AGENDA

Mid Month Meeting of Council

To be held at the

Civic Centre

511 Burwood Highway

Wantirna South

On

Monday 9 November 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 12 October 2026

4 Officer Reports

4.1 Minor Grants Program 2026-27 Monthly Report

Final Report Destination: Mid-Month
Paper Type: For Decision
Author: Community Grants Officer, Bryony Lee
Senior Community Grants Officer, Kim Johnstone
Manager: Manager Community Strengthening, Kerryn Jansons
Executive: Director, Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley

SUMMARY
This report summarises the grant applications recommended for approval in November 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.

RECOMMENDATION
That Council resolve to:
1. Approve in full, five applications under the Minor Grants Program for a total of $6,379.68 as detailed below:

Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
Knox Wind Symphony Inc.	**Timpani service** Repair the band's four timpani drums and replace all four drum heads, so the instruments stay available for community concerts, band competitions and school outreach across Knox.	$1,298.00	$1,298.00
Each	**Towards Wellbeing 'Connections Group'** Funding for an inclusive social program supporting 'Towards Wellbeing' participants to reduce isolation, build connections, improve wellbeing and community participation. Purchases include things like card and board games, colouring books, pencils & journals.	$356.35	$323.95

Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
Bayswater Senior Citizens Inc.	**Health & Safety review equipment purchase** Buy one trestle-table trolley and one chair trolley so members (mostly over 70) and hall hirers can store and move tables and chairs safely.	$1,985.00	$1,985.00
The Orchard Church of Christ Inc.	**Accessible Community Seating Upgrade** Lightweight, stackable commercial chairs (some with arms) for community meals and the Coffee Pot Play Cafe, reducing the load on older volunteers and improving accessibility for participants.	$2,500.00	$2,272.73
Knox Obedience Dog Club Inc.	**Acquiring heavy duty carts to move equipment and improve health and safety** Two heavy-duty poly carts to replace worn metal carts used to move ~150kg of tunnels and training equipment from storage to the grounds, reducing injury risk for instructors and volunteers. Note: this group have applied for other minor grants but for small amounts.	$500.00	$500.00
Total		**$6,639.35**	**$6,379.68**

2. Partially approve one application under the Minor Grants Program for a total of $1,890.00 as detailed below:

Applicant Name	Project Title	Reason for Partial	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
Pyramid Spiritual Societies Movement Australia Inc.	**Community Meditation & Wellbeing Program** Funding to help deliver a free Community Meditation and Wellbeing Program in Knox on 12 December 2026, offering guided breath meditation and wisdom-sharing to support mental wellbeing and social connection.	Partial funding is recommended as the application included catering costs exceeding the 20% limit outlined in the Community Grants Guidelines and a $500 refundable venue deposit, which is not considered an eligible grant expense. The recommended funding has been adjusted to exclude the refundable deposit and ensure catering costs comply with the guidelines.	$2,500.00	$1,890.00 comprising $780 for venue hire, $795 for audio-visual equipment, and $315 for catering.
Total				**$1,890.00**

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

Applicant Name	Project Title	Reason for Deferral	Amount Requested
Australian Nagarathar Cultural and Educational Foundation	Thai Poosam Paatha Yaathirai 2027	Application deferred pending clarification of eligibility regarding religious activities, advice from Events and Local Laws teams on event requirements, and further review of expenditure exceeding the 20% catering cap.	$2,500.00
Total			**$2,500.00**

4. Refuse three ineligible applications under the Minor Grants Program requesting a total of $5,947.99 as detailed below:

Applicant Name	Project Title	Reason for Ineligibility	Amount Requested
Boronia K-12 College Parents, Friends & Community Group (auspice: Rotary Club of Boronia Inc.)	Boronia K-12 College Christmas Fete 2026	The applicant has confirmed they are not a not-for-profit organisation and therefore do not meet the eligibility requirements under Council's Community Grants Guidelines.	$1,100.00
Rotary Club of Boronia Inc.	Rotary Club Boronia Youth Skills Shed BHPS	As per the Community Grants Guidelines, organisations can receive a maximum of $2,500 per financial year. Having already received $2,458 in funding this financial year, only $42 remains available under the annual funding cap of $2,500. The current request therefore exceeds the maximum funding limit permitted under the guidelines.	$2,400.00
Knoxfield Cricket and Sporting Club	Equipment Replacement - Square POS system & PA system	As per the Community Grants Guidelines, organisations are only eligible to receive a maximum of $2,500 per financial year. Having already received $2,500 through Minor Grant 2627-MGP073, the organisation has reached its annual funding limit, making the current application ineligible.	$2,447.99
Total			**$5,947.99**

5. Note that should the recommended Minor Grants be approved by Council, the remaining budget for 2026-27 will be $71,892.24.

1. DISCUSSION

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.

1.2 Applications Recommended for Approval

Ten applications have been assessed this month, requesting grants totaling $17,587.34. Of the ten, six are recommended for approval, with five recommended for full funding and one for partial funding. A summary of the projects recommended is in Attachment 1.

1.3 Applications Recommended for Deferral

One application is recommended for deferral to the December 2026 Meeting of Council as we await further information regarding their application:

- Australian Nagarathar Cultural and Educational Foundation.

This group has been encouraged to provide the additional information prior to the deadline for the December 2026 Meeting of Council.

1.4 Applications Recommended Ineligible

Three applications have been assessed as ineligible and are recommended for no funding:

- Boronia K-12 College Parents, Friends & Community Group (auspice: Rotary Club of Boronia Inc.);
- Rotary Club of Boronia Inc.; and
- Knoxfield Cricket and Sporting Club.

2. ENGAGEMENT

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

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

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

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Minor Grants Program allows Council to respond promptly to requests from Knox-based community groups for small amounts of funding to assist in 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.

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

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 $396.73 which increased the budget to $161,010.73.

Funding commitments to date are summarised below:

Yearly Summary 2026-27	Total Amount Approved at Council Meeting
July 2026	$29,324.54
August 2026	$14,196.28
September 2026	$17,438.18
October 2026	$19,889.81
November 2026	$
December 2026	$
January 2027	$
February 2027	$
March 2027	$
April 2027	$
May 2027	$
Totals (Year to Date)	**$80,848.81**

Recommended applications for the November period total $8,269.68.

If approved as recommended, the remaining Minor Grants budget for 2026-27 will total $71,892.24

7. RISKS

Any risks associated with administering the Minor Grant Program are managed through the implementation of Council's Grant Framework Policy Grant Guidelines. All Minor 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 1.2 - Our community can access diverse training and life-long learning opportunities through delivery, promotion and partnerships with relevant organisations.

Embracing connection, inclusion and diversity
Strategy 2.1 - Our community's diverse needs are addressed by ensuring equity and inclusion are considered in decision making and strategic planning.
Strategy 2.4 - There are opportunities for social connection and active living through planning, provision of facilities, program delivery and support for local groups.

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 - November 2026 [**4.1.1** - 6 pages]

Minor Grant Program Applications
November 2026

Knox Wind Symphony

Application Number	2627-MGP017		
Organisation Name	Knox Wind Symphony		
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program		
Project Title	Timpani service		
Project Start Date	01/12/2026	**Project End Date**	31/12/2026
Knox Beneficiaries	1024		
Total Amount Requested	$1298.00		
Request Details	Repair the band's four timpani drums and replace all four drum heads, so the instruments stay available for community concerts, band competitions and school outreach across Knox.		
Community Benefit	The four timpani are vital to the performance of Knox Wind Symphony and Knox Concert Band, a key musical resource that contribute to the cultural vitality of Knox. Without regular servicing and repair, their performance quality and longevity are compromised. This grant will ensure these instruments remain available for community concerts, national and state band competitions, educational outreach activities, and partnerships with schools and local organisations. The result will be improved performance standards, increased opportunities for community engagement in the arts, and the continued delivery of inclusive cultural experiences that enhance community wellbeing and social connection across Knox.		

Minor Grant Program Applications
November 2026

Each

Application Number	2627-MGP059		
Organisation Name	Each		
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program		
Project Title	Towards Wellbeing 'Connections Group'		
Project Start Date	12/11/2026	**Project End Date**	17/12/2026
Knox Beneficiaries	30		
Total Amount Requested	$356.35		
Request Details	This funding request seeks support for social inclusion activities within the Towards Wellbeing Program. Towards Wellbeing participants are directly referred from the Eastern Health Mental Health unit. As per the flyer, the activities are: - Indoor games (board games, card games, etc) - Journaling (requires specialist books) - Mindfulness colouring-in (requires specialist books) - Sleep hygiene discussion and making dream-catchers (requires kits) The activities are run by mental health peer workers with a view to supporting individuals with a similar journey to help reduce stigma and isolation within the local community. These activities will provide opportunities for individuals from the Towards Wellbeing program to connect through shared activities, build meaningful relationships, develop confidence, and strengthen their sense of belonging by normalising engagement within the community. Connections Group activities are a mix of current and new activities. Cost has been an issue to some participants engaging in the past.		
Community Benefit	By facilitating the cost of this basic activities it would foster a sense of being part of the Knox community, with local business owners/operators also benefitting. The program offers medium term support for mental health consumers with complex needs, with the activities outlined hoping to encourage future involvement in the social fabric of Knox. By fostering positive engagement, with the aim that a sense of connection last for years and strengthens people's sense of belonging.		

Minor Grant Program Applications
November 2026

Bayswater Senior Citizens Inc.

Application Number	2627-MGP079		
Organisation Name	Bayswater Senior Citizens Inc.		
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program		
Project Title	Health & Safety review equipment purchase		
Project Start Date	10/11/2026	**Project End Date**	27/11/2026
Knox Beneficiaries	150		
Total Amount Requested	$1985.00		
Request Details	Bayswater seniors has identified a potential Health & Safety issue in relation to the storage of trestle tables and the ability to move and stack and unstack chairs for use in the Hall. Although we have three table trolleys and one chair trolley at present we are storing 10-12 tables stacked against a wall, making it difficult for our members to move them safely as the majority of our members are over the age of 70. We are therefore looking to purchase one more table and chair trolley to reduce any Health & Safety risks.		
Community Benefit	Being able to store and access our equipment more easily and safely will benefit not only our members, but also the groups and organisations who hire our hall on both a regular and casual basis such as the Bayswater Market group and the Disability Disco and Fun Dance group who use the Hall twice a week.		

Minor Grant Program Applications
November 2026

Orchard Church of Christ

Application Number	2627-MGP080		
Organisation Name	Orchard Church of Christ		
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program		
Project Title	Accessible Community Seating Upgrade		
Project Start Date	10/11/2026	**Project End Date**	01/03/2027
Knox Beneficiaries	90%		
Total Amount Requested	$2500.00		
Request Details	Orchard Church of Christ operates community programs in Bayswater, including The Coffee Pot Play Cafe and regular community meals. These programs provide more than food and practical support: they create welcoming, low-cost spaces where local residents can meet others, build friendships and experience a sense of belonging. This is particularly important for people experiencing loneliness, social isolation or reduced community connection. Our existing seating is ageing, heavy and regularly needs to be moved, stacked and reconfigured by volunteers. Many participants and volunteers are older adults, making the weight and accessibility of the current chairs an increasing concern. We are seeking funding to purchase 50 lightweight, durable and stackable commercial chairs, including a proportion of accessible chairs with arms. The new seating will make our shared spaces safer and easier to use, while supporting the continued delivery of inclusive community programs that help people connect, participate and feel part of their local community.		
Community Benefit	The seating upgrade will strengthen Orchard's ability to provide safe, welcoming and accessible spaces where Knox residents can gather, share food and build meaningful community connections. For some participants, a community meal or cafe visit is not simply about receiving food; it may be an important opportunity for regular social contact, conversation and friendship. Comfortable and accessible seating helps people stay, participate and connect, particularly older residents and people with reduced mobility. Lightweight chairs will also reduce the physical demands on volunteers who regularly set up and pack down spaces, while chairs with arms will assist people who find sitting down or standing difficult. Stackable, flexible seating will allow the space to be easily adapted for different programs and group sizes. This practical infrastructure investment will support Orchard's ongoing work reducing isolation, encouraging participation and creating a stronger sense of belonging within the local community.		

Minor Grant Program Applications
November 2026

Knox Obedience Dog Club

Application Number	2627-MGP084		
Organisation Name	Knox Obedience Dog Club		
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program		
Project Title	Acquiring heavy duty carts to move equipment and improve health and safety		
Project Start Date	16/11/2026	**Project End Date**	04/01/2027
Knox Beneficiaries	350		
Total Amount Requested	$500.00		
Request Details	Funding is sought to purchase 2 x Gorilla Carts 200L Poly Dump Carts at $269.00 each, totalling $538.00, to replace ageing, heavy metal carts with deteriorating wheels that are becoming increasingly difficult to manoeuvre. The carts are used to transport tunnels and tunnel bags from the storage garage to the grounds for training sessions and competitions. They are essential for safely moving approximately 150kg of equipment, reducing manual handling risks and the potential for injury. The new carts will improve safety, accessibility and ease of use for members of varying ages and physical abilities, supporting the continued delivery of training and competition activities.		
Community Benefit	The carts provide a much needed tool for moving equipment by our instructors and volunteers, reducing injury risk and providing safe use for members of the community as members of the club on training days, as well as events such as trials and Fun Days. Our club values encourage inclusivity ranging from children to seniors, different ethnicities and the promotion of exercise, dog safety and being a good citizen and equipment requiring the use of these types of carts is used in nearly all training levels every week..		

Minor Grant Program Applications
November 2026

Pyramid Spiritual Societies Movement Australia

Application Number	2627-MGP089		
Organisation Name	Pyramid Spiritual Societies Movement Australia		
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program		
Project Title	Community Meditation & Wellbeing Program		
Project Start Date	12/12/2026	**Project End Date**	12/12/2026
Knox Beneficiaries	40		
Total Amount Requested	$2500.00		
Request Details	PSSM Australia Inc. seeks support to deliver a free Community Meditation and Wellbeing Program in Knox on 12 December 2026. The program aims to improve overall health and mental wellbeing by promoting inclusion, cultural diversity and social connection. The event is not a religious gathering and is not intended to promote any particular religion, religious institution, doctrine or belief system. Rather, it is an inclusive community event that explores the relationship between science, human consciousness, wellbeing, personal experience and our understanding of the world around us. Activities will include guided Anapanasati meditation, focusing on observing the natural breath, and wisdom-sharing sessions covering self-awareness, stress reduction, emotional wellbeing, resilience, compassion, respect and healthy living. Participants will have opportunities to learn simple practices they can continue at home, ask questions and share experiences. The program aims to provide a welcoming and inclusive environment where people from diverse backgrounds and varying levels of meditation experience can participate, connect and learn together. By offering the program free of charge, PSSM Australia Inc. seeks to reduce financial barriers and make meditation and wellbeing education accessible to the Knox community. Funding is sought to support hall hire, food catering and audio-visual requirements for the event.		
Community Benefit	The program will support improving social connection and mental wellbeing by providing free, accessible opportunities for participants to learn and connect. Participants will explore meditation and breathing practices to develop self-awareness, encourage self-reflection and support personal growth. Wisdom-sharing sessions will introduce practical approaches to everyday stress, emotional wellbeing and healthy lifestyle choices. Group activities and discussions will promote compassion, positive thinking, respectful relationships and a sense of peace and community belonging. The program will also create opportunities for community participation, shared learning and meaningful social interaction, helping participants feel more connected to their community.		

4.2 Knox Disability Advisory Committee Membership Recruitment and Annual Report

Final Report Destination: Council
Paper Type: For Decision
Author: Disability and Support Program Lead, Alison Treeby
Manager: Manager Community Access and Support, Gail Power
Executive: Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley

SUMMARY
The Knox Disability Advisory Committee advises Council on strategic disability issues, contributes to inclusive policy development, promotes disability awareness and helps ensure Council practices reflect the needs and rights of people with disabilities and their carers.

This report seeks endorsement of the Knox Disability Advisory Committee on Terms of Reference, with minor administrative changes provided as Attachment 1. The Terms of Reference were considered by the Committee who determined they continued to reflect on the needs and governance of the Committee for a further four years.

This report seeks approval to appoint 11 Committee members – three new and eight returning members—for a two-year term from December 2026 to December 2028. The appointments follow an Expression of Interest and recruitment process conducted in August 2026 to fill 11 vacancies. Refer to Confidential Attachment 2.

Attachment 3 presents a report of the Committee's achievements over the past 12 months.

RECOMMENDATION
That Council:
1. Endorse the Terms of Reference, with minor administrative changes, for a further four years as per Attachment 1.
2. Appoint the following current Knox Disability Advisory Committee members for a second term for the period December 2026 to December 2028 as presented in Confidential Attachment 2:

No.	Name	Category
1		Community Representative
2		Community Representative
3		Community Representative
4		Community Representative
5		Community Representative
6		Community Representative
7		Service Provider/Industry Representative
8		Service Provider/Industry Representative

3. Appoint the following applicants to the Knox Disability Advisory Committee for the period December 2026 to December 2028 as presented in Confidential Attachment 2:

No.	Name	Category
9		Community Representative
10		Community Representative
11		Community Representative

4. Note the achievements of the Committee over the past 12 months as presented in Attachment 3.
5. Thank the outgoing members of the Knox Disability Advisory Committee for their valuable contribution:
    - Shelley Spencer – Community Representative.
    - Emily Dive – Community Representative.
    - Melissa Chapman – Community Representative.

1. DISCUSSION

The Knox Disability Advisory Committee (KDAC), established in 1999, plays a key role in advising Council on strategic issues affecting Knox residents with disabilities and their carers. KDAC provides informed guidance to support Council's decision making on matters of access and inclusion. The Committee also contributes to the monitoring and implementation of the Knox CARES Strategy 2022–2027 which incorporates the Council's Disability Action Plan. In addition to its advisory role, KDAC advocates for the rights of people with disabilities and works to ensure that local services and programs are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to community needs.

1.1 Terms of Reference

The KDAC Terms of Reference (TOR) were last reviewed and endorsed by Council in December 2022. Over the last four years, KDAC has continued to meet and provide Council with advice on access and inclusion related issues.

The TOR for KDAC (refer Attachment 1) is aligned with the Committees Policy adopted by Council in September 2022. This report recommends that Council affirm the continued operation of the KDAC and the TOR for a further four years including a four yearly review.

1.2 KDAC Recruitment

At the end of October 2026, eight members of the Committee came to the end of their first two-year term and one Committee member concluded their second two-year term. Two members have resigned from the Committee over the last year. The remaining five KDAC members' term does not conclude until September 2027.

As outlined in Section 3.1 of the TOR (refer Attachment 1), all members are eligible to re-apply for a second two-year term.

The selection and recruitment of new members for KDAC followed the process outlined in Section 3.1 of the TOR (refer Attachment 1).

The Committee vacancies have occurred due to:

- One Committee member (community representative) coming to the end of their second two-year term on the Committee;
- Two Committee members (community representatives) resigning prior to the end of their term due to work/personal commitments; and
- Eight committee members finishing a two-year term on the Committee.

1.3 Selection Process

The promotion of the Expression of Interest (EOI) process occurred through Council's social media, electronic mail, and via various networks during August 2026. Eight of the current eligible members expressed an interest in a second term on KDAC.

Council received five EOI's, with all applications fully completed and eligible for assessment. One applicant withdrew their application after further consideration. Four applications were received from community representatives with lived experience of disability. The vacant Committee positions to be filled through the selection process included three community representatives with lived experience of disability.

A Selection Panel was established to interview and assess the applicants in accordance with the Committee's TOR. The Selection Panel comprised Councillor Meagan Baker (KDAC Chair) and two Council officers from the Social and Inclusive Communities team.

The following criteria were used when assessing the applicants:

1. Being a Knox resident with background that will help achieve the purpose and objectives of the Knox Disability Advisory Committee as articulated in the Terms of Reference;
2. Demonstration of involvement and efforts to promote disability inclusion within the Knox community;
3. Capacity to communicate effectively with a wide range of individuals; and
4. Experience and/or expertise and demonstrated understanding of the issues facing people with disability and carers.

The Selection Panel met on Monday 14 September and Tuesday 15 September to interview four applicants. Eight current representative applications were assessed as suitable to continue on the Committee due to their active and positive contribution to the Advisory Committee.

The selection process involved reviewing the applicant and their application against the above selection criteria and the applicant's knowledge and experience of disability, as well as their motivation for wishing to join the Committee.

Recommendations and the assessment of applicants are provided in Confidential Attachment 2.

KDAC Achievements – October 2025 to October 2026

KDAC is comprised of members with lived experience of disability and strong, practical knowledge of the issues impacting people with disabilities and their carers. The Committee reflects a diverse range of abilities and perspectives. It meets bi-monthly, with meetings designed to gather feedback and advice on presentations related to key focus areas in the Council and Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029 and Knox CARES Strategy 2022-2027 (including the Disability Action Plan).

The Committee remains highly active, playing a vital role in strengthening Council's response to access and inclusion challenges. Members also contribute by sharing relevant information with community members and local service providers. The annual report provides an overview of the topics discussed and outcomes from the meetings of the Committee (refer Attachment 3).

2. ENGAGEMENT

Council officers invited community members with lived experience of disability to nominate to participate in KDAC. Communications calling for nominees to join the KDAC was placed on the Council's website, distributed through Council community email networks and newsletters, and advertised via Seek Volunteer and Better Impact volunteer websites.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Committee provides input and advice to Council on matters relating to people with a disability. Advising on Council policies, programs and protocols to reflect the needs of residents with disabilities and their carers. The Committee also provides a central point for Council and the Knox community to identify issues relevant to people with disabilities and their carers.

The Committee considers social implications when providing advice to Council, aligned to goals and objectives within the Council and Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029.

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

KDAC provides input and advice to Council on matters relating to environmental and amenity issues as applicable.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The resources required to service the Committee is within the Community Access and Support's operational budget. Council officers also provide administrative support to this Committee.

7. RISKS

The risks associated with Council not consulting with the disability community are:

- Stigma and discrimination – lack of consultation can contribute to stigma and discrimination against individuals with a disability, further marginalising vulnerable populations; and
- Public perception – inadequate response to disability issues can erode public trust and diminish community support for initiatives aimed at addressing access and inclusion.

The focus of KDAC is to inform Council on issues of access and inclusion and promote disability awareness within Council and in the wider community.

8. COUNCIL AND HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN 2025-2029

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

Leading, listening and governing responsibly
Strategy 4.1 - Council demonstrates its accountability through transparent and responsible decision-making and working together productively.
Strategy 4.2 - Our diverse community is informed and has opportunities to participate and provide feedback through clear and meaningful communication and engagement.

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

Attachment 2 is included in the confidential agenda, as it contains confidential information pursuant to Council's Governance Rules and Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2020, as it relates to personal information being the names and details of prospective committee members which would be unreasonable to disclose publicly, or to disclosure before they are appointed.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment 1 - Terms of Reference - Knox Disability Advisory Committee - 2026 - 2030 marked up copy [**4.2.1** - 6 pages]
2. Attachment 3 - Annual Report - Knox Disability Advisory Committee 2026 [**4.2.2** - 4 pages]

Terms of Reference

Knox Disability Advisory Committee

Directorate:	Connected Communities		
Approval by:	Council	Responsible Officer:	~~Team Leader Disability Inclusion~~Disability and Support Program Lead
Approval Date:		Version Number:	1
Review Date:	December 203026		

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Advisory Committee is to promote disability awareness within Council and the wider community and assist Council in the development of policy and planning about issues of access and inclusion.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the Knox Disability Advisory Committee are:

- To report to Council on its work and advise Council of strategic issues regarding Knox residents with disabilities[1], their families and carers;
- To assist Council in the development of policy and action planning about issues of access and inclusion;
- To work with Council officers to ensure that all of Council's policies, programs and protocols reflect the needs and rights of residents with disabilities, their families and carers;
- To provide a central point for Council and the Knox community for the identification of issues relevant to people with disabilities, their families and carers; and
- To promote disability awareness within Council and the wider Knox community.

1

KDAC adopts *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031 definition of disability which states* people with disability include, but are not restricted to, those who have long-term physical, mental, cognitive, intellectual or sensory impairments. People with disability have specific needs, priorities and perspectives based on their individual identities including their gender, age, sexuality, race and cultural background, and can face additional barriers and inequities.

3. Membership, Period of Membership and Method of Appointment

The Knox Disability Advisory Committee shall comprise the following:

- A maximum of 7 community members with a disability;
- A maximum of 4 unpaid carers of a person with a disability;
- A maximum of 4 Industry or professional representatives; and
- 1-2 Councillors

3.1 Selection and Recruitment of Community and Professional Industry Representative Members

The process to appoint community and Industry or professional representatives will be advertised on Council's website, digital platforms and through local networks. Applicants must make application via an expression of interest process.

Submissions will be assessed alongside the following selection criteria:

- Have a lived experience of disability and/or interest in and good working knowledge of the disability sector
- Offer insight into the social, cultural, environmental and economic factors that impact Knox residents with a disability
- Live, work or study in Knox

The approach and method for appointing representatives will include the following:

- Community and Industry or professional members will be selected by a panel comprising a Councillor and 2 Council Officers from the relevant service unit;
- The method of appointment will be via an expression of interest process;
- Members will be appointed for a two year term;
- All members will be eligible to re-apply for appointment, however continuous membership for longer than four years will not be considered; except in special circumstances;
- Council will be responsible for appointing all Councillor, community and professional/industry representative members; and
- Casual vacancies which occur due to community members being unable to complete the full term of their appointments may be filled by co-opting suitable candidates from a previous selection process for the remainder of the previous incumbents' terms. The selection panel will make a recommendation to the CEO, who will have the authority to appoint the recommended candidate to the Committee for the remainder of the previous incumbent's term.

Industry or professional representatives unable to attend a Committee meeting are able to nominate a proxy or alternate member from the organisation they represent. Any proxy attendance should be notified to Council's nominated officer at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. It is expected the appointed industry or professional representative will provide an appropriate briefing of the Committee purpose and objectives and relevant meeting notes to enable active participation and contribution of the proxy representation to the meeting.

The Committee may invite observers to meetings from time to time. This is at the discretion of the Committee.

Guests may also be invited to attend and participate at meetings, this would generally be for a specific purpose and/or specified period of time. This is at the discretion of the Committee.

3.2 Councillors

Council will appoint Councillor representation annually.

Unless otherwise appointed to the Committee by Council, the Mayor is, by virtue of the Office, an ex officio member of the Committee. It is important that whilst the Mayor may not chair these meetings, appropriate recognition should be given to the presence of the Mayor if in attendance.

The role of Councillors is to participate in the meetings, listen to community and stakeholder views and keep the Council informed, through reports on committees by Councillors at Council meetings, on issues of community interest being considered at meetings.

3.3 Council Officers

Council officers will be nominated to support the Committee by the CEO as required to provide advice and administrative support to the Committee.

4. Delegated Authority and Decision Making

The Committee acts in an advisory capacity only and has no delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of Council. The Committee provides advice or makes recommendations to Council and staff to assist them in their decision making.

5. Meeting Procedures

The Committee will meet ~~on a bi-monthly basis~~up to six times a year and an annual schedule of meetings will be agreed upon at the first meeting of the Committee in each year.

The Committee is not required to give public notice of its meetings and its meetings are not open to the public.

Meetings will follow standard meeting procedure protocols, which are in summary:

- Commence on time and conclude by the stated completion time;
- Be scheduled and confirmed in advance with all relevant papers distributed (as appropriate) to each member;
- Encourage fair and respectful discussion;
- Focus on the relevant issues at hand; and
- Provide advice to Council, as far as practicable, on a consensus basis.

Multi-advisory committee meetings will be arranged where ~~From time to time, the Committee may decide that a joint meeting of two or more Council Committees will be~~ beneficial for progressing the work of the Committee or for sharing ideas and providing updates on key issues of relevance in progressing the work of the Council and Health and Wellbeing Plan. Multi-advisory committee meetings are included in the total number of annual KDAC meetings. Such committee meetings will only occur where requested and agreed by two or more Council Committees.

6. Chair

The position of Chairperson shall be held by a Councillor and shall be reviewed annually immediately following Councillor appointments to committees. The position of Chairperson is to be agreed upon between Councillors. When this cannot be achieved, the Mayor of the day shall determine the Chair.

If the Chairperson is not present at a meeting, any other Councillor who has been appointed to the Committee shall be appointed Chairperson. In the absence of any other Councillor representative/s, a staff member appointed by the relevant Director may Chair the meeting.

7. Agendas and Minutes

Agendas and meeting notes must be prepared for each meeting.

The Agenda must be provided to members of the Committee not less than four (4) days before the time fixed for the holding of the meeting.

Officer reports that fail to meet the timelines as detailed above, will then be considered supplementary reports and will only be permitted to be included in the relevant agenda with the approval of the Chair of the Committee.

The Chairperson must arrange for meeting notes of each meeting of the Committee to be kept.

The meeting notes of a Council Committee must:

(a) contain details of the proceedings and recommendations made;

(b) be clearly expressed;

(c) be self-explanatory; and

(d) incorporate relevant reports or a summary of the relevant reports considered by the Committee.

Meeting notes must be:

(a) distributed to all Committee Members within 14 days of the meeting; and

(b) submitted to the next meeting of the Committee for information.

8. Voting

As this is an Advisory Committee, voting on issues is not required. Any recommendations will generally be developed through consensus. Where a matter cannot be agreed the differing opinions should be clearly expressed in the notes of the meeting.

9. Conflict and Interest Provisions

In performing the role of Advisory Committee member, a person must:

- Act with integrity;
- Impartially exercise their responsibilities in the interests of the local community;
- Not improperly seek to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person;
- Treat all persons with respect and have due regard to the opinions, beliefs, rights and responsibilities of other persons;
- Commit to regular attendance at meetings; and
- Not make improper use of information acquired because of their position or release information that the member knows, or should reasonably know, is confidential information.

Meetings of the Advisory Committee will typically constitute a Meeting Conducted under the Auspices of Council pursuant to Council's Governance Rules and Councillors are consequently required to comply with the conflict of interest provisions as set down in the Local Government Act 2020 and Chapter 5 of the Council's Governance Rules.
Councillors must:

- Disclose that conflict of interest by explaining the nature of the conflict of interest to those present immediately before the matter is considered;
- Absent themselves from any discussion of the matter; and
- As soon as practicable, provide the CEO with a written notice recording the nature of the conflict.

Typically, where a member of staff or a community member has a conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest in relation to a matter before the Advisory Committee, they must disclose the matter to the Advisory Committee before the matter is considered or discussed. Disclosure must include the nature of the interest and be recorded in the meeting notes. It will be at the discretion of the Chairperson if the staff and/or community member remains or leaves the room whilst the matter is discussed, and this must also be recorded in the notes of the meeting.
All members of the Advisory Committee must agree to participate in training on the Conflict and Interest provisions. Training shall be provided in consultation with Council's Governance team.

10. Planning and Reporting

The Committee will formulate an annual work plan that aligns with Council's Community Plan and Council Plan and may also highlight any emerging issues which will also be documented. The business of the Committee throughout the ensuing year should align with the work plan and list of emerging issues. From time to time the Committee may be requested to include training or other business in their agendas such as occupational health and safety, emergency management and First Nations matters.

The Committee will prepare a formal report on an annual basis in line with their stated objectives. The report must be adopted by the Committee and should directly reflect the objectives and the performance measures of the Committee as set out in the Terms of Reference. Once adopted by the Committee the report will be presented to Council.

11. Administration Support

Administration support will be provided by the Connected Communities Directorate.

12. Personal Support

The provision of resources for the personal support of Committee members to attend KDAC meetings is provided by Council as required.

13. Contact with the Media

Contact with the Media by Advisory Committee members will be conducted in accordance with the Councillor and Staff Media Policies. Community members should defer any media enquiries to the Chairperson in the first instance and then Council Communications team, if deemed necessary and should take care not to respond as a representative of the Council or Committee.

14. Review Date

The Committee must be reviewed on a regular basis, with a review date generally not exceeding a 4 year period. If the Committee has a relevant function at the end of the standard review period, a report must be presented to Council including a review of the Committee's Terms of Reference and seeking endorsement from Council to continue act for a further period.

15. Meals

Council will provide reasonable meals for the Committee meetings at times that immediately precede, follow or extend through normal meal times. The provision of meals will be determined by the CEO or delegate, and be within the capacity of the relevant department's budget.

16. Administrative Updates

From time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this terms of reference. Where an update does not materially alter this terms of reference, such a change may be made administratively and approved by the Chief Executive Officer. Examples of minor administrative changes include changes to names of Council departments or positions, changes to Federal or State Government department names or legislation; or other minor amendments that do not have material impact on the provisions or intent of the terms of reference. Where any change or update is considered to be a material change, it must be considered by Council or a relevant Delegated Committee.

DRAFT

Disability Advisory Committee Annual Report 2026

The Terms of Reference for the Knox Disability Advisory Committee requires an annual report to be developed that is aligned with the Community and Council Plans and in line with the Committee's objectives, which are:

- To report to Council on its work and advise Council of strategic issues regarding Knox residents with disabilities, their families and carers;
- To assist Council in the development of policy and action planning about issues of access and inclusion;
- To work with Council officers to ensure that all of Council's policies, programs and protocols reflect the needs and rights of residents with disabilities, their families and carers;
- To provide a central point for Council and the Knox community for the identification of issues relevant to people with disabilities, their families and carers; and
- To promote disability awareness within Council and the wider Knox community.

Key Issues considered by the Disability Advisory Committee in 2026

Topic	Action	Outcome
Knox Mobility and Access Action Plan October 2025	Traffic and Transport presented the draft MAAP and thanked KDAC for previous involvement in the development of the plan.	KDAC provided feedback on the draft plan and undertook an activity to priortising the actions listed in the draft MAAP plan.
Interchange Outer East agency overview and update October 2025	Interchange Outer East provided an overview of the services and supports they provide for people with a disability and families in Knox.	KDAC were provided with information to share with networks on a service supporting people with a disability, families and carers in Knox.
Volunteering at Knox events October 2025	Disability Inclusion Team presented Knox Council opportunities for volunteering and sort feedback on inclusive volunteering.	KDAC provided feedback on how Knox Council can ensure volunteering opportunities are accessible and inclusive for people with a disability including training, preparation and support.
Knox Open Space Strategy Dec 2025	Strategic Infrastructure Team provided an overview of the development of Knox Open Space Strategy and sort feedback on priority features to be considered.	KDAC provided feedback and input on the draft strategy including how parks and open spaces can be designed to be more inclusive and accessible. The committee participated in an activity looking at parks of the future.

Topic	Action	Outcome
EACH overview and update Dec 2025	EACH provided an overview of the services provided by EACH to residents in Knox.	KDAC were provided with information on the services and supports EACH provide to community including disability, health, mental health, counselling supports and housing. Committee able to share information with networks regarding services available for people with a disability, families and carers in Knox.
Amenity Local Law review Feb 2026	Local Laws presented the Local Law review and gathered feedback from the group.	KDAC provided feedback on gaps and opportunities to be considered via the review to address access and equity.
Employment opportunities for people with a disability 31 March 2026	Presentation from Belonging Matters Community Employment Program regarding developing individualized employment options.	KDAC informed about an employment program that is based in Knox, not reliant on NDIA funding and available for people with a disability. Information shared with networks.
Knox Council Festivals and Events 2 June 2026	Arts & Cultural Services presented an overview of the program of events and sort feedback on access and inclusion.	KDAC provided feedback on accessibility of Knox Fest and other events including what Knox does well and what we could do better.
Knox Inclusion Logo 2 June 2026	Customer and Communications presented a draft proposal for the development of an inclusion logo for Council communications.	KDAC provided feedback on the draft proposal.
Multi-advisory committee meeting 22 July 2026	Council arranged a multi-advisory committee meeting covering a number of engagement topics.	KDAC attended and provided feedback on - ○ Annual Plan and budget 2027 – 2028 ○ Community Safety ○ Integrated Transport Strategy ○ Green Streets Policy Review ○ Heart of Knox (Knox Central) Valued opportunity to hear views and feedback from other advisory committees and work collaboratively.

Topic	Action	Outcome
Supporting Siblings of children and adults with disability 4 August 2026	Siblings Australia presentation regarding supports and programs they run to support siblings.	Presentation provided information for Council and KDAC to share with networks and disability community to better support families and siblings.
Inclusion messaging 4 August 2026	Disability Inclusion team ran an activity regarding important inclusion messages for staff and community.	Committee members contributed valuable insights and priority messages to support disability inclusion.
Thriving Kids – disability services 6 October 2026	Noahs Arc provided an overview of the changes planned for services for children with a disability.	KDAC were provided with an overview of changes to current funding and services for children under the age of eight with a disability or developmental delay. This is a significant change for the community. Committee discussed impact on local community and services.
Public Toilet Management Plan & Policy 6 October 2026	Major Projects Team presented the draft public toilet management plan and policy.	KDAC provided feedback and discussed barriers to access and potential solutions. Discussion focus on how to make public toilets safer and accessible to the broader community.

October 2025 – October 2026 Meeting Schedule and Agenda Items

- Tuesday 7 October 2025
  - Knox Mobility and Access Action Plan
  - Interchange Outer East overview and update
  - Volunteering at Knox events

- Tuesday 2 December 2025
  - Knox Open Space Strategy
  - EACH overview and update

- Tuesday 3 February 2026
  - Knox Local Law Review
  - KDAC 2026 workplan

- Tuesday 31 March 2026
  - Belonging Matters Community Employment Program
  - KDAC 2026 workplan

- Tuesday 2 June 2026
  - Council festivals and events
  - Knox Inclusion Logo

- Wednesday 22 July – Multi Advisory Committee Meeting
    - Annual Plan and budget 2027 – 2028
    - Community Safety
    - Integrated Transport Strategy
    - Green Streets Policy Review
    - Heart of Knox (Knox Central)

- Tuesday 4 August 2026
    - Support for Siblings
    - KDAC Terms of reference
    - Capturing key inclusion messages

- Tuesday 6 October 2026
    - Thriving Kids
    - Public Toilet Management Plan

Committee membership

The 2026 Committee consisted of ten community members, four industry representatives and two Councillors - Cr Meagan Baker – Chair, Cr Susan Pearce (October 2025) and Cr Glen Atwell (December 2025 – October 2026).

4.3 Knox Local Safety Committee Terms of Reference Update and Roundtable Report

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

SUMMARY
Community safety is an important issue for the Knox community. While recorded crime in Knox remains lower than a decade ago, Knox Community Satisfaction Survey results indicate that perceptions of safety declined between 2024 and 2025, highlighting a gap between actual crime trends and how safe the community feels. Results released in early 2026 suggest these perceptions are beginning to improve, but feeling safe remains important to the community's health and wellbeing.

In response to community interest in safety, Victoria Police partnered with Knox Council to establish the Knox Local Safety Committee (LSC) in November 2025, an initiative of the Neighbourhood Policing Framework. The LSC is driven by Victoria Police and brings together Council, Victoria Police and key local organisations to share information, coordinate responses and support evidence-based crime prevention and community safety initiatives.

In May of 2026, Council also convened the independently facilitated Keeping Knox Safer Roundtable. The Roundtable brought together 44 representatives from Victoria Police, emergency services, local and state government, community and social support services, education, justice, transport, health and trader organisations. Participants considered five areas: homelessness and rough sleeping, family violence, substance use, youth disconnection, and trader and public safety.

An important theme arising from the Roundtable was the difference between recorded crime trends and perceptions of safety. While recorded crime in Knox is approximately 15% lower than a decade ago, perceptions of safety declined in 2025 but improved in the 2026 survey. Participants identified the need for local responses to address both actual safety issues and perceptions of safety, supported by accurate information and without reinforcing stigma towards young people or other vulnerable groups.

The resulting Keeping Knox Safer Roundtable Final Report (Attachment 1, and Summary Report in Attachment 2) identifies three immediate priorities: youth disconnection, family violence, and trader and public safety, and presents recommendations across three tiers:

1. Six short-term opportunities for exploration within six months;
2. Four priority directions to inform the LSC's first 12-month Action Plan; and
3. Seven longer-term strategic recommendations.

Following a request from Victoria Police, as the lead agency of the LSC, the committee's governance arrangements and Terms of Reference were reviewed after its first year of operation and in response to changes in local Victoria Police leadership.

The revised Terms of Reference (Attachment 3) strengthen the LSC's purpose, membership, decision-making, accountability and reporting arrangements. The revised model provides for a smaller, decision-focused core membership while maintaining broader engagement through targeted invitations, circulation of minutes and an annual community safety forum.

Together, the revised Terms of Reference and Roundtable Report provide the governance structure and evidence base needed to develop the LSC's first 12-month Action Plan. The Roundtable recommendations are stakeholder proposals for further consideration and are not proposed as funded or adopted Council commitments through this report. Each recommendation will be assessed for feasibility, responsibility, resource implications and alignment with Council priorities before inclusion in the draft Action Plan.

The revised Terms of Reference will be presented to the LSC for endorsement on 11 November 2026. Development of the 12-month Action Plan will then commence, with the draft Action Plan expected to be presented to Council in early 2027.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Note the draft Keeping Knox Safer Roundtable Report in Attachment 1 (and Summary Report in Attachment 2).
2. Note the revised Local Safety Committee Terms of Reference in Attachment 3.
3. Note that the Roundtable recommendations will inform the development of a 12-month Local Safety Committee Action Plan, to be presented to Council in early 2027 following assessment of feasibility, responsibilities and resource implications.

1. DISCUSSION

1.1 Local Safety Committee Background

Council has a long history in supporting crime prevention initiatives to reduce crime and improve perceptions of safety.

Community safety is a growing concern across Victoria, and this is felt at a local level in Knox. Engagement undertaken for the Council and Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029 found that 77% of respondents identified crime as a concern. Furthermore, data obtained from the Knox Council Community Satisfaction Survey showed a decrease in perceptions of safety from 2024 to 2025:

- In public areas during the day, from 8.6 to 7.9;
- In and around local shopping areas, from 8.1 to 7.5; and
- At night, from 7.2 to 6.5.

Following the 2025 Community Satisfaction Survey results, Council worked collaboratively with key stakeholders to deliver a range of initiatives aimed at improving perceptions of safety and encouraging residents to adopt practical measures to reduce the risk of crime. This included community awareness articles in Knox News highlighting the importance of securing vehicles and homes and maintaining adequate outdoor lighting at night.

Encouragingly, the 2026 Community Satisfaction Survey results did show improvement across all three measures of safety in public places:

- In public areas during the day, from 7.9 to 8.2 out of 10;
- In and around local shopping areas, from 7.5 to 7.7; and
- At night, from 6.5 to 6.9.

The average rating across these three measures increased by 0.3 points. Perceptions of safety in respondents' own homes also rose from 8.2 to 8.3 out of 10. Seventy-five per cent reported feeling "very safe" at home, while two per cent reported feeling "unsafe".

Survey results measure how safe people feel, rather than the level of recorded crime. Recorded crime in Knox is approximately 15% lower than it was a decade ago. Although perceptions have improved in 2026, community safety continues to affect residents' health and wellbeing. The difference between recorded crime trends and community perceptions highlights the need to address safety risks, support people to feel safe and provide accurate, balanced information.

In recognition of increasing community concerns, Notice of Motion No. 184 - Crime Rate and Community Safety was tabled at the Council Meeting held on 25 August 2025, seeking to endorse the Victoria Police initiative to implement a Local Safety Committee (LSC). This Motion was unanimously supported by Councillors. The LSC is an action-focused committee with representatives from Victoria Police, Knox City Council, and local service providers. The inaugural LSC meeting was held on 20 November 2025 and focused on governance and the key priority areas related to safety concerns and shared solutions.

Since the LSC's establishment, two further meetings have been held in February and August 2026, with the May meeting replaced by the Keeping Knox Safer Roundtable. The externally facilitated Roundtable provided an opportunity to consult with local stakeholders and identify possible solutions to support the LSC in developing a 12-month Local Safety Committee Action Plan 2027.

The LSC's first formal Action Plan was scheduled for 2027 so that stakeholder input and the Roundtable findings could inform its development. In the interim, Victoria Police and Council have continued to collaborate on prevention and response initiatives, including:

- Coffee with a Cop community sessions;
- Safe Plate Days;
- Monthly news articles for community focused on education and awareness raising;
- Visits to traders to provide safety information;
- Development and distribution of Community Safety and Gambling Support Help Cards;
- Information sharing on local incidents and trends; and
- Collaborative responses to community concerns.

1.2 Terms of Reference Review

Victoria Police requested changes to the LSC's Terms of Reference and governance arrangements following its first year of operation. In response to this request, Council worked with Victoria Police to review the Terms of Reference, incorporate member feedback, align more closely with the Neighbourhood Policing Framework and support a stronger focus on coordinated action and accountability.

The review followed the appointment of Inspector Ben Gordon as the new Local Area Commander for the Knox Police Service Area in May 2026.

The previous Terms of Reference were reviewed by Victoria Police and the Manager of Community Strengthening, in consultation with relevant Council stakeholders. The proposed revised Terms of Reference and membership model were presented to the LSC on 19 August 2026 and were positively received.

Under the revised model, core membership will comprise senior representatives who can contribute to decisions and coordinated action. Other stakeholders will be able to attend meetings relevant to their role, raise issues through established pathways and remain informed without being required to attend every meeting.

An Expression of Interest form was sent to existing members, inviting them to nominate their preferred level of involvement by:

- Attending all meetings as a core member;
- Attending meetings relevant to their role or area of expertise; or
- Receiving meeting minutes and updates.

Council and Victoria Police will review the Expressions of Interest and confirm membership in accordance with the revised Terms of Reference.

1.2.1 Key Changes to the Terms of Reference

Both versions of the Terms of Reference (TOR) maintain the same overarching intent of improving community safety. The revised TOR strengthens governance, accountability, reporting and decision making. Table 1 below details the proposed changes.

Table 1: Comparison of Proposed Changes to TOR

Theme	Original TOR	Revised TOR
Overall Purpose	Supports the Neighbourhood Policing Project and community safety initiatives.	Broader community safety partnership focused on crime prevention, vulnerability, wellbeing and perceptions of safety.
Committee Role	Collaborative forum for discussion, information sharing and problem-solving.	Strategic governance body providing direction, oversight and coordinated action.
Objectives	Focus on crime prevention, community concerns, funding opportunities and safety perceptions.	Expanded focus including anti-social behaviour, vulnerable people, advocacy, policy development and service coordination.
Membership	Broad and flexible stakeholder participation, reviewed annually.	More structured membership with senior decision-makers and formal appointment processes.
Leadership Structure	Chair or co-chair must be Council and/or Victoria Police.	Formal co-chair arrangement between Victoria Police and Council.

Theme	Original TOR	Revised TOR
Meetings and Administration	Basic requirements with meeting frequency determined by the Committee.	Detailed requirements for meetings, agendas, notices, minutes and secretariat support.
Decision-Making	No formal voting or quorum provisions.	Formal quorum, voting procedures and recording of decisions.
Governance and Accountability	Limited governance requirements.	Includes member responsibilities, reporting obligations, appointment terms and breach provisions.
Risk and Compliance	Basic confidentiality provisions only.	Adds FOI, conflicts of interest, media protocols, member conduct and signed terms and conditions.

1.3 Keeping Knox Safer Roundtable Background

On 29 September 2025, Council endorsed Notice of Motion 189 - Keeping Knox Safer Forum. The Notice of Motion proposed an independently facilitated Roundtable with representation across relevant internal Departments, Victoria and Transit Police, State Government, local support agencies, schools and community.

The purpose was to better understand community safety issues in Knox and explore potential responses relating to youth counselling, family violence, substance use and support for people sleeping rough, including access to safe spaces, showers and food. The Notice of Motion also requested a report from the independent facilitator to inform the LSC's future prevention and response work.

On 27 May 2026, Council convened the Keeping Knox Safer Roundtable, facilitated by Explicability. The session brought together 44 representatives from Victoria Police, emergency services, local and state government, community and social support services, education, justice, transport, health and trader organisations. Participants considered local data across five domains:

- Homelessness and rough sleeping;
- Family violence;
- Substance use;
- Youth disconnection; and
- Trader and public safety.

Participants discussed what the data indicated, the factors contributing to each issue in Knox and the changes they wanted to see over the following 12-months. Each table developed a headline statement and proposed actions, after which participants prioritised the issues and identified activities that could be explored in the short term.

1.3.1 Summary of Roundtable Outcomes

Participants identified three immediate priorities for the next 12-months:

- Youth disconnection;
- Family violence; and
- Trader and public safety, including perceptions of safety.

Two themes emerged across the discussions:

- **The importance of connection:** social isolation and disconnection were identified as contributing factors across all five domains. Connection to people, places, services and opportunities was consistently identified as part of the response.
- **The difference between recorded crime and perceptions of safety:** recorded crime in Knox is approximately 15% lower than it was a decade ago, indicating that crime has not worsened over the longer term. Participants also noted that public discussion can disproportionately focus on young people, despite adults accounting for 83% of alleged offenders. This highlights the need to address both actual safety issues and perceptions of safety, communicate accurate information and avoid reinforcing stigma.

The Roundtable Report groups its recommendations into three tiers. These recommendations reflect stakeholder proposals and will require further assessment before they are included in the LSC Action Plan or adopted as Council commitments.

1.3.2 Tier One: Short-Term Opportunities

The report identifies six activities that could be explored within the first six months:

- Safe Plate Days;
- Expanded Coffee with a Cop sessions;
- Library-based safety engagement;
- Positive youth storytelling;
- Trader safety information and support; and
- Knox-wide Neighbour Day street gatherings.

Several of these activities build on existing Council or Victoria Police initiatives. Their continuation or expansion will be considered through the Action Plan development process.

1.3.3 Tier Two: Priority Directions

The report identifies four priority directions to anchor the first 12-month Action Plan:

1. Youth connection and early intervention;
2. Family violence early intervention and service navigation;
3. Trader and public safety, including perceptions of safety; and
4. Homelessness service coordination.

Although homelessness was not among the three highest-ranked immediate priorities, it was retained as a priority direction because participants identified a need for stronger coordination across the local service system.

1.3.4 Tier Three: Strategic Recommendations

The report identifies seven longer-term strategic recommendations:

1. Advocate to the Victorian Government for investment where gaps have been identified in Knox;
2. Make belonging and social cohesion an explicit community safety strategy;
3. Develop a shared data network and measurement framework;
4. Improve service-system navigation through co-location and soft entry points;

5. Embed youth voice in community safety governance;
6. Improve safety through place-based approaches; and
7. Sustain a positive and accurate communications strategy.

These recommendations extend beyond the first 12-month Action Plan and, in several cases, will require collaboration with external agencies, further scoping and consideration of resource implications.

1.4 Next Steps

At its meeting on 11 November 2026, the LSC will be asked to endorse the revised TOR and consider the Keeping Knox Safer Roundtable Report. Council and Victoria Police will then work with LSC members to assess the Roundtable recommendations and develop the LSC's first 12-month Action Plan, which is expected to be presented to Council in early 2027.

The full Keeping Knox Safer Roundtable Report will be distributed to all participants, with a Keeping Knox Safer Summary Report (Attachment 2) provided to participants, Councillors and the broader community.

To maintain broader stakeholder engagement under the revised membership model, one LSC meeting each year will be replaced by a Community Safety Forum. The Forum will bring together core and non-core members and other relevant stakeholders to report on progress, identify emerging issues and provide feedback on LSC priorities. It will support ongoing engagement but will be smaller in scope than the Keeping Knox Safer Roundtable.

2. ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is crucial for implementing localised approaches to crime prevention and community safety. Since the commencement of the LSC in November 2025, Council has worked in partnership with Victoria Police to engage the community regarding safety in a variety of ways:

- Visits to local traders to understand current issue and provide information and support about preventative measures;
- Coffee with a Cop events run by Victoria Police;
- Keeping Knox Safer Roundtable; and
- A Community Policing Forum facilitated by Victoria Police and hosted at Knox City Council Civic Centre.

The Keeping Knox Safer Roundtable brought together 44 representatives from Victoria Police, emergency services, local and state government, community and social support services, education, justice, transport, health and trader organisations. Participants reviewed local data, discussed factors contributing to community safety concerns, and proposed priorities and actions for further consideration.

The revised Terms of Reference were developed jointly by Council and Victoria Police in response to Victoria Police's request for changes. Feedback from LSC members and relevant Council stakeholders informed the revisions. Existing members were also invited to nominate their preferred level of future involvement through an Expression of Interest process.

Broader engagement will continue through the annual community safety forum, targeted stakeholder engagement, and the development and implementation of the LSC Action Plan.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS
A balanced approach should be taken to ensure that crime prevention strategies are effective and address key issues, without further disadvantaging the most vulnerable members of the 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 IMPLICATIONS
There are no environmental considerations associated with this report

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
Administration of the LSC and development of the draft Action Plan will be undertaken within existing Council resources.

The Roundtable recommendations have not yet been fully scoped or costed. Any proposed actions requiring additional Council funding or resources will be identified through the Action Plan development process and presented to Council for consideration through the appropriate budget or decision-making process.

7. RISKS
There are no major risks involved with endorsing the updated Terms of Reference and Keeping Knox Safer Roundtable Report.

8. COUNCIL AND HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN 2025-2029

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

Being a strong voice for safety
Strategy 5.1 - Our community feels safer in public spaces and facilities through planning, maintenance, education, design and proactive program delivery for Council owned and managed spaces and via advocacy for others.
Strategy 5.3 - Our community is more secure, connected and feel less isolated through planning, partnerships, advocacy and targeted support for our most vulnerable.
Strategy 5.4 - People feel safe in their homes and in the community through the development of partnerships, planning and promotion of programs, services and education that focus on connection, safety and respect.

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 - Final Report - Keeping Knox Safer Roundtable - 2026.09.10 [**4.3.1** - 30 pages]
2. Attachment 2 - Summary Report - Keeping Knox Safer Round Table - 2026-09-10 [**4.3.2** - 18 pages]
3. Attachment 3 - Knox Local Safety Committee - Terms of Reference DRAFT - 2026-09-15 [**4.3.3** - 8 pages]

Attachment 1

Keeping Knox Safer Roundtable

Report of proceedings and recommendations

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Prepared for: Knox City Council and the Knox Local Safety Committee

Roundtable held: 27 May 2026, Knox

Report date: September 2026

Acknowledgement of Country

Knox City Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the Roundtable was held, the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation, and pays respect to Elders past and present.

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Executive summary

On 27 May 2026, Knox City Council convened the Keeping Knox Safer Roundtable, bringing together approximately 44 participants from Victoria Police, emergency services, local and state government, social support and emergency services, education, justice, transport, health and trader organisations. The Roundtable was established through Council's Notice of Motion No. 189 (September 2025) and was designed to give the new Knox Local Safety Committee (LSC) a credible, community-supported starting point for its work: a shared reading of the evidence, a set of room-endorsed priority directions for the next 12 months, and a validated list of quick wins within the remit of Council and Victoria Police.

Participants worked through local data across five domains – homelessness and rough sleeping, family violence, substance use, youth disconnection, and trader and public safety – responding to what the data made them feel, what they believe drives each issue in Knox, and what would need to be different within 12 months. Each table distilled its discussion into a headline statement, before the room prioritised across domains and identified actions that could begin immediately.

The room endorsed three priorities for the next 12 months: youth disconnection, family violence, and trader and public safety (including perceptions of safety).

Two observations emerged through almost every conversation. The first is **the power of connection**: social isolation and disconnection appeared as a contributing factor in every domain, and connection (to people, place, services and opportunity) appeared on every solution list. The second is **the gap between perception and reality**: recorded crime in Knox is almost 15 per cent lower than it was a decade ago and adults account for 83 per cent of alleged offenders, yet community perceptions of safety have declined and public concern about young people has grown. The recommendations respond to both observations: by investing in belonging and social cohesion across the whole Knox community – an approach with strong national evidence and a proven local track record through the Knox Empowering Communities program – and by investing early in young people and families, not because young people drive crime, but because the middle years are where prevention investment pays its greatest dividends.

The youth voice was formally embedded through a parallel session (held 29 April) with Council's Youth Advisory Committee (YAC), whose letter to the Roundtable asked three things of the adults in the room: stop contributing to prejudice against young people; create real connections to education and employment; and invest in mental health support, particularly in schools. The adult tables independently arrived at the same territory; a convergence that strengthens the legitimacy of both.

This report records the proceedings, synthesises the findings, and sets out recommendations in three tiers: six quick wins that can be explored within the first six months; four priority directions with indicators of success to anchor the LSC's first 12-month Action Plan; and seven strategic recommendations to guide Council officers and the LSC over the next one to two years and beyond. Each recommendation is grounded in the Roundtable's outputs and supported, where available, by Australian research, government evaluation evidence, and the evaluated outcomes of Knox's own community safety initiatives.

The Roundtable's mandate was deliberately narrow: to generate a room-endorsed set of priorities and quick wins, not to write the Action Plan itself. That work now passes to the Local Safety Committee. Consistent with the Notice of Motion, this report will be provided to all participants.

1. Background and purpose

1.1 Origins

At its meeting of 29 September 2025, Knox City Council resolved through Notice of Motion No. 189 to hold a Keeping Knox Safer Round Table to properly understand the safety issues being experienced by the Knox community, residents and businesses alike. The motion noted that Victoria Police's Eastern Region Division 2 was establishing a new Local Safety Committee, that safety issues are occurring nationally and require local solutions, and that young people were featuring strongly in crime reports. It required the Roundtable to be led by an independent facilitator, to produce a report of proceedings and recommendations, and to focus on identifying issues and exploring possible solutions relating to youth counselling, family violence, substance abuse, rough sleeping, safe spaces, and the experiences of affected individuals and local traders.

The Knox Local Safety Committee held its inaugural meeting on 20 November 2025, co-chaired by Victoria Police and Knox City Council. The LSC's role is to provide local oversight, input and support for community safety and crime prevention, identify local priorities, and develop an Action Plan. The Roundtable was designed in this context: not to duplicate the LSC's ongoing work, but to give it grassroots intelligence and a room-endorsed mandate it could not otherwise access directly.

1.2 Purpose and mandate

The Roundtable had two concrete objectives: first, to produce a set of priority directions for the LSC, each with indicators of success; and second, to validate a list of quick wins within the remit of Council and Victoria Police. The Roundtable was deliberately not asked to draft frameworks, commitment statements or the Action Plan itself – that responsibility sits with the LSC. This narrow mandate protects the integrity of both: the Roundtable speaks with the authority of the room on what matters most, and the LSC owns the ongoing work of turning priorities into action.

A note on scope:
Many of the issues identified at the Roundtable are complex in their causes and their solutions similarly require the collective action of organisations, governments and communities. The focus of this report is on priorities and actions within the remit of Knox Council and Victoria Police to realistically influence and enact. Some ideas raised at the Roundtable are key elements for change and are included in the report, but they sit outside the remit of Council and Police, e.g. legislative or regulatory responses, health system service delivery models, state and federal government funding levels.

1.3 Who was in the room

Approximately 44 participants attended, drawn from Victoria Police (Knox, Boronia, Rowville and Transit), emergency services, Knox City Council departments (community strengthening, community laws, emergency management, community access and support, customer and communications, youth services, economic development, major projects and facilities and traffic and transport), state government departments including the Department of Justice and Community Safety and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, emergency relief and homelessness services, family violence services, youth and mental health services, education, health and transport representatives. A parallel session with Council's Youth Advisory Committee formally fed youth perspectives into the day (see Section 3).

2. How the Roundtable worked

Before the event, participants received a pre-reading summary – key things the evidence tells us about safety in Knox – to establish a shared baseline. On the day, the program centred on three linked activities.

Activity 1: Data walk

Tables worked with data points across five domains: homelessness and rough sleeping; family violence; substance use; youth disconnection; and trader and public safety. For each domain, tables responded to three guiding questions: What do you feel when you see that? What do you think contributes to this

situation in Knox? and Who or what would need to be different for this to change in 12 months? Each domain conversation closed with the table consolidating its thinking into a headline statement: based on the discussion, what is the situation in Knox and what needs to happen?

Activity 2: Prioritisation

Looking across all five domains, tables considered what the Local Safety Committee most needs to prioritise in the next 12 months, and what would tell us in 12 months that things had shifted. Tables selected their top two to three priorities and proposed an indicator for each.

Activity 3: Quick wins

Tables identified actions within the remit of Council and Victoria Police that could begin immediately, drawing on initiatives raised through the data walk and on participants' knowledge of existing programs that could be expanded or connected.

Participant contributions were captured through table notes, sticky-note responses to each guiding question, and the headline statements. This report synthesises that material; the full compilation of responses is at Appendix A.

3. The youth voice: Youth Advisory Committee

A session with Council's Youth Advisory Committee ran in parallel with the Roundtable's development, so that young people's perspectives were formally embedded rather than spoken about in their absence. Using a reverse-brainstorm method – how would you make Knox less safe for young people? – the YAC revealed, in inverted form, what protects safety: mental health support in schools, addiction and social supports, youth-only spaces, balanced media coverage, support for families, attention to online extremism, transport links to opportunity, addressing trauma and bullying, social-skill development, and public lighting. The group then asked the confronting question for the Roundtable: which of these things are we currently doing, even unintentionally, that need to stop? The full findings from the YAC are contained in Appendix B.

The YAC's letter to the Roundtable distilled this into three requests, reproduced here in summary because they anchor several of this report's recommendations:

1. Stop contributing to the prejudice against young people that they experience daily, including by positively portraying and celebrating young people in local media.
2. Provide opportunities that connect young people to education and employment, so they can develop and demonstrate their skills in the community.
3. Provide extensive mental health support – to feel safe in the community, you first need to feel safe in yourself.

In an encouraging alignment of community perspectives, the Roundtable attendees similarly identified these key issues as priorities for supporting Knox's young people: positive narratives about young people, employment pathways through local traders, and early intervention in mental health and connection. Section 7.4 maps each YAC request to where this report responds.

4. What the evidence and the community have told us

The Roundtable did not begin from a blank page. Recorded crime in Knox is lower than the state rate and trending down – the rate of criminal incidents is almost 15 per cent lower than it was ten years ago – and 83 per cent of alleged criminal offenders in Knox are adults, with young people aged 10 to 17 making up

a much smaller proportion, consistent with the pattern across Victoria. The most common recorded offences are theft from cars, retail theft and breaches of family violence orders.

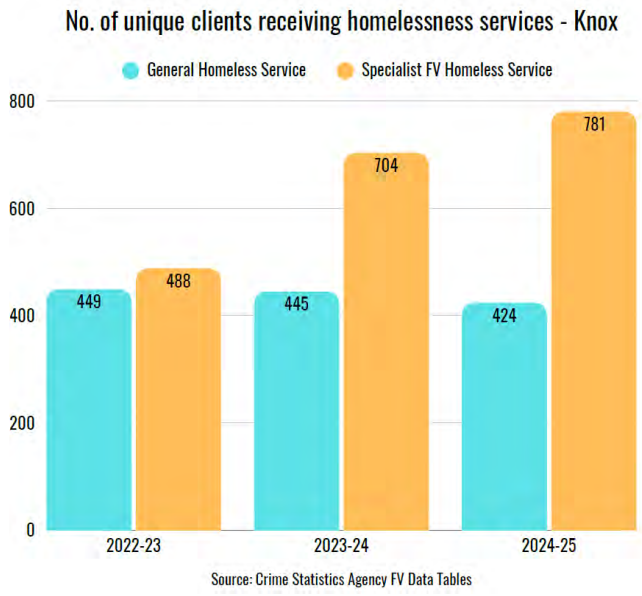
Community sentiment tells a different story. Council's Health and Wellbeing Plan community engagement (2024) called on Council to ensure people feel safe at home and in the community and to improve social connection. The 2025 Community Satisfaction Survey recorded a measurable decline (between 6 and 7 per cent) in perceptions of safety in Knox's public areas, a perception of safety measurably lower than the metropolitan and eastern region averages, an increase in respondents nominating safety, policing and crime as an issue to address (12 per cent, up from 7 per cent), and a substantial increase in comments about youth and youth crime.

This gap – between what the recorded data shows and how safe people feel, and between where community concern concentrates (young people, visible crime) and where the service data shows deep and growing need (housing, family violence, substance use) – became one of the defining threads of the day, and is reflected throughout the recommendations: in the emphasis on accurate communication, on belonging and social cohesion, and on positive, asset-based narratives about young people.

5. What the room said: findings by domain

Each domain finding below opens with the data point discussed, the headline statement the tables produced, followed by a synthesis of the discussion across the three guiding questions. As noted in section 1.2 above, some of the ideas for change identified by the room sit outside of the scope of Council, Police and the LSC, however they are included here to recognise the cross-sector, collaborative, longer-term and systemic work required to effectively address these complex issues.

5.1 Homelessness and rough sleeping



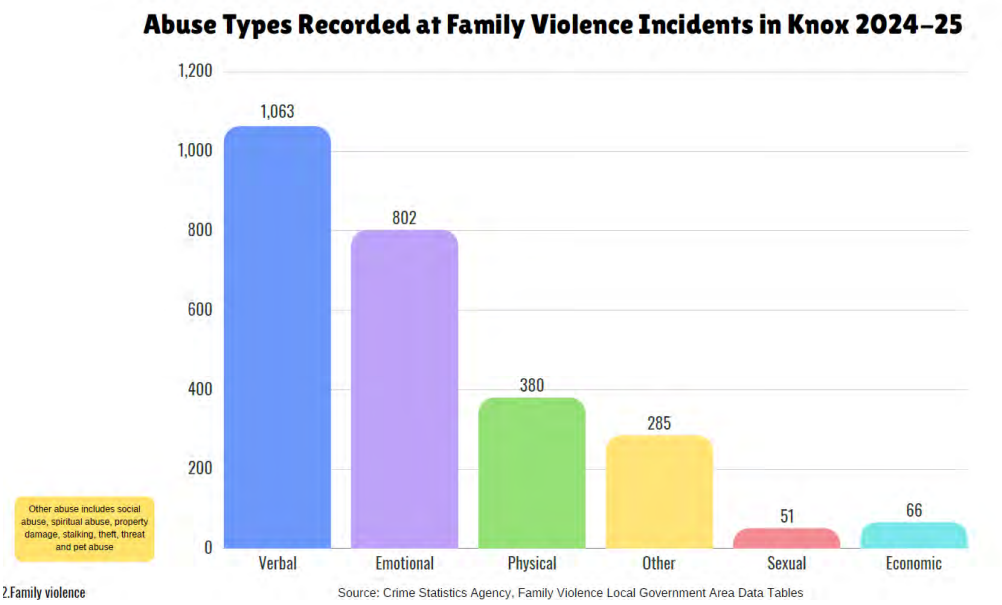
Lack of resources to keep pace with the current and growing need — therefore we need to strengthen partnerships across sectors and improve promotion and utilisation of the resources we currently have.

Participants were saddened but largely unsurprised by the data, and several read it through a family violence lens: many people presenting to homelessness services, particularly young people, are escaping violence at home. One service reported that around 90 per cent of young people reaching out to their service were escaping family violence. Participants noted that static client numbers can mask repeat presentations by people for whom no housing options exist.

Contributing factors named by the room included the lack of social and affordable housing, private rental pressure, mental health and alcohol and other drug services unable to meet demand in a timely way, the absence of funded assertive outreach in Knox, and – more positively – greater awareness of services and growing confidence to report family violence.

Participants wanted to see stronger cross-sector partnerships and regular partnership forums; early intervention for young people; a campaign addressing stigma; and advocacy for action outside the scope of council and police: increased state funding into Knox; legislative oversight and quality standards for rooming houses; and the promotion of prevention and eviction-prevention programs.

5.2 Family violence

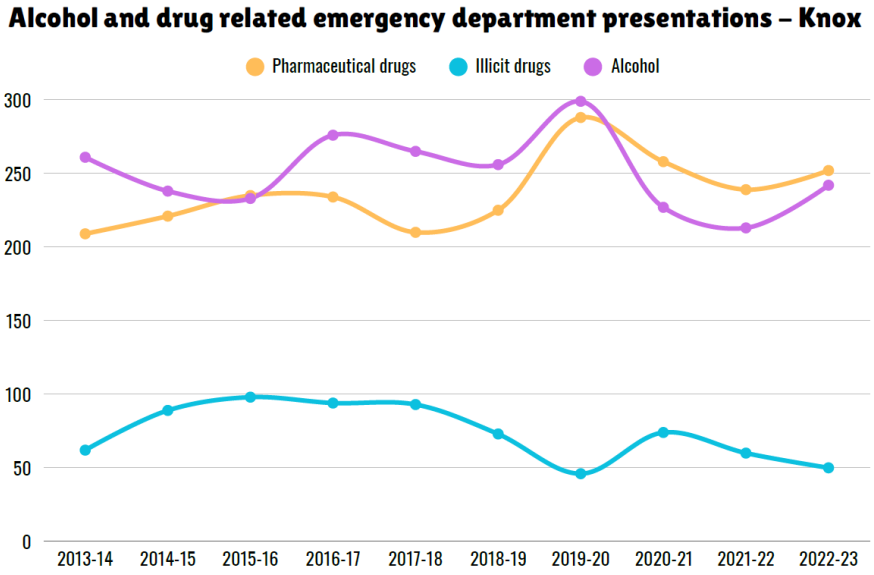


To improve the under-reporting and incidence of family violence in Knox, we invest in preventative education and awareness, and build the capacity of support services that can support throughout the whole journey.

Participants emphasised that reported incidents are the tip of the iceberg, that elder abuse is seriously under-reported, and that the trauma impact on children is lifelong. Contributing factors included financial stress and financial dependence, social isolation, control of finances within relationships, and limited community education about what abuse is and how to recognise red flags.

The 12-month change agenda was rich and specific: better support for victim-survivors post-arrest and for bystanders; respectful relationships messaging in schools and continuity of school family violence reports into Orange Door triage; co-location of Orange Door staff in Knox; raising the profile of positive male role models and countering harmful online content; and clear, well-promoted explanations of the services available. The strong service-system theme was navigation: pathways are complex, awareness is fragmented, and first points of contact such as GPs and schools need to know where to send people.

5.3 Substance use



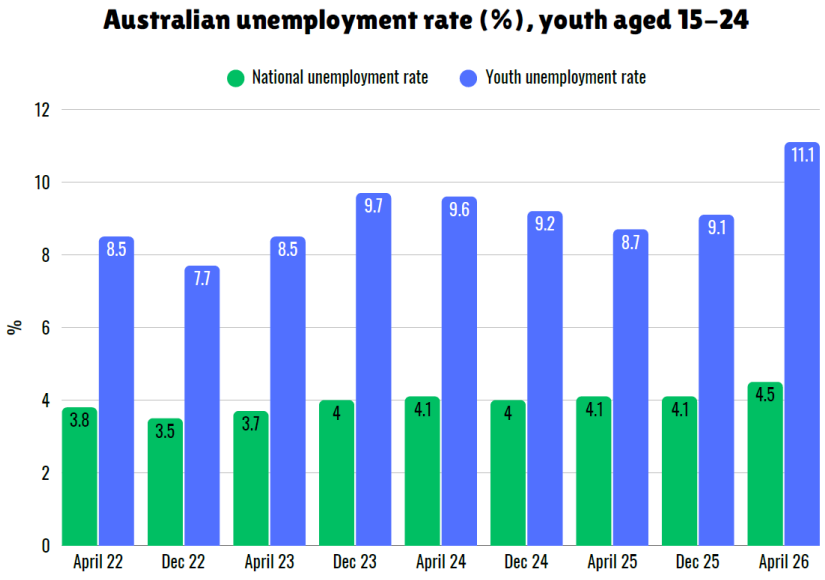
Substance Use

The statistics under-represent the issue. These substances are masking the major drivers – we need a more health-based approach. Education, and focusing on social isolation and improving connection, is fundamental to *changing behaviours.*

The room read the data as understated, pointing to a normalised drinking culture, the density of packaged liquor outlets, easy access to pharmaceutical medications (including online and through over-prescription), and stigma that deters young people from calling for help. Participants consistently framed substance use as a symptom – of trauma, masking, isolation and disconnection – rather than a standalone behaviour.

For a 12-month change agenda, participants called for accessible and timely detox, rehabilitation and AOD services; mental health service accessibility; primary prevention through connection (including new-parent groups and supports for women aged 40 to 60 navigating divorce, finances, caring and menopause); engagement of local sporting communities; and exploration of the peer worker model operating in Frankston and Dandenong.

5.4 Youth disconnection



4.Youth disconnection

Source: ABS Labour Force Status April 2026, seasonally adjusted, youth age 15-24 and all persons

Young people are disengaged due to certain driving factors – therefore early intervention needs to be prioritised (age group 8 to 11). Young people are negatively perceived in the community, which impacts employment; we need to paint a positive picture of young people to local businesses and prospective employers.

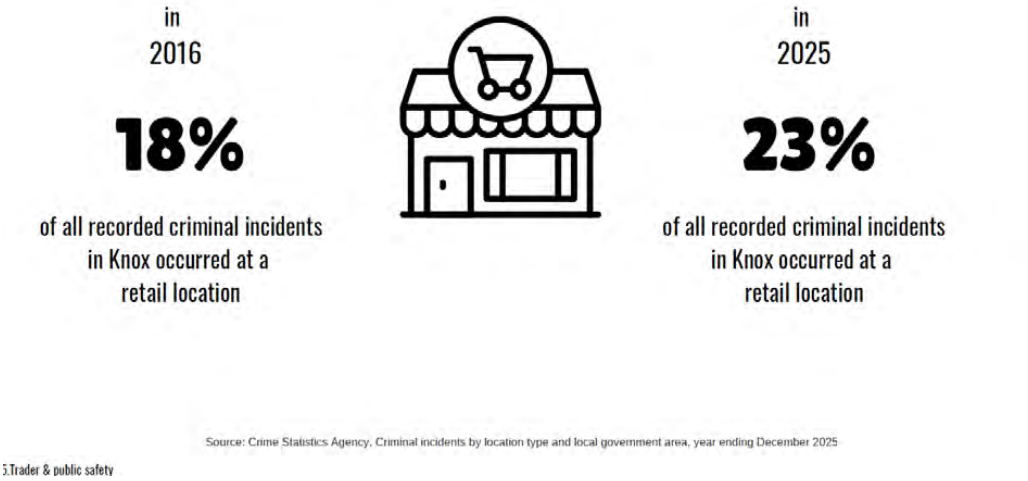
This domain generated extensive discussion. Participants were alarmed (though not surprised) by youth unemployment running well above the national rate, and stressed that disengaged young people typically have multiple prior touchpoints with services, not just school disengagement. Contributing factors included gaps in employment and educational support in Knox and the outer east, early disengagement from education, schools unable to meet mental health need, limited life-skills development, the lingering effects of COVID on resilience and social skills, and family dislocation.

The change agenda for 12 months was the most extensive of any domain: prioritise early intervention in the middle years; create adaptive, flexible and culturally safe models that capture young people who would otherwise be missed; facilitate local connections that build pathways to employment through trader engagement and traineeships (participants pointed to a local barber offering traineeships as a positive example); capture and amplify young people's voices and stories; portray young people positively to businesses and employers; strengthen school-police-community data collaboration; support parents, particularly from the middle years; help multicultural families and young people connect early; and create more safe, welcoming spaces for young people, in the mould of The Hive. The room's most direct advocacy message: fund the middle years.

Importantly, the room's concern was for young people, not about them. Participants repeatedly distinguished between the small number of young people involved in offending and the much larger number experiencing disconnection – and noted that negative community perceptions are themselves a

barrier, costing young people employment and belonging. This echoes the YAC's first request, and it matches the data: adults account for 83 per cent of alleged offenders in Knox.

5.5 Trader and public safety



Incidents of criminal activity in retail locations have increased between 2016 and 2025. To address this we need everybody doing their part to increase perceptions of safety: easier and increased reporting, addressing youth cost-of-living pressures and creating opportunities, encouraging a sense of place, and more deterrence – security, and making it harder to commit crimes.

Participants found the growth in retail-located crime concerning but consistent with what they see and hear. Contributing factors clustered around cost-of-living pressure, social media and peer dynamics, low perceived consequence, easier reporting (which lifts recorded numbers), opportunistic theft at strip shops versus premeditated activity at larger centres, and (repeatedly) lack of connection to place and community. The room also distinguished perception from reality: bias can shape what is read as a 'gang' versus young people simply gathering.

For a 12-month change agenda, participants wanted to see alternative activities and employment for young people; practical safety resources for traders; target hardening, lighting and continued visible presence (PSOs, security with community engagement focus) at major hubs; and initiatives that build respect for and connection to retail places. Participants noted trader training is resource-intensive, therefore linking traders to existing online safety and security resources may be a more effective way of providing information and support.

5.6 Cross-cutting observations

Four threads ran across every domain.

First, **connection**. Social isolation and disconnection appeared as a contributing factor in homelessness, family violence, substance use, youth disconnection and retail crime alike, and community connection points – libraries, neighbourhood houses, sporting clubs, monthly service hubs, soft entry points – appeared on every solution list. The room's solutions consistently treated connection not as a soft extra but as core safety infrastructure.

Second, **navigation and information sharing**. Services do not consistently know what each other offers, data is fragmented across sectors, and the people most in need are the least equipped to navigate the system.

Third, **perception versus reality**. Community fear is rising faster than recorded harm: crime in Knox is almost 15 per cent lower than a decade ago and adults account for 83 per cent of alleged offenders, yet perceptions of safety are declining and public commentary increasingly focuses on young people. Meanwhile, harm in less visible domains – family violence, elder abuse, substance use – remains under-recognised. Accurate, consistent communication is itself a safety intervention, and a safety agenda that disproportionately centred young people would match neither the evidence nor the intent of the room.

Fourth, **belonging** in a polarising climate. Participants observed that the broader social environment is becoming more polarised – online and offline – and that people who feel they do not belong are both less safe and less likely to contribute to the safety of others. Actively fostering a sense of belonging, connection and acceptance for everyone in the Knox community – across ages, cultures and circumstances – emerged as a foundation on which every domain-specific strategy depends. This observation is strongly supported by national and local evidence, and it anchors a new strategic recommendation in this report (S2).

5.7 Local proof of concept: Knox Empowering Communities

Knox does not need to look far for evidence that connection-based approaches improve safety. Between 2021 and 2024, the Knox Empowering Communities program – funded by the Victorian Department of Justice and Community Safety and overseen by a community-led Action Group – delivered six community-designed projects in Ferntree Gully under the common goal of connecting people to enhance community safety. The independent evaluation (Capiche Consulting, October 2024) found that perceptions of safety in Ferntree Gully Village improved at all times of the week over the project period, and that a deteriorating trend – residents and traders feeling less safe than one and two years prior – was reversed by project conclusion.

The individual projects offer practical, locally evaluated models that this report's recommendations draw on directly: the Ferntree Gully Village Community Safety Outreach (trauma-informed outreach workers engaging more than 200 vulnerable residents, co-designing responses with traders and police); Neighbour Day (57 street gatherings reaching 1,440 residents, who reported feeling safer in their own street, less isolated, and more willing to help and ask for help); the Knox Nocturnals Youth Group (measurable growth in protective factors among young people); the YES Program (reduced anxiety and improved confidence and engagement among young people with severe social anxiety); the Ferntree Gully Village Markets (precinct activation, stronger community connection and trader benefit); and the Cultural Safety project with Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place. Where relevant, the recommendations below cite these projects as local evidence alongside the national research.

6. The priorities the room endorsed

Through the prioritisation activity, the room endorsed three priorities for the Local Safety Committee's first 12 months:

1. **Youth disconnection:** with advocating early intervention in the middle years, increasing employment pathways and empowering youth voice as the leading strategies.
2. **Family violence:** with improving prevention, education, navigation and service capacity as the leading strategies.
3. **Trader and public safety, including perceptions of safety:** with supporting trader capability, fostering youth opportunity, creating visible initiatives and promoting accurate communication as the leading strategies.

This report also carries forward homelessness service coordination as a fourth direction. While it was not among the room's top three votes, the Notice of Motion explicitly names rough sleeping, the data walk elicited clear and low-cost coordination opportunities, and the homelessness discussion is tightly interwoven with the family violence priority. Substance use is addressed through advocacy for timely access to treatment (S1) and through the connection-focused, soft-entry approach that runs across these recommendations, reflecting the room's framing of it as a symptom rather than a standalone challenge.

7. Recommendations

The recommendations are organised in three tiers, matching the Roundtable's mandate and the different horizons of the audiences who will act on them. Tier 1 quick wins sit within the existing remit of Council and Victoria Police and work on these can commence within the next six months. Tier 2 sets out four priority directions, with indicators, to anchor the LSC's first 12-month Action Plan. Tier 3 sets out strategic recommendations for Council officers and the LSC over the next one to two years and beyond, including advocacy positions. Tiers 2 and 3 are directions for the LSC and Council to develop and own; they are recommendations of this report, not commitments made by the Roundtable.

Each Tier 2 and Tier 3 recommendation is accompanied, where available, by a summary of supporting Australian research and government evaluation evidence, and by locally evaluated evidence from the Knox Empowering Communities program (Section 5.7). Where the evidence base is still emerging, this is stated plainly.

7.1 Tier 1 – Quick wins (commence within 0 to 6 months)

All six quick wins below were identified or validated by participants on the day, or extend an evaluated Council/Police program. Suggested leads are indicative and should be confirmed through the LSC.

Quick win	What it involves	Suggested lead
QW1. Safe Plate Days	Anti-theft number plate screw events with Victoria Police, Neighbourhood Watch and Crime Stoppers, delivered as pop-ups in retail precincts, schools and community events.	Victoria Police / Council Safer Communities
QW2. Expand Coffee with a Cop	Proactive, scheduled informal police-community engagement at shopping precincts, libraries and community hubs.	Victoria Police
QW3. Library-based safety engagement	'Perceptions of Crime' talks at Knox libraries pairing accurate local crime statistics with Council communications and visual displays.	Council / Victoria Police

Quick win	What it involves	Suggested lead
QW4. Positive youth storytelling	A campaign capturing and amplifying young people's stories and successes – in consultation with the YAC – through Council channels, trader e-news and local media.	Council Communications / Youth Services
QW5. Trader safety information support	Practical guidance for traders and staff: building on the learnings of the Ferntree Gully outreach project by distributing Council's emergency response cards through existing local channels.	Council / Victoria Police
QW6. Knox-wide Neighbour Day street gatherings	Build on the successful 2024–26 gatherings: follow-up communications celebrating what worked, and coordination with Neighbourhood Watch and Crime Stoppers who run similar activities, to encourage further resident-hosted street and park gatherings supported by Council 'host kits'. (Embedding neighbourhood connection as ongoing core work is carried in S2.) Participants in the 2024 program reported feeling safer in their own street, less isolated, and more willing to help and ask for help.	Council Community Strengthening with community partners

7.2 Tier 2 – Priority directions for the next 12 months

Direction 1: Youth connection and early intervention

Strengthen the focus on young people across Council's existing work – applying an early-intervention and prevention lens to the services, programs and touchpoints Council already delivers, rather than treating youth wellbeing as a separate or additional workstream. Within this, prioritise the actions already within reach: strengthening Council's role in connecting and facilitating access to existing education and employment pathways for young people, including through trader engagement and traineeships; embedding youth voice in community safety work (see S5); and helping ensure existing youth-facing services are culturally safe, welcoming and connected to the young people most likely to be missed. The room placed particular weight on the middle years (participants specifically named ages 8 to 11) as the point where a prevention focus is most valuable; in the first 12 months this is best pursued as a matter of focus and coordination – making the middle years visible in existing planning and better connecting the services already working with this age group – while the case for any expanded, dedicated middle-years investment is developed through advocacy and a business case (see S1).

This direction is an investment in young people's wellbeing and opportunity, not a response to young people as a source of risk: adults account for 83 per cent of alleged offenders in Knox, and the case for the middle years rests on wellbeing, education and employment outcomes as much as on prevention.

Indicators proposed by participants: number of young people engaged in activities; participation in employment pathways and traineeships; youth voice captured and amplified (stories, posts, engagement reach); and, over the longer term, youth offending trends.

What the evidence says

Early intervention is among the best-evidenced prevention strategies available to local partnerships. The Australian Institute of Criminology reports a growing body of evidence that early intervention achieves significant reductions in crime involvement, child maltreatment and substance abuse, alongside

improvements in education, employment and behaviour, with significant financial savings to the individual and the wider community (AIC 2003, 2007, 2024).

Victorian return-on-investment modelling estimated that an additional $150 million invested in six evidence-based prevention strategies would deliver a five per cent reduction in incarceration, a four per cent reduction in intimate partner violence involving physical force, and a conservatively estimated net return of $191 million over ten years (Heerde et al., AIC Trends and Issues No. 545, 2018) – evidence that links prevention investment to both this direction and Direction 2.

ARACY's national frameworks treat the middle years (8 to 14) as a distinct life stage requiring targeted attention, anchored in The Nest wellbeing framework; the 'Maximising the Middle' initiative (Uniting, ARACY and the Stronger Smarter Institute) offers a current Australian model of community-driven, youth-led middle-years investment. On employment pathways, AIFS practice evidence shows support spanning education, training and work settings produces better employment outcomes for young people experiencing disadvantage.

Locally, the Empowering Communities evaluation found the Knox Nocturnals Youth Group strengthened protective factors – young people's confidence in sharing their thoughts and ideas, and self-knowledge, grew significantly the longer they participated – and the YES Program reduced anxiety and improved confidence, social connection and engagement among young people experiencing severe social anxiety (Capiche Consulting 2024).

Direction 2: Family violence early intervention and navigation

Complete a family violence service mapping exercise that includes small and local programs; promote services to GPs and schools as common first points of contact; improve cross-sector data sharing within Victoria's information sharing schemes; explore co-location and outreach models, including an Orange Door presence in Knox; and provide accessible entry points through libraries and community hubs. Continue to promote preventative education, including respectful relationships messaging and bystander support.

Indicators proposed by participants: increased reporting (interpreted as a positive indicator of help-seeking in the near term); reduction in repeat family violence incidents; increased uptake of support services; and improved community attitudes (National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey).

What the evidence says

The Royal Commission into Family Violence (2016) and the coronial inquest into the death of Luke Batty both found that timely sharing of information is critical to assessing and managing family violence risk, leading to the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme, the Child Information Sharing Scheme and the MARAM framework. The independent review of the FVISS (Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre) confirms the Scheme's purpose of better protecting victim-survivors and strengthening perpetrator accountability. The local task in Knox is operational, not legislative: building the relationships, mapping and shared indicators that let existing schemes work as intended.

On co-location: the Royal Commission specifically recommended integrated hubs to improve the experience of people seeking help, by bringing together intake services previously delivered through separate organisations and premises – the design logic of The Orange Door. The Victorian Auditor-General's audits of The Orange Door (2020, 2025) indicate the model's implementation requires sustained attention, supporting a considered local advocacy position: pursue Knox-based co-location or outreach while engaging with the lessons of implementation to date.

Direction 3: Trader and public safety, including perceptions

Work with relevant stakeholders to support the building of trader capability and confidence through practical safety resources; maintain visible safety initiatives at major hubs alongside community-engagement-focused security and PSO presence; work to improve lighting and environmental design in identified locations; embed the activation of precincts as community destinations into Council strategic planning; and communicate accurate local crime data consistently through Council, community and trader channels to close the gap between perception and reality.

Indicators proposed by participants: trader perceptions of safety (survey-based); community perception of safety (Community Satisfaction Survey); engagement with Council safety communications; and increased use of public spaces.

What the evidence says

The scale of the problem is well documented nationally: the SDA's most recent national survey of close to 3,000 retail and fast-food workers (December 2025) found 88 per cent had experienced verbal abuse in the past 12 months and 25 per cent had experienced physical violence – double the proportion in the union's 2023 survey – with younger workers heavily represented, directly echoing the Roundtable's concern for young retail and hospitality staff.

On what works, industry experience and regulator guidance converge on capability: training in de-escalation, recognising warning signs and safe disengagement, with clear reporting and escalation pathways (SafeWork SA). Large retailers can resource this internally; small traders generally cannot – which is the gap a Council-Police partnership may be well placed to address. On environment and perception: Australian research consistently identifies lighting and surveillance among the most influential environmental characteristics on perceived safety, while noting that perceptions are mediated by the surrounding environment and the 'image' of a place; supporting the room's twin focus on environmental design and sense of place (Cozens and van der Linde 2015).

Locally, the Empowering Communities program offers two evaluated precedents: the emergency response cards co-designed with police and distributed to Ferntree Gully traders (the direct forerunner of QW5), and the Ferntree Gully Village Markets, which drew around 1,000 visitors a month, lifted trader turnover (one trader reported a 25 per cent increase on market days), and contributed to measurably improved perceptions of safety in the precinct (Capiche Consulting 2024) – evidence that activation and sense of place are practical safety strategies.

Direction 4: Homelessness service coordination

Establish regular partnership forums across homelessness, family violence, youth and emergency relief services; improve communication channels between services to share resources and intelligence; promote prevention and eviction-prevention programs (such as TAPP); and advocate for improved oversight and quality standards for rooming houses.

Indicators proposed by participants: growth in available resources across organisations; improved coordination between services (e.g. forum participation, active referral relationships); and service usage data that distinguishes new clients from repeat presentations.

What the evidence says

Coordination is the evidence-backed core of effective responses to rough sleeping. AHURI's national research on assertive outreach found promising results where programs combined street-based engagement, multi-disciplinary teams and access to stable housing (Phillips and Parsell, AHURI Final Report No. 179).

Knox has its own evaluated proof of concept: the Ferntree Gully Village Community Safety Outreach project engaged more than 200 vulnerable residents through two part-time, trauma-informed outreach workers, brokered referrals into housing, health and mental health services, supported a long-term rough sleeper into housing, and co-designed practical responses with traders, police and community organisations. Victoria Police credited the project as integral to its local policing response, and perceptions of safety in the precinct improved at all times of the week over the project period (Capiche Consulting 2024). The model demonstrates both the effectiveness of outreach in Knox and the case for recurrent funding (see S1).

7.3 Tier 3 – Strategic recommendations (1 to 2+ years)

These recommendations guide the work of Council officers and the LSC beyond the first Action Plan cycle. Several are advocacy positions: as noted in 1.2 above, the Roundtable identified needs whose funding and regulatory levers sit with the Victorian and Commonwealth governments, and a united local voice – Council, Victoria Police and services together – is itself one of the most valuable assets the Roundtable created.

S1. Advocate to the Victorian Government for investment where Knox has identified gaps

Develop a coordinated LSC advocacy agenda covering: investment in the middle years; funded assertive outreach for Knox (participants identified that none currently exists, and the Empowering Communities outreach project demonstrated both effectiveness and unmet demand before its funding concluded); timely access to detox, rehabilitation and AOD services; social and affordable housing supply; and regulation and quality standards for rooming houses.

On the middle years in particular – the strongest single theme of the youth discussion – participants also recognised there is currently no dedicated funding for this work across Council or its partners, and that relevant programs are already delivered by others (for example through state education initiatives). The recommended path is therefore twofold: advocate to the Victorian and Commonwealth governments for middle-years prevention investment in Knox and the outer east; and scope a business case for expanding Council's focus in this area, so Council is ready to act if funding becomes available. In the interim, a middle-years lens can be applied to existing work at no additional cost (see Direction 1).

What the evidence says

Each advocacy position has an established evidence base. Assertive outreach is increasingly embedded in state homelessness policy on the strength of evaluated Australian programs (AHURI), and Knox's own outreach project showed the model working locally; meaning the absence of funded assertive outreach in Knox is a funding gap, not an evidence gap. In AOD treatment, national modelling by the UNSW Drug Policy Modelling Program suggests current services meet only around one quarter to one half of potential treatment demand. The middle-years case is set out under Direction 1.

S2. Make belonging and social cohesion an explicit community safety strategy

Adopt the active fostering of belonging, connection and acceptance – for everyone in the Knox community, across ages, cultures and circumstances – as a named strategy of the LSC Action Plan and Council's community safety work, particularly as the broader social climate becomes more polarised. Practical

expressions include: continuing and scaling neighbour-to-neighbour connection programs (QW6); connecting community organisations with existing Council grant programs and relaying relevant external grant opportunities that arise; piloting monthly rotating service hubs (legal aid, Centrelink, health and related services) at libraries and neighbourhood houses and, if effective, embedding them as ongoing practice; intercultural and intergenerational activities that build familiarity across difference; precinct activation that gives people reasons to share public space; and designing all safety communications and initiatives so that no cohort – including young people, people experiencing homelessness, and culturally diverse communities – is positioned as the problem.

What the evidence says

The relationship between cohesion and safety is one of the most robust findings in criminology. The landmark Chicago neighbourhoods study found that collective efficacy – social cohesion among neighbours combined with willingness to act for the common good – was strongly associated with lower violence, and substantially explained why otherwise similar disadvantaged neighbourhoods had different crime rates (Sampson et al. 1997). Australian longitudinal research extends this: neighbourhood places that support everyday social interaction ('social conduits' such as shops, parks and community facilities) build the cohesion and informal social control that suppress crime over time (Zahnow et al. 2022).

National monitoring connects belonging directly to perceived safety. The Scanlon Foundation Research Institute's Mapping Social Cohesion studies find that people who feel most unsafe are much less likely to trust others, feel a weaker sense of belonging in their neighbourhoods and in Australia, and are more likely to be socially isolated – concern for safety and social cohesion are closely intertwined (2024). The 2025 report finds that amid polarisation and global uncertainty, local neighbourhood cohesion has been the most resilient element of Australian social life – people who perceive strong cohesion in their local area are markedly more likely to feel they belong and to trust others – while the national sense of belonging has weakened (46 per cent of adults reporting a great sense of belonging, down from 63 per cent in 2020, with the decline steepest among younger adults). Local government is the level at which this resilient, neighbourhood-scale cohesion can be deliberately cultivated.

Knox has already demonstrated the approach works here. The Empowering Communities evaluation found that a portfolio of connection-focused projects in Ferntree Gully – street gatherings, outreach, markets, youth programs – was accompanied by improved perceptions of safety at all times of the week and a reversal of a deteriorating trend. Neighbour Day participants reported feeling safer in their own street, less isolated, and more willing to help a neighbour and to ask for help (Capiche Consulting 2024); cohesion and informal support built street by street.

S3. Build a shared data and measurement framework

Develop consistent, agreed indicators across Council, Victoria Police, schools and services – covering service usage and referrals, repeat incidents, youth participation and engagement, communication reach, and perception and belonging measures – with data-sharing arrangements that operate within Victoria's information sharing schemes. This framework should be established early so the LSC can report credible 12-month results against the indicators developed for the LSC Action Plan.

What the evidence says

Reviews of Australian place-based initiatives consistently find promising but methodologically mixed outcome evidence, with the absence of shared outcome frameworks a recurring limitation – a lesson the Knox Empowering Communities evaluation itself noted, recommending more robust and consistent data collection across projects. The practical implication is to treat measurement as infrastructure: agree the indicators and

baselines now, so that in 12 months the LSC can demonstrate what shifted rather than assert it. Victoria's information sharing reforms exist precisely because risk-averse non-sharing was found to undermine the safety of children and victim-survivors; the framework should build on those schemes rather than create parallel arrangements.

S4. Improve service system navigation through co-location and soft entry points

Pursue co-location and outreach models – including facilitating an Orange Door presence in Knox – and develop libraries and neighbourhood houses as permanent soft entry points where safety-related engagement leads naturally into broader service connection including mental health. Complete and maintain the family violence service map (Direction 2) as a navigation tool for GPs, schools and frontline staff across all sectors.

What the evidence says

The Royal Commission's hub model rests on the finding that fragmented intake arrangements were a barrier to help-seeking. Australian research on social infrastructure finds that community centres, libraries and neighbourhood houses function as sites where trust and belonging are built through routine encounters – the 'soft entry' mechanism participants described. The Ferntree Gully outreach project showed this in practice: meal nights, a community pantry, a community garden and wellbeing check-ins became the doorways through which residents who had previously avoided services accessed housing, health and mental health support for the first time (Capiche Consulting 2024).

S5. Embed youth voice in safety governance

Establish a standing channel between the Youth Advisory Committee and the Local Safety Committee - for example, a scheduled YAC input to each LSC cycle and YAC involvement in designing and reviewing youth-facing actions – so that the Roundtable's youth engagement becomes structural rather than one-off. The LSC has already identified youth engagement as a gap it wants to close; this recommendation gives it a concrete mechanism.

What the evidence says

National child and youth wellbeing frameworks (ARACY's The Nest) identify participation in decisions that affect them as a core dimension of young people's wellbeing, and Australian practice evidence on engaging disengaged young people consistently emphasises capturing youth voice, building trust and including young people in the process – a point the Roundtable's own participants made independently, and that the YES Program and Knox Nocturnals demonstrated through co-designed activities.

S6. Build safety through place

Extend Knox's existing application of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (currently applied to new Council buildings and renovations) into a broader program covering lighting audits and improvements in identified precincts, design responses at major community hubs, and placemaking and activation initiatives that build sense of place, ownership and everyday social interaction in retail precincts and public spaces. Embed community safety considerations into built environment and social planning decision-making across Council as BAU rather than an additional extra.

What the evidence says

Evidence on environmental design is strongest for perceptions of safety – the dimension where Knox's Community Satisfaction Survey shows measurable decline. Australian research identifies lighting and natural surveillance among the most influential environmental characteristics on perceived safety, while showing that a place's surrounding environment and image mediate how safe it feels (Cozens and van der Linde 2015). The collective efficacy literature adds the social dimension: places that bring residents into regular, low-stakes contact build the cohesion that suppresses crime (Zahnow et al. 2022), which is why activation (the Ferntree Gully markets model) belongs alongside lighting and design in this recommendation.

S7. Sustain a positive-narrative and accurate-communication strategy

Maintain an ongoing, asset-based communication approach: accurate local crime data communicated consistently through Council, police and trader channels (such as the Experience Knox social media platforms) – including the facts that recorded crime in Knox is trending down and that adults account for 83 per cent of alleged offenders; positive storytelling about young people sustained beyond a single campaign; and engagement with local media on balanced reporting. This recommendation operationalises the YAC's first request and the room's repeated concern about sensationalised coverage.

What the evidence says

Australian research finds that persistently negative media coverage stereotypes and stigmatises young people, positions them as outsiders in their own communities, and reduces adults' willingness to support and engage with them – while positive community ties are key protective factors, particularly for young people at risk of justice-system involvement. Selective crime reporting is also associated with the public overestimating crime levels, reinforcing the perception-reality gap recorded in Knox's own survey data. The Scanlon research adds a cohesion lens: feeling unsafe erodes trust and belonging, so accurate communication that reduces unwarranted fear is itself a cohesion-building intervention. Positive storytelling is therefore a protective-factor strategy, rather than public relations.

7.4 How this report responds to the Youth Advisory Committee

The table below maps each of the YAC's three requests to where this report responds, so that the youth voice is demonstrably carried through to action.

What the YAC asked	Where this report responds
Stop contributing to prejudice against young people; positively portray and celebrate young people in local media.	QW4 (positive youth storytelling); Direction 3 (accurate communication of crime data); S2 (belonging and acceptance for all); S7 (sustained positive-narrative strategy, including accurate offender-age data).
Provide opportunities connecting young people to education and employment.	Direction 1 (employment pathways, traineeships, trader engagement); S5 (youth voice in governance).
Provide extensive mental health support – feeling safe in yourself comes before feeling safe in the community.	Direction 1 (early intervention, middle years); Direction 2 (school-based prevention and navigation); S1 (advocacy: mental health and AOD service access); S4 (soft-entry points, connection-focused and outreach response).

8. What happens next

The Roundtable's outputs now pass to the Local Safety Committee. The recommended sequence is straightforward. First, the LSC adopts the four priority directions and indicators as the spine of its first 12-month Action Plan, assigning owners and timeframes to the quick wins. Second, the shared measurement framework (S3) is scoped early so baselines are captured before initiatives commence. Third, the LSC reports progress against the indicators at 12 months – to Council, to participants, and to the community – closing the loop the Roundtable opened.

Consistent with Notice of Motion No. 189, this report will be provided to all Roundtable participants, and a summary version has been prepared for participants, councillors and the broader community. Participants should also be advised how they can stay connected to the work – such as through the LSC's partner organisations and the regular partnership forums (Direction 4).

A note on this report

This report synthesises the contributions of participants as captured on the day through table notes, sticky-note responses and headline statements. It reflects the views, experience and local intelligence of the people in the room; individual statements have not been independently verified, and service-specific figures cited by participants should be confirmed with the relevant organisations before being relied upon in formal planning. Where research evidence is cited, sources are listed in the References section.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Full compilation of participant responses

The complete compilation of sticky-note responses from the data walk covering all five domains across the three guiding questions, together with the headline statements as recorded.

Appendix B: Youth Advisory Committee materials

The YAC reverse-brainstorm output and the letter 'Dear Roundtable' from the Knox Youth Advisory Committee accompany this report. The letter is reproduced in summary at Section 3.

Appendix A – Full participant responses

1. Homelessness

What do you feel when you see that?

- Reflective of prevalence of family & domestic violence
- Unsurprising (sadly)
- Surprised general client no. static because doesn't reflect that many are accessing services multiple times because there are no solutions/options
- More people 'escaping' violence
- Concerning – but good to know people are accessing support
- Lack of resources – some people give up asking
- Family Violence: Although high I feel it is positive because people are not staying in high risk situations

What do you think contributes to this situation in Knox?

- Greater awareness of services to support them
- Mental health not addressed, lack of services
- Lack of social housing, awareness to report family violence
- More confidence in the police force to remove perpetrator therefore reporting more
- External & global pressures
- Pressure of private rentals - $$
- Lack of resourcing & infrastructure
- People reaching out for support
- Less affordable housing available
- Assertive outreach funding for Knox doesn't meet demand
- Mental health support for young people (headspace)
- High proportion of young people reaching out to local services are escaping Family Violence
- Mental health & drug and alcohol supports unable to meet timely needs and demands
- Not enough supported affordable housing options available

Who or what would need to be different for this to change in 12 months?

- Early intervention – young people
- Advocacy for state funding allocation into Knox
- Social educational address stigma campaign
- Legislative oversight and regulation of rooming houses – planning, environmental health officer
- Rooming house – tiered, standardised. Incentivise better quality
- More partnerships across all sectors
- Promotion of prevention programs – TAPP program, prevention of eviction
- Visibility of support for mental/emotional and physical health

2. Family Violence

What do you feel when you see that?

- Reported incidents are the tip of the iceberg
- Elder abuse seriously underreported
- Trauma impact of family violence on children is lifelong
- If there is verbal abuse there are other forms happening

What do you think contributes to this situation in Knox?

- Education around reporting sexual abuse – education on what it is
- Financial stress
- Financial dependence on men for housing and car
- Social isolation and disconnection
- Cultural differences

- Financial abuse – one partner's control of finances and bank accounts
- Education on red flags
- Balance in gender roles

Who or what would need to be different for this to change in 12 months?

- Improve support for victim post-arrest
- Increase profile of 'good men' in media and social media
- Working on algorithms to remove 'red pill' content
- Improve support for bystanders
- Improve relations among teenagers
- Messaging in schools
- Support when reporting is breaking an intergenerational cycle of abuse
- Explaining the services available
- Looking at what parenting and discipline looks like in 2026
- Ensuring that reporting from schools continues to the triaged by Orange Door
- Co-location of Orange Door staff in Knox

3. Substance Use

What do you feel when you see that?

- Unsurprising – health response – Priority
- Unsurprising
- Drinking culture
- Appears to be easy to acquire pharmaceutical drugs
- Accessibility & legality – alcohol, meds
- High number of liquor outlets/packaged liquor
- Stigma – young person not wanting to call emergency services
- Initially surprised but possible lack of disclosure to illegal drugs
- Irresponsible doctors to over-prescribe medications
- Not surprising. People who seek help. Easy access to medications online.
- Alcohol contributing factor in family violence.
- We have an alcohol problem, surprised at pharmaceuticals

What do you think contributes to this situation in Knox?

- Trauma & masking
- Access to prescription meds and people over-consuming alcohol in the home
- Sale of counterfeit medication online
- Covid, decriminalisation of public drunkenness, transition to health based response contributing to other issues

Who or what would need to be different for this to change in 12 months?

- Detox/rehab services & access
- Mental health service accessibility
- Access to expedient services – AOD, detox, rehab etc
- New parenting support groups, including primary prevention, how to build connection with community
- Local sporting community awareness
- Connecting people to social supports and break down barriers to engagement
- Peer worker – look at the model at Frankston/Dandenong
- Doing more education support for women in the age bracket of 40-60 – divorce, finances, homelessness, menopause, caring.
- Helping people connect with positive spaces (overcome barriers i.e.. mental health)

4. Youth

What do you feel when you see that?

- Doesn't feel too alarming
- Concerning that youth are not receiving these opportunity
- Alarming but not surprising
- Disproportionate to national rate but matches that data trend
- Not surprised by the significant increase of the unemployment rate
- Alarming, worrying
- Stats are not reflective of the reality of challenges young people face
- Sad, disappointed, worry for the future
- It is alarming to see the ratio of unemployment in young people compared to the national rate

What do you think contributes to this situation in Knox?

- Lack of services especially employment services, accessibility to these services
- Limited opportunities for employment in local businesses, traders, others
- Shortage of educational support and opportunities in Knox and the Outer East
- Social/disengagement from education at an early age
- Lack of support services capturing right cohort of students /young people
- Family dislocation and dysfunction (but not just a Knox thing)
- Key identified needs: pathway knowledge and skills, connection (social, sport, arts, church)
- Lack of early intervention program
- Schools not resourced enough to deal with mental health issues
- Life skills development lacking in schools
- Mental health issues, alcohol & drug abuse, lack of social skills, lack of life skills such as resilience
- Youth who don't go to school or work or participate in any social activities rather do a wrong thing and get attention
- Effects of Covid on resilience and social skills

Who or what would need to be different for this to change in 12 months?

- Adaptive & flexible models to capture young people who may be missed
- Capture youth voice, build support & trust, include them in the process
- Culturally safe programs & services
- Positive portrayal of young people to businesses
- Stakeholders to work more cohesively to promote/raise awareness of available programs and services
- More information sharing between local services
- Tertiary drift – the high percentage of students leave tertiary courses in the first 12 months
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations: What works well to engage youth 15-24 eg. MMIGP Youth Program after hours engagement
- To better understand the data in ALL sectors related to youth aged 15-24
- Inform young people of the social supports that are available
- Life skills education for young people, shifting prevention to the middle years
- Allow children to experience failure in life so they can build resilience and develop coping skills
- Parenting education and support starting in the middle years
- Help CALD community to integrate with the local community so kids feel connected and belonged early on
- More resources are allocated to sectors that support youth and children: literacy, mental health, employment, addiction recovery
- Provide more education and support for parents to help their kids
- Positive images/ stories of young people: decrease the stigma of being a young person
- Creating more safe, welcoming spaces for young people (like The Hive)
- Fund the middle years!

5. Traders

What do you feel when you see that?

- Not surprised
- Curious; what does it mean

- Doesn't make me feel less safe more curious on whether out reporting is up
- This stat is concerning as it indicates shoplifting can grow into more significant crime
- Retail sites seem to draw in 'gang' or 'mob' mentalities
- Not surprising; cost of living crisis, cigarette prices/raids, gateway to larger crimes, alarming
- Concerning but not entirely unexpected. The 'feel' matches to what the data shows.
- Concerning, feels that it is in line with society currently
- Challenging from a policing perspective

What do you think contributes to this situation in Knox?

- Petrol theft up
- Ease of reporting
- Social media/ peer pressure
- Cost of living
- Ease of being able to do it – low security
- Peer pressure
- No deterrent/ accountability; no consequences
- Lack of community/ sense of connection to place
- Libraries open longer, things to do
- Bias and perception of what is a gang vs hanging out
- Local shops opportunistic, larger ie. Knox Westfield pre-meditated
- Cost of living pressures
- Cost of living
- Lack of support or education
- Lack of consequence
- Cost of living
- Social pressures
- Easy to access hubs
- Social media

Who or what would need to be different for this to change in 12 months?

- Develop alternative activity for youth
- Training for traders in welcoming people with issues
- Increase uniformed presence visibility at major community hubs
- Think of ways to make people respect retail settings
- Increase lighting in dimmer areas
- Continues PSO involvement at shopping hubs, transition to local security
- Targeted use of similar people to assist with engagement
- High visibility security presence with more community engagement
- Consequences
- Target hardening
- Support programs (Dandenong community connection program)
- Training/ education for retailers
- Training for trader de-escalation (resource intensive)
- Empower the community to increase sense of place
- Trader education and practices
- Make it harder to steal: security, pay before options
- New starter pack for staff – online
- Classification of retail; large hard tops vs shop strips

Headline statements

1. **Homelessness & rough sleeping**:
   Lack of resources to keep pace with the current and growing need, therefore we need to strengthen partnerships across sectors and improve promotion and utilisation of the resources we currently have.

2. **Family violence:**
   To improve the under reporting and incidence of family violence in Knox, we invest in preventative education and awareness and build the capacity of support services that can support throughout the whole journey.

3. **Substance use:**
   The statistics under-represent the issue. These substances are masking the major drivers, we need to be looking at a more health-based approach. Education and focusing on social isolation and improving connection is fundamental to changing behaviours.

4. **Youth disconnection:**
   Young people are disengaged due to certain driving factors, therefore early intervention needs to be prioritised (age group 8-11).
   Young people are negatively perceived in the community which impacts employment, we need to paint a positive picture of young people to local businesses and prospective employers.

5. **Trader and public safety:**
   Incidents of criminal activities in retail locations are on the increase between 2016 and 2025. To address this we need everybody doing their part to increase perceptions of safety.
   Easier increased reporting, youth cost of living pressures, more opportunities. Encourage sense of place and more deterrence eg. security, harder to commit crimes.

Priorities:

1. Youth disconnection
2. Family violence
3. Trader & public safety (including perceptions of safety)

Appendix B – YAC Materials

YAC Meeting 29/4/2026

Reverse Brainstorming – How to ensure Knox has a steady supply of youth gang members into the future:

- Remove supports – mental health, in schools, addiction support, social supports, youth only spaces
- Spread misinformation from the media
- Continue to advertise crimes loudly to other young people – all press is good press
- Have sensationalised and unbalanced conversation around the crimes
- Have no supports for families and households
- Don't monitor social media and online activities and behaviour, particularly disregard any extremist behaviour
- Make Knox a dystopia and reduce links to employment and education
- Remove transport links, especially to places where there are more opportunities
- Keep security cameras as this keeps it exciting for young people to commit crimes
- Romanticise crime through songs, pop culture etc
- Don't address trauma (individual and community), bullies
- Don't provide any social support or lessons on how to manage social situations
- Remove public lighting

Top 3 priorities identified:

- Connection to education and employment
- Positive youth stories
- Mental health in schools

Letter to the Round Table

Dear Round Table,

We are concerned about our political, social and economic wellbeing and worry that things will continue to go downhill if we don't do something about it now.

We want you to stop contributing to the prejudice against young people that we experience daily. One way that this can be achieved is through positively portraying and celebrating young people in local media.

We would like you to start providing us with opportunities that connect us to education and employment to effectively and powerfully develop and demonstrate our skills and prowess in the community.

In order to feel safe in the community, we acknowledge that you need to first feel safe in yourself, so providing extensive mental health support is absolutely necessary to foster a safe and cohesive community.

Together we can all create a better and more prosperous Knox for everyone.

From the Knox Youth Advisory Committee

Closing remarks from each table

A. One thing I hope comes out of the round table OR

B. One thing I want the adults in that room to understand

- A. The opportunities for young people

- A. A change in how young people are projected in the media

- B. Young people matter and have a voice and deserve to be portrayed correctly in the media and celebrated

- B. We are the future of the world, and we deserve to be treated like it



KEEPING KNOX SAFER ROUNDTABLE

Attachment 2

What we heard, what we'll do - Summary Report

September 2026

knox your city

explicability

WHY WE HELD THE ROUNDTABLE

In September 2025, Knox City Council resolved to hold a community safety Roundtable (Notice of Motion No. 189) to support the new Knox Local Safety Committee (LSC), co-chaired by Victoria Police and Council.

The Roundtable's purpose was to give the LSC a credible, community-supported starting point for action.

Representatives from council, police, emergency services, state government, education, health, justice, transport, community services and trader groups spent the day with the local evidence — and agreed on what matters most for the next 12 months, and what we can start working on right now.

This summary shares what the room found. The full report of proceedings and recommendations has been provided to the Local Safety Committee and all participants.



2



Who was in the room and what we did

Around 44 participants. One day. Five conversations.

Tables worked through local data across five domains — homelessness and rough sleeping, family violence, substance use, youth disconnection, and trader and public safety — answering three questions for each:

- *What do you feel when you see that?*
- *What do you think contributes to this situation in Knox?*
- *Who or what would need to be different for this to change in 12 months?*

Each table then wrote a headline summarising the situation in Knox and what needs to happen. The room finished by choosing priorities for the next 12 months and naming the quick wins that could start immediately.

3

What has the community told us already?

Community Satisfaction Survey 2025

- The perception of safety in the public areas of the City of Knox declined measurably in 2025 (between 6% and 7%), and there was an increase in the proportion of respondents raising safety, policing, and crime as an issue to address (12% up from 7%).
- The perception of safety **in public areas** of the City of Knox in 2025 was measurably and significantly lower than the metropolitan or eastern region councils' averages.
- The researchers noted the substantial increase in the number of comments relating to perceived issues with youth and youth crime in the City of Knox in 2025.
- There were relatively few comments relating to drugs and alcohol, or homelessness related issues for the City of Knox.
- The 2026 survey showed increases in perceptions of safety and decreased focus on crime and safety as issues of concern, recovering some, but not all, of the ground from the previous year, with the perception of safety in the City of Knox still lower than was recorded in 2024.

Council Health & Wellbeing Plan Community Engagement 2024

- Council to ensure that people feel safe at home and in the community
- Council to improve social connection in the community
- Calls for increased safety

Community concern about safety is rising faster than recorded harm in some areas - while deep need in housing, family violence and substance use stays less visible. The Roundtable worked with both.



YOUTH VOICE

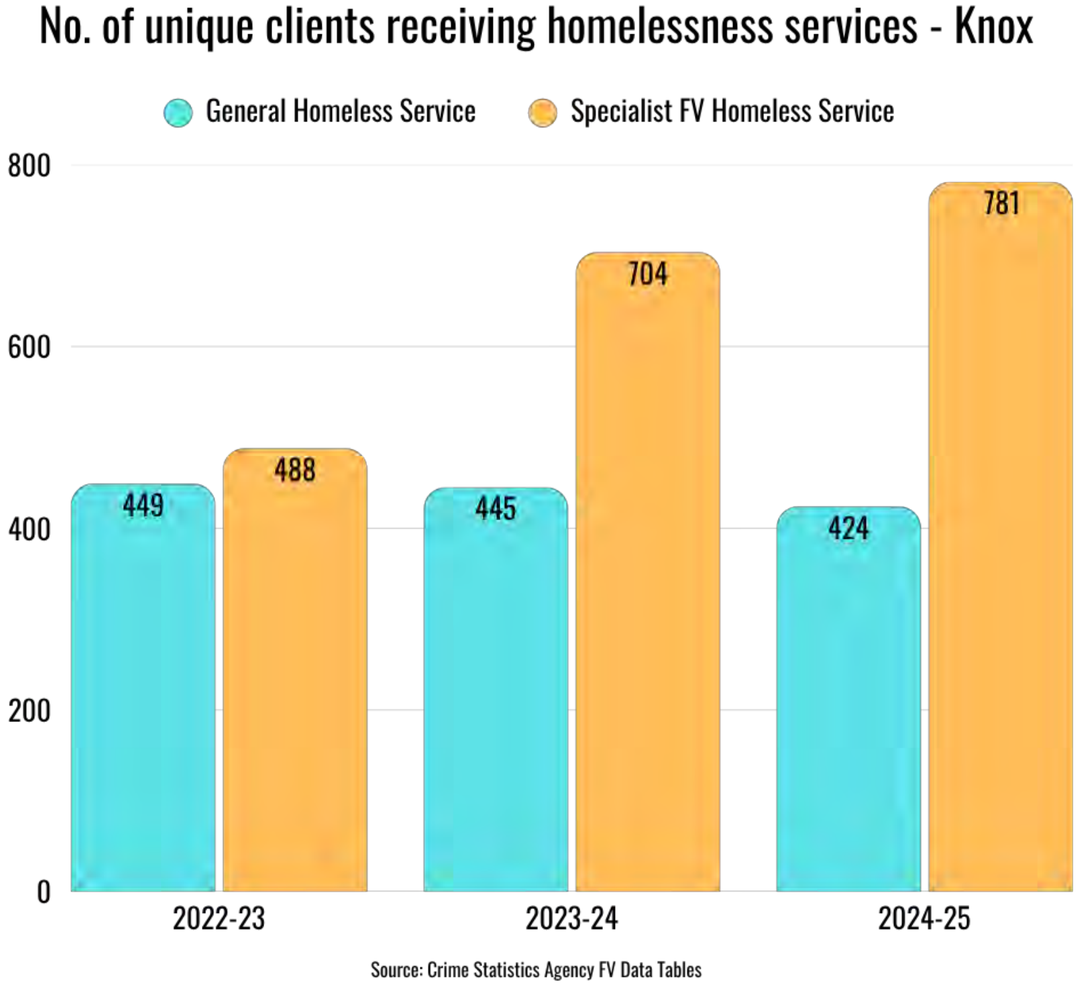
Despite young people not being present on the day, their voice was heard throughout. Council's Youth Advisory Committee asked three things of the Roundtable:

- Stop contributing to prejudice against young people — celebrate them in local media.
- Connect young people to education and employment.
- Invest in mental health support — feeling safe in yourself comes before feeling safe in the community.

The adults in the room independently landed in the same place. Page 17 shows how each request was answered.

5

WHAT THE DATA TOLD US - HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPING

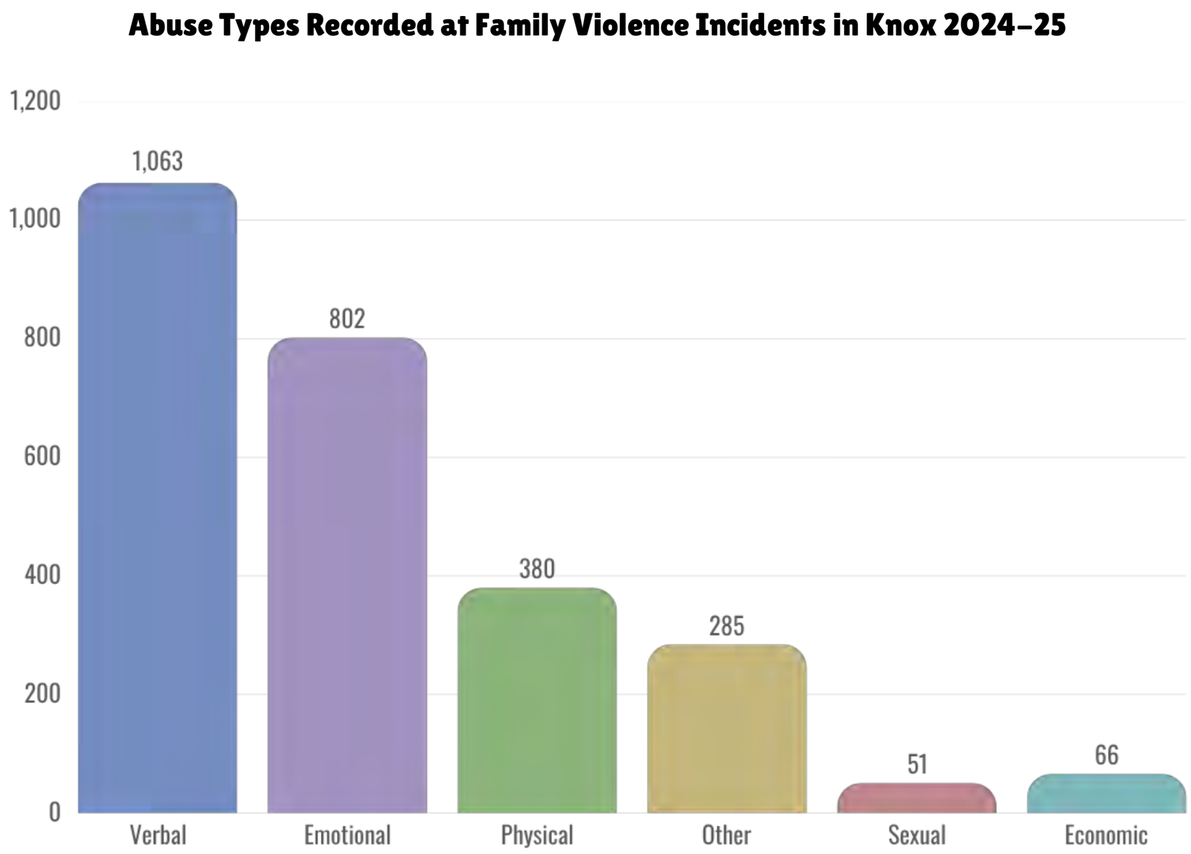


Source: Crime Statistics Agency FV Data Tables

WHAT THE ROOM SAID

> Resources aren't keeping pace with growing need — so we strengthen partnerships across sectors, and make better use of what we already have.

WHAT THE DATA TOLD US - FAMILY VIOLENCE

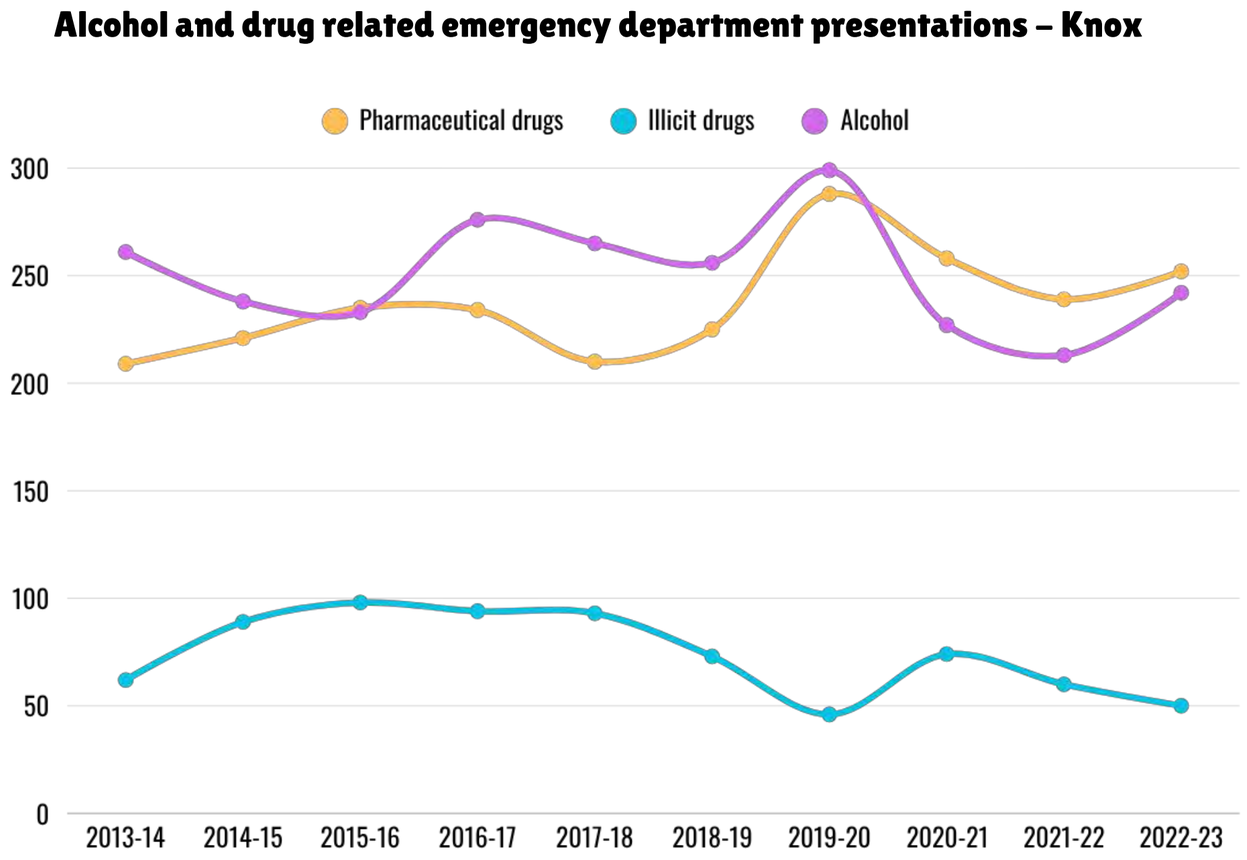


Source: Crime Statistics Agency, Family Violence Local Government Area Data Tables

WHAT THE ROOM SAID

> To improve under-reporting and reduce family violence in Knox, we invest in preventative education and awareness, and build services that can support people through the whole journey.

WHAT THE DATA TOLD US - SUBSTANCE USE

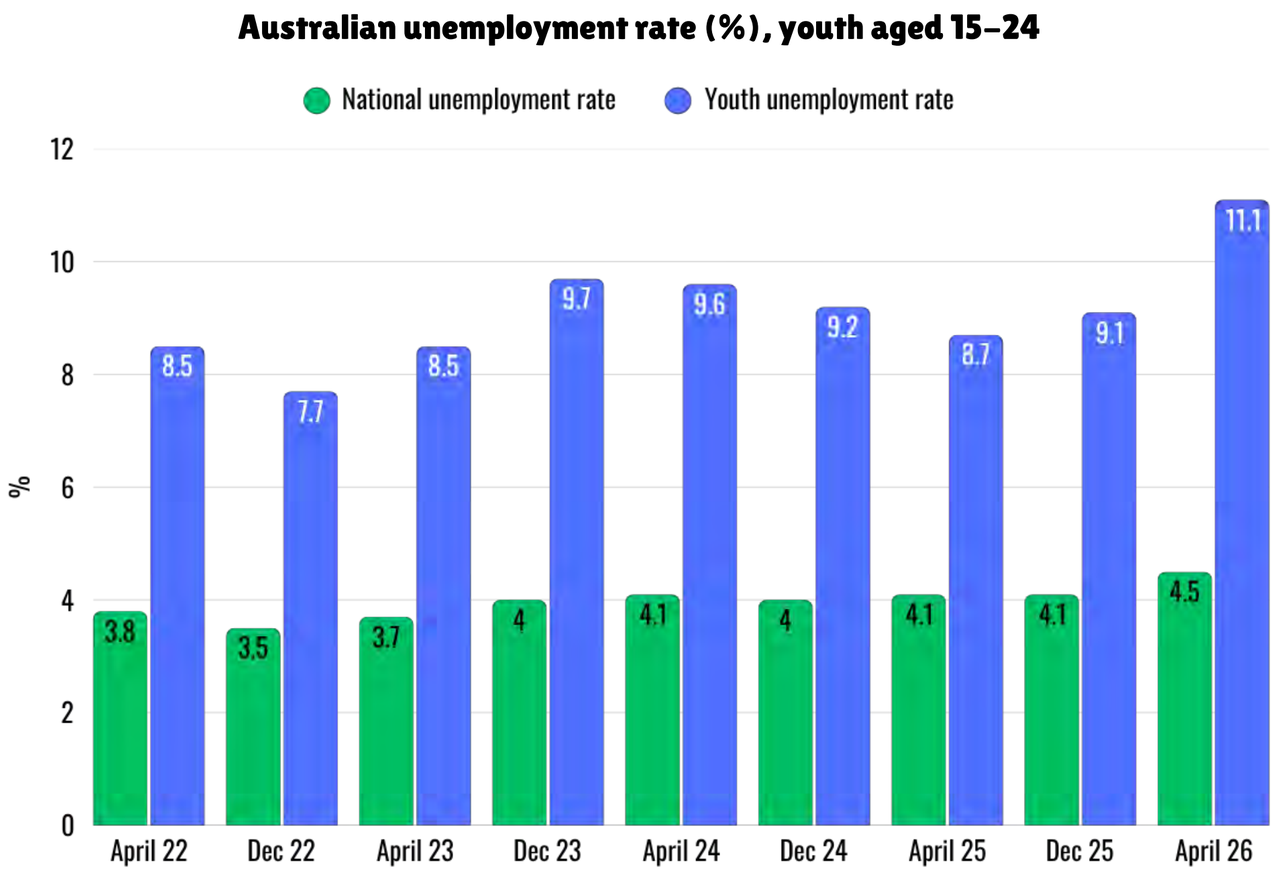


Source: AOD Stats, Victorian Emergency Minimum Dataset, Number of emergency presentations for substance by financial year

WHAT THE ROOM SAID

> The statistics under-represent the issue. Substances are masking the real drivers — we need a health-based approach. Tackling social isolation and building connection is fundamental.

WHAT THE DATA TOLD US - YOUTH DISCONNECTION



Source: ABS Labour Force Status April 2026, seasonally adjusted, youth age 15-24 and all persons

WHAT THE ROOM SAID

> Early intervention needs to be prioritised - ages 8 to 11. And young people are negatively perceived, which costs them jobs: we need to paint a positive picture of young people to local businesses and employers.

WHAT THE DATA TOLD US - TRADER & PUBLIC SAFETY

in
2016

18%

of all recorded criminal incidents in Knox occurred at a retail location



in
2025

23%

of all recorded criminal incidents in Knox occurred at a retail location

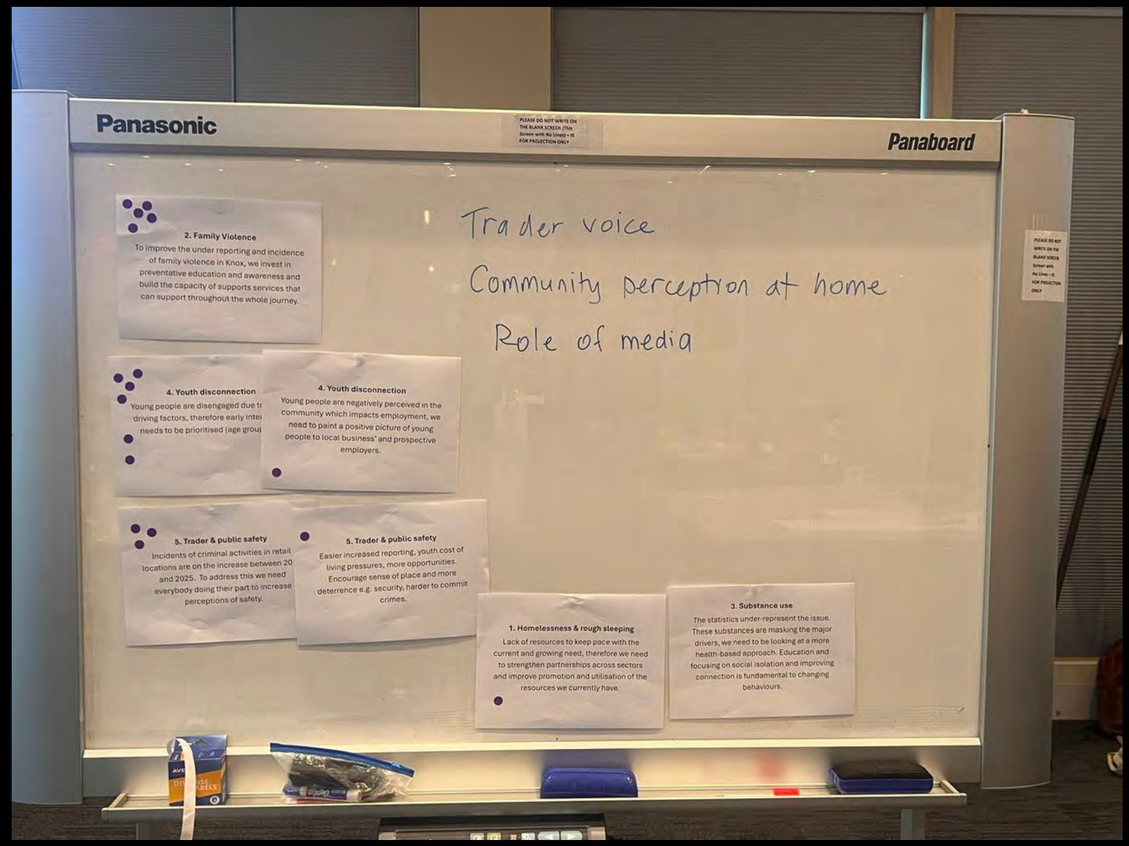
Source: Crime Statistics Agency, Criminal incidents by location type and local government area, year ending December 2025

WHAT THE ROOM SAID

> Crime at retail locations has grown since 2016. Everybody has a part to play — easier reporting, opportunities for young people, a stronger sense of place, and making crime harder to commit.

2 OBSERVATIONS RAN THROUGH EVERY CONVERSATION:

- Connection is core safety infrastructure. Isolation showed up as a driver in every domain and connection to people, place, services and opportunity was on every solution list.
- Fear is rising faster than harm. Recorded crime in Knox is almost 15% lower than a decade ago and adults are 83% of alleged offenders — yet people feel less safe, and concern about young people has grown. Accurate, positive communication is itself a safety measure.



11



KNOX HAS ALREADY SHOWN THIS WORKS

We don't have to look far for proof. Between 2021 and 2024, the Knox Empowering Communities program ran six community-led projects in Ferntree Gully — all built on connecting people to improve safety. The independent evaluation found perceptions of safety improved at all times of the week, and a worsening trend was reversed.



Neighbour Day
- 57 Street gatherings
- 1440 residents
- people felt safer in their own street, more willing to help & ask for help

Community Safety Outreach
- Trauma informed workers
- 200+ vulnerable residents engaged
- Police called it integral to their local response

Knox Nocturnals & YES Program
- Measurable growth in young people's confidence, connection and protective factors

FTG Village Markets
- Activation that lifted trader turnover and improved how safe the precinct felt

These local examples appear throughout the recommendations as evidence that connection-based approaches work here in Knox.

12

THE PRIORITIES THE ROOM ENDORSED

For the next 12 months, the room asked the Local Safety Committee to prioritise:

1. **Youth disconnection - advocating early intervention in the middle years, increasing employment pathways, empowering youth voice**

2. **Family violence – improving prevention, education, navigation and service capacity**

3. **Trader and public safety, including perceptions of safety – supporting trader capability, fostering youth opportunity, visible initiatives, promoting accurate communication**

Also carried forward...

4. Homelessness service coordination partnership forums and better connections between services - and addressing substance use through advocacy for timely access to treatment and connection-focused, soft-entry approaches.

Each priority direction was accompanied by suggested indicators so we can see whether things are shifting over time.



13

TIER 1 QUICK WINS: WHAT WE CAN START WORK ON NOW



1. Safe Plate Days

Anti-theft number plate fittings with Victoria Police, NHW and Crime Stoppers: pop-ups at shops, schools and events.



2. Coffee with a Cop, expanded

Scheduled, informal police-community catch-ups at hubs, libraries, shopping precincts across Knox



3. Safety talks at libraries

'Perceptions of crime' sessions sharing accurate local data and safety information



4. Positive youth storytelling

Capturing and amplifying young people's stories; co-designed with the YAC



5. Trader safety information

Practical guidance for traders and staff - distributing Council's emergency response cards through existing channels



6. Knox-wide Neighbour Day

Resident-hosted street gatherings supported by Council 'host kits' - extending the evaluated FTG model Knox-wide

A note on scope

Many issues identified at the Roundtable are complex and solutions require collective action from organisations, governments and communities. This report focuses on ideas raised at the Roundtable that are within the remit of Council and Police to influence and enact.

14

TIER 2: PRIORITY DIRECTIONS FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

1. Youth connection & early intervention - strengthening the focus on young people across Council's existing work, making the middle years visible in planning & service delivery	Number of young people engaged in activities, participation in employment pathways & traineeships, youth voice captured & amplified, youth offending trends (longer term)
1. Family violence early intervention & navigation - service mapping, improving cross-sector data sharing, exploring co-location & outreach models, accessible entry points & promoting preventive education	Increased reporting, reduction in repeat FV incidents, increased uptake of support services & improved community attitudes.
1. Trader and public safety, including perceptions - supporting trader capability & confidence, visible safety initiatives, improving lighting & environmental design, communicating accurate local crime data	Trader & community perceptions of safety, engagement with Council safety communications, increased use of public space
1. Homelessness service coordination - partnership forums, improving communications & connections between services, promotion & advocacy for eviction prevention & rooming house standards & oversight.	Improved co-ordination between services, growth in available resources across orgs, service usage data improvements

15

TIER 3 STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS - LOOKING FURTHER AHEAD

Beyond the first 12 months, the full report recommends seven longer-term strategic directions for Council, Police and the Local Safety Committee:

1. Advocate to the Victorian Government - middle-years investment, assertive outreach for Knox, timely drug and alcohol treatment, social housing, rooming house standards.
2. Make belonging a safety strategy - actively foster connection and acceptance for everyone in Knox, especially as the wider community becomes more polarised.
3. Build shared measurement - common indicators across Council, police, schools and services.
4. Make services easier to find - service mapping, co-location (including an Orange Door presence in Knox), and welcoming entry points at libraries and neighbourhood houses.
5. Keep youth voice at the table - a standing YAC channel into the Local Safety Committee.
6. Build safety through place - lighting, design and placemaking in our precincts and public spaces.
7. Tell the accurate, positive story of Knox - and of its young people - consistently.

Every recommendation is grounded in what the room said and backed, in the full report, by Australian research and government evaluation evidence, including Knox's own Empowering Communities program.

ANSWERING THE YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

You asked	The Roundtable answered
“Stop contributing to prejudice against young people.”	Positive youth storytelling campaign; accurate local crime communication (including that adults are 83% of alleged offenders); a sustained positive-narrative strategy; and making belonging and acceptance a safety strategy for all.
“Connect us to education and employment.”	Employment pathways and traineeships with local traders; youth voice in safety governance.
“Provide extensive mental health support.”	Early intervention in the middle years; prevention and navigation through schools and GPs; advocacy for mental health and drug and alcohol services in Knox.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

The Roundtable's job was to contribute their frontline knowledge, expertise and help set the direction. The Local Safety Committee now takes it forward:

- The four priority directions and their suggested indicators inform the LSC's first 12-month Action Plan.
- Quick wins are assigned owners and timeframes at the LSC's next meeting.
- In 12 months, the LSC reports back to Council, to participants, and to the community on what has shifted.

Staying connected:
This report goes to every participant. You'll hear ongoing updates through the partner organisations of the Local Safety Committee and the new partnership forums.



Thank you to everyone who gave their time, expertise and honesty on the day — and to the young people of the Knox Youth Advisory Committee, whose voices helped shape it.

18

Attachment 3

Knox

Local Safety Committee (LSC)

Terms of Reference

Date Adopted: XXXXX 2026
Review Date: XXXXX 2027

VICTORIA POLICE

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1. Purpose

1.1 This Terms of Reference aims to guide the Local Safety Committee (LSC) and bring local organisations together to tackle crime, protect vulnerable people and help people feel safe. The aim is to promote a safer, stronger, and more connected Knox by facilitating collaborative problem-solving, information sharing, and strategic action on local safety priorities that impact perceptions and levels of safety in the community.

2. Objectives

2.1 The objectives of the LSC are to:

a. To work in partnership to tackle and address community safety issues, including identifying new and emerging shared priorities for action.
b. Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, improve public confidence, perceptions of safety, and community engagement through joint initiatives.
c. Collaboratively strengthen services for those experiencing vulnerability in the community.
d. Address environmental factors contributing to safety concerns.
e. Promote and strengthen Council's role through active engagement and strategic advocacy.
f. Assist in the development and implementation of policies, plans, and programs that deliver tangible benefits to the community.
g. Share information, knowledge and resources as appropriate.

3. Principles

3.1 Work together across agencies to develop shared solutions to community safety challenges.
3.2 Ensure members actively contribute, honour commitments, and maintain transparency in decision-making.
3.3 Use data and insights to inform strategies and measure impact.
3.4 Focus on improving safety, well-being, and perceptions of safety for local residents.

4. Role of Partnership

4.1 The role of the LSC is to bring key local agencies together to deliver multi-agency solutions to local problems by pooling resources and experience. The LSC is responsible for cross-sector strategic direction, the creation of an authorising environment, securing resources and the mobilisation of a community response with the support of sub-groups and thematic action groups.

5. Membership

5.1 Membership of the LSC will be made up of those with senior responsibility for delivering sustainable community safety priorities and local and state crime reduction initiatives. Members should have the authority to influence strategic direction, service delivery and relevant resources within the agencies they represent. If members are unable to attend, they should send a representative at the appropriate level with decision making authority.

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5.2 The membership will comprise of representatives from:

a. Knox City Council
    i. Senior Officers (Manager of Community Strengthening and Manager City Safety and Health)
    ii. Mayor (or Deputy Mayor)
    iii. Councillors (Guests only)
b. Victoria Police
c. External stakeholders
    i. Knox Infolink
    ii. EACH
    iii. Department of Justice and Community Safety
    iv. Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (seeking representation)

5.3 Representatives from other agencies / organisations, and other Council staff, may be invited to attend meetings for specific agenda items or may be co-opted for pre-determined periods.

6. Appointment of Community Service Organisations

6.1 Membership or attendance of Community Service Organisations within the LSC will be undertaken by calling for nominations. Specific representatives may also be invited to nominate through an Expression of Interest.

6.2 The selection panel will comprise:

a. Manager, Community Strengthening or delegate.
b. Knox Local Area Commander, Victoria Police.
c. Coordinator Community Partnerships and Inclusion.

7. Provision of Advice to Council

7.1 The nominated Council Representative to the LSC will be responsible for advising an internal committee on the activities, advice and opinions of the LSC. This activity will serve to duly inform Council members and Council Executive on matters of interest and relevance to Council activities and priorities.

8. Chair

8.1 The LSC will be co-chaired by Victoria Police and Council (Manager, Community Strengthening). The responsibility for chairing the meetings will alternate between agencies or otherwise be determined through mutual agreement between LSC representatives.

9. Member Responsibilities

9.1 To lead their organisation's contribution to meeting the objectives of the partnership. They should therefore consult with their organisation on issues being discussed at the LSC and ensure that any commitments made on behalf of their organisation are honoured to ensure that their organisation is kept informed about LSC developments, decisions, actions and

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emerging issues.

9.2 To ensure that the LSC is informed about developments relevant to community safety taking place within their parent organisation.

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10. Term of Appointment

10.1 The nominal term for the LSC is two years. Representatives acting in substantive core representative positions, will automatically be appointed to the LSC for the period for which they are performing the relevant role within their respective organisation.

10.2 A member of the LSC may resign at any time and recommend a proxy in their stead that the LSC will provisionally endorse as appropriate.

11. Thematic Action Groups

11.1 The LSC will identify thematic action groups to support specific objectives. The LSC will determine the role, responsibility and resourcing of these sub-groups (if not already existing) to achieve projects and initiatives in line with the LSC Principles.

11.2 The LSC will maintain an overview of all measures from the sub-groups and their priorities, monitor strategies and action plans to improve performance for each of the sub-group and thematic areas.

12. Scheduled Meetings

12.1 The LSC will be scheduled bi-monthly (maximum of 5 annually), with additional meetings to be agreed when required.

12.2 The Secretariate will provide at least 4 weeks' notice (unless otherwise agreed) in writing (includes e-mail) of the date, time and location of any meeting.

13. Voting Rights and Decision Making

13.1 Quorum

a. For the meeting to be quorate, there should be not less than half of the substantive members present; but must include representatives from Council and Victoria Polce.

13.2 Voting

a. Decision making will be arrived at by majority voting of the members present with a casting vote held by the Chair at the relevant time.
b. Decisions will be recorded in the minutes, with actions being reviewed at subsequent meetings.
c. Votes shall be taken by a show of hands and recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
d. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are entitled to vote, however Councillors and guests who are not members of the LSC are not entitled to vote.

14. Secretariat and Reporting of Minutes

14.1 Secretariat Support and Distribution of Agendas and Minutes

a. The management of the LSC will be overseen by Victoria Police and Knox City Council.
b. Secretariat support will be provided by Council's Community Strengthening Team to assist the LSC to function efficiently and effectively, including but not limited to servicing all scheduled meetings and the timely preparation and distribution of Agendas and Minutes.

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c. The Chair(s) will agree the agenda prior to the meetings. The agenda should reflect the terms of reference and provide opportunity for discussion of any other business.
d. Agenda items must be submitted to either of the Chair's or Council's Coordinator Community Partnerships and Inclusion no less than ten (10) days prior to a scheduled meeting.
e. The Chair in consultation with the Secretariat will be responsible for coordinating the preparation and distribution of Agendas.
f. Papers will be circulated at least five working days prior to meetings, to allow sufficient time for partners to prepare.
g. Draft minutes will be distributed in a timely manner to all members to ensure accuracy prior to formal endorsement by the LSC at a subsequent meeting.

15. Policy Adherence

15.1 Freedom of Information

a. All documents produced by or relating to LSC that are not publicly available or deemed confidential are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 1982.
b. Requests for information pertaining to documents should be referred back to the originating organisation for assessment.
c. LSC members must not release any information, document or thing belonging to another organisation without the expressed written permission to do so.

15.2 Breaches

a. Victoria Police and Knox City Council may, by resolution, terminate a LSC member's appointment for breaching the Terms of Reference set out in this document and/or any the members employing organisation's code of conduct or similar document.

15.3 Conflicts of Interest

a. Any matter deemed by a member to represent a Conflict of Interest shall be reported to the Chair either prior to a meeting or before the specific item is discussed. Disclosure must include the nature of the relevant interest.
b. A member who has a direct or indirect conflict of interest (i.e. Interest by close association, financial interest, conflicting duty, personal gain or loss) regarding an item to be considered or discussed by the LSC, must leave the meeting and remain absent until the conclusion of the discussion.

15.4 Media Protocols

a. All LSC members must act in accordance with Victoria Police and Council's Media Policy and refer all media enquiries to the Victoria Police Media Unit and/or Council's Customer and Communication Department for a response.
b. No LSC member is permitted to represent Victoria Police in any capacity, other than sworn members of the Victoria Police Force appointed to the LSC under these Terms of Reference.
c. The Mayor of the day remains the spokesperson for all Council activities, LSC members are not to represent the Partnership or Council to the media or on social media, unless approved by the Manager, Customer and Communications.

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15.5 Terms and Conditions

a. All members of the LSC will be required to accept and sign the agreed Terms and Conditions as part of their membership.

16. Contact

Benjamin GORDON - Inspector
Knox Local Area Commander
Victoria Police
Eastern Region – Division Two (2)
414 Burwood Highway, Wantirna South VIC 3152
KNOX-PSAMANAGER-OIC@police.vic.gov.au

Council
Kerryn Jansons, Manager Community Strengthening
+613 9298 8541 | 0457 174 812
Knox City Council
511 Burwood Highway
Wantirna South, VIC 3152
kerryn.jansons@knox.vic.gov.au

DRAFT

5 Notices Of Motion

6 Supplementary Items

7 Urgent Business

8 Confidential Items

8.1 Property Matter

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

- Council business information, that will prejudice Council's position when negotiating for acquisition if prematurely released;
- land use planning information regarding property zoning and/or property purchases that might encourage or enable speculation in land values if prematurely released.