks Council's direction for the delivery of the Fund in 2026-2027.

The ERF was established in 2025-2026 to provide responsive funding to organisations supporting Knox residents experiencing hardship and financial distress. During its inaugural year, a mid-point review found that the Fund had supported the delivery of essential relief including food, bedding, vouchers, transport assistance, and other emergency relief items. The Fund was fully allocated by November 2025, demonstrating strong community demand.

Council has allocated $150,000 for the Emergency Relief Fund in 2026-2027. This is ongoing funding for future budgets.

Following a review of the inaugural Program, Officers have developed proposed ERF Guidelines for 2026-2027. The Guidelines include a reduced annual funding cap of $10,000 per organisation, clearer eligibility and assessment criteria, and stronger alignment with the Knox Emergency Relief Network (KERN).

Officers, responding to community need, did explore opportunities to fund a homelessness outreach program via the ERF, in response to local service gaps and increasing demand for support for people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. This included consideration of a targeted outreach pilot to improve connections to housing, emergency relief and specialist support services however it is recommended that opportunities to support homelessness outreach will be explored separately through alternative funding sources, partnerships and advocacy.

RECOMMENDATION
That Council:
1. Approve the Knox Emergency Relief Guidelines 2026-2027.
2. Request Officers to explore alternative funding options to support homelessness outreach activities.

**RESOLUTION**

**MOVED: Councillor Williams**
**SECONDED: Councillor Atwell**

**That Council:**
1. **Approve the Knox Emergency Relief Guidelines 2026-2027.**
2. **Note Council's earlier decision at Item 8.4 Knox Community Development Fund 2026-2027 and Community Partnership Fund 2027-2030 Grants Assessment Panel, which allocated $40,000 towards the Emergency Relief Fund to support a pilot Homelessness Outreach Program for 12 months.**

**CARRIED**

## 8.6 Proposed Outdoor Dining Parklet Policy

SUMMARY
This report has been prepared in response to Notice of Motion No. 194 – Outdoor Dining Parklet Policy, adopted by Council at its Meeting of 25 May 2026 which states (in part):

> "Request officers present a report at a future Council Meeting prior to November 2026 with a proposed Outdoor Dining Parklet Policy developed in line with Option 2 as presented to the 27 April 2026 Council meeting."

The proposed Outdoor Dining Policy **(Attachment 1)** has been developed as a standalone policy that complements the existing Street Trading and Outdoor Dining Permit and Licence Agreement processes for the use of Council land. Consistent with Option 2 presented to Council on 27 April 2026 Council Meeting (**Attachment 2)**, the policy incorporates guidance informed by recent learnings from the extensive work undertaken by officers in relation to the original nine parklets. It also draws on benchmarking undertaken across nine local government areas (LGA's) to identify best practice approaches and key considerations relevant to the development of an Outdoor Dining Parklet Policy.

The proposed Outdoor Dining Parklet Policy supports the longer-term activation of outdoor public space, to enhance the vibrancy and attractiveness of local activity centres. It is intended to enable outdoor dining in Knox while balancing associated risks and competing priorities. The Policy has been developed to provide a clear framework to guide decision making for hospitality businesses seeking to expand outdoor dining into public spaces, such as Council owned carparks. Importantly, the Policy promotes the safe and equitable placement of parklets while balancing the activation of public space with the needs and amenity of the surrounding community.

The proposed Policy aims to ensure the consistent and transparent application of process by Council officers, while improving applicants' understanding of the application process, statutory requirements, timelines, and the cost involved in the installation, operation and maintenance of parklets. It should be noted that a procedure and guidelines **(Attachment 3)** have been developed to support the Outdoor Dining Parklet Policy and assist businesses applying for an Outdoor Dining Parklet licence.

Officers recommend the proposed Outdoor Dining Parklet Policy for Council adoption.

RECOMMENDATION
That Council:

1. Adopt the proposed Outdoor Dining Parklet Policy (Attachment 1) developed in line with Option 2 as presented to the 27 April 2026 Council meeting.
2. Note the procedures and guidelines to support the lodgement of Outdoor Dining Parklet applications and decision making in Attachment 3.

**RESOLUTION**

**MOVED:** **Councillor Williams**
**SECONDED:** **Councillor Pearce**

**That Council:**

1. **Adopt the proposed Outdoor Dining Parklet Policy (Attachment 1) developed in line with Option 2 as presented to the 27 April 2026 Council meeting.**
2. **Note the procedures and guidelines to support the lodgement of Outdoor Dining Parklet applications and decision making in Attachment 3.**

**CARRIED**

## 8.7 2027 Council Meeting Schedule

SUMMARY
This report presents the proposed schedule for Council Meetings for 2027 and considers proposed updates to two related Council policies: Council's Meeting Structure and Cycle Policy and the Live Streaming of Public Meetings Policy.

The proposed 2027 Meeting Schedule has been developed having regard to the traditional meeting cycle established under the Meeting Structure and Cycle Policy, with some variations proposed to support the effective planning and conduct of Council's business throughout the year.

The report also proposes updates to the Meeting Structure and Cycle Policy to ensure it remains fit for purpose and reflects current legislative requirements, contemporary meeting practices and the way Council's Meeting Schedule currently operates.

Updates to the Live Streaming of Public Meetings Policy are also proposed to provide greater clarity and ensure the policy appropriately reflects current legislative requirements, technology and Council's approach to providing transparent and accessible public meetings.

Together, the proposed Meeting Schedule and policy updates are intended to provide a clear and contemporary framework for the planning, conduct and accessibility of Council meetings in 2027 and beyond.

RECOMMENDATIONS
That Council resolve to adopt the:
1. 2027 Council Meeting Schedule as set out in Attachment 1.
2. Revised Meeting Structure and Cycle Policy as set out in Attachment 2.
3. Revised Live Streaming of Public Meetings Policy as set out in Attachment 4.

**RESOLUTION**

**MOVED: Councillor Baker**
**SECONDED: Councillor Cooper**

**That Council resolve to adopt the:**
**1. 2027 Council Meeting Schedule as set out in Attachment 1.**
**2. Revised Meeting Structure and Cycle Policy as set out in Attachment 2.**
**3. Revised Live Streaming of Public Meetings Policy as set out in Attachment 4.**

**CARRIED**

## 8.8 Ferntree Gully Cemetery - Masterplan Progression

SUMMARY
The Ferntree Gully Cemetery Masterplan provides a long-term framework for the staged development of the Cemetery, increasing memorialisation capacity, responding to community demand and importantly, supporting its financial sustainability. A copy of the recommendations from the Ferntree Gully Cemetery Masterplan adopted by Council in December 2025 are included at Attachment 1. A precinct-based approach has been adopted to implement the Masterplan, with the Foothills area identified as the first priority as it provides the most straightforward opportunity to commence construction, including proposed niche walls at the rear of the site.

The concept design process has identified an opportunity to progress a project that is well positioned to align with the October round of the Department of Health Cemetery Grants. This report seeks support to progress the supply and construction of three additional niche walls adjacent to the existing Grove niche walls. This project offers a relatively low-cost investment with strong revenue potential, while responding to community demand for additional memorial positions. Importantly, the revenue generated will contribute to funding more complex projects identified through the concept design process, while minimising the impact on the Cemetery Trust's existing funds.

The report also provides an update on the proposed removal and replacement of the existing pencil pines within the Foothills Precinct. Commencement of these works will support the Masterplan's broader objectives of enhancing the cemetery's landscape, increasing shade and creating opportunities for memorialisation through new tree planting.

The concept designs for other Focus Areas within the Foothills Precinct are being further developed, with work continuing to refine potential yields, costs and staging options to support practical implementation over time. The updated designs are expected to be presented to Council in the new year for further consideration.

RECOMMENDATION
That Council:

1. Note the progress of the development of concept designs for the Foothills precinct as detailed in the Officers' report.
2. Approve the installation of three additional niche walls alongside the existing Grove niche walls, in Focus Area Six as detailed in Attachments 2 and 3 in line with Council's adopted Ferntree Gully Cemetery Masterplan, and:
    a. Note that officers will prepare a funding application for the October round of the Department of Health Cemetery Grants for a grant towards supply and construction costs.
    b. Authorise the Mayor, Councillor _____, and Councillor _____, in their capacity as Trust Members, to approve and sign the Department of Health grant application.
    c. Authorise officers to procure the supply and construction of the three additional niche walls under delegation and note that any costs not covered by grant funding will be met from the Cemetery Trust's funds.
3. Authorise officers to progress replacement of the pencil pines in the Foothills Precinct with trees that provide both shade, and memorialisation opportunities in line with Council's adopted Ferntree Gully Cemetery Masterplan.

4. Note that officers will provide further updates on the concept designs and community engagement planning in February/March 2027.

*Councillor Baker made a transparency statement in relation to Item 8.8, noting that she and members of her family hold positions at Ferntree Gully Cemetery, but she did not consider this gave rise to a conflict of interest.*

**RESOLUTION**

**MOVED:** **Councillor Baker**
**SECONDED:** **Councillor Atwell**

**That Council:**

**1. Note the progress of the development of concept designs for the Foothills precinct as detailed in the Officers' report.**

**2. Approve the installation of three additional niche walls alongside the existing Grove niche walls, in Focus Area Six as detailed in Attachments 2 and 3 in line with Council's adopted Ferntree Gully Cemetery Masterplan, and:**

- **a. Note that officers will prepare a funding application for the October round of the Department of Health Cemetery Grants for a grant towards supply and construction costs.**
- **b. Authorise the Mayor, Councillor Baker, and Councillor Considine, in their capacity as Trust Members, to approve and sign the Department of Health grant application.**
- **c. Authorise officers to procure the supply and construction of the three additional niche walls under delegation and note that any costs not covered by grant funding will be met from the Cemetery Trust's funds.**

**3. Authorise officers to progress replacement of the pencil pines in the Foothills Precinct with trees that provide both shade, and memorialisation opportunities in line with Council's adopted Ferntree Gully Cemetery Masterplan.**

**4. Note that officers will provide further updates on the concept designs and community engagement planning in February/March 2027.**

**CARRIED**

# 9 Supplementary Items

Nil.

# 10 Notices Of Motion

Nil.

# 11 Urgent Business

Nil.

# 12 Questions Through the Chair

Nil.

# 13 Confidential Items

Nil.

**MEETING CLOSED AT 9:29 pm**

Minutes of Meeting confirmed at the
Meeting of Council
held on Monday, 23 November 2026

……
Chairperson

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