

## KNOX ACTIVE AGEING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Thursday 22 February 2024**

**Time: 6.30pm to 8.30pm**

**Eastgate North Conference Room, Eastgate North Building,  
Knox City Council, 511 Burwood Hwy, Wantirna South**

**and via MS Teams**

Attendees	Present		Present
Cr Nicole Seymour, Knox Councillor	Yes	Cr Meagan Baker, (Chair) Knox Councillor	Yes
Catherine Balaz – Community Rep	Yes	Christine Pow – Community Rep	No
Eddie Atacador – Community Rep	Yes	Fen Peng – Physiotherapist	Yes
Gary Cantwell – Community Rep	Yes	Geoff Deacon – Community Rep	Yes
Gerard Meagher – Outplacement & Transition to Retirement Coach	No	Lawrie Gaylard – Community Rep	Yes
Linda Lim - EACH	No	Peter Burns – Bridges Connecting Communities	Online
Pranee Birch – Community Rep	Yes	Shoua Liu – Community Rep	No
Gail Power - KCC Manager Community Access and Support	Yes	Linda Keenahan – KCC Age and Dementia Friendly Communities Project Officer	Yes
Sheridan Stone – KCC Program Lead Social Connections	Yes		
Guests	Present		Present
N/A			

### 1. Meeting Opening

#### 1.1 Welcome & Apologies

- The Chair, Cr Nicole Seymour opened the meeting at 6.40 pm.

#### 1.2 Conflict of Interest Disclosures

None declared.

#### 1.3 Previous Minutes

- Minutes of the Previous meeting taken on Thursday 30 November 2023 were moved and accepted on block.

- 1.3.2 Linda advised that two alternative Mission statement options were submitted from Committee members, following our November meeting and indicated these would be discussed during Item 3.1.
- 1.3.3 Following the November 2023, Margaret Kimber approached the Waste team with the suggestion of creating a magnetic fridge magnet. However, this request was declined because magnets cannot be recycled easily. Instead, the Waste team will work with the Communications team to produce a hardcopy calendar for 2024/25 outlining which bins will be collected each week. Once the calendars are available, residents will be able to contact Customer Service and request a calendar to be posted to their home.

## 2. Pulse Check

### 2.1 Emergency Resilience pulse check

Facilitator: Cr Nicole Seymour, Knox City Council

In wake of the recent storm and power outages. A discussion took place for the purpose of ensuring Council is learning and building some resilience, while identifying any gaps.

Refer to Appendix 1 for details on what was discussed.

## 3. Matters for Decision

### 3.1 KAAAC Workplan 2024

Facilitator: Gail Power, Manager Community Access and Support

After considering additional options, the original Mission Statement was endorsed:

“To champion the voice and needs of seniors. Ensuring Knox is a welcoming, inclusive and connected community for all ages, where addressing loneliness and social isolation is a shared priority of Council and community together.”

Refer to Appendix 2 for details on what was discussed.

## 4. Matters for Discussion

### 4.1 Age-Friendly Knox 2023 survey overview

Facilitator: Linda Keenahan, Age and Dementia Friendly Project Officer

Linda provided an overview of the Age-Friendly Knox 2023 survey and explained 627 people responded to the survey, with 92% aged over 70 years. A series of focus group discussions have been organised for w/c 26 February 2024 to explore common themes which include:

- Community Safety
- Community Transport
- Stretching Your Weekly Budget
- Emergency Planning and Preparedness

The Emergency Planning and Preparedness session was identified prior to the storms, because 69.37% of respondents indicated that they do not have an emergency plan and/or kit. It was noted the survey was conducted prior to the distribution of the Extreme Weather and Heat health packs in December 2023.

In relation to the Stretching Your Budget discussion, Cr Nicole requested that Linda gauge how residents would feel if their additional seniors discount which Knox City Council offers concession card holders (over and above the State Government's rebate) was removed. However, Linda explained the intention for this session was to encourage participants to share their tips on how to save costs, which can then be promoted through the Bright Ideas Network.

An overview of the Age-Friendly Knox 2023 survey presentation has been circulated with these Minutes.

#### **4.2 Bright Ideas / Dementia Friendly / EveryAge Counts coalition update (standing item)**

Facilitators: Linda Keenahan, Age and Dementia Friendly Project Officer  
Sheridan Stone, Program Lead Social Connections

- Linda and Sheridan provided an update on the various Age-Friendly, Bright Ideas, Dementia and Zest4Life activities that are taking place in Knox. For details refer to Appendix 3.

## **5. Matters for Discussion**

### **5.1 Upcoming Events**

- Please refer to Appendix 3 to see a list of upcoming events.
- Cr Nicole mentioned a multicultural event is being organised on Saturday 23 March 2024 as part of Cultural Diversity week. Details of this event will be promoted via Council's social media in due course.

## **6. Meeting Finalisation**

### **6.1 Review Actions to be taken**

- As outlined in table below.

### **6.2 Meeting Evaluation**

- Committee members indicated they were satisfied with the discussion and were encouraged to provide any further feedback to Linda.
- Meeting concluded at 8.45 pm.

### **6.3 Next meeting**

- Next meeting will take place on Thursday 2 May 2024.

Action	Who	Status
<p>Following the February storms and power outage. Linda to request statistics from Customer Service which captured how many reports were made relating to tree damage.</p> <p>The Communications team may like to communicate the work Council’s arborists perform throughout community.</p>	<p>Linda</p>	
<p>Advocacy letter to be sent to the Minister (for Housing of Victoria, The Honourable Colin Brooks MP) requesting consideration be given to enable people to rent out a room, without the extra money having an impact on their income (there was a suggestion to refer to the international /exchange student framework that enables people to supplement their income without being taxed).</p>	<p>Camille</p>	<p>To commence: Advocacy to occur at completion of the project (November 2023) to maximize impact and have support from Knox City Council.</p>

## Emergency Resilience pulse check

### What issues/obstacles do you believe were experienced from a senior's perspective?

- **Meals on Wheels**
  - Meals on Wheels (MoWs) had an existing plan in place to manage this type of risk and the process went to plan.
  - The MoWs team pulled together and made sure clients without power were supported. In some instances this meant clients were unable to accept their meal delivery, because they were unable to store the food safely. In other circumstances, volunteers needed to collect meals from clients to avoid any food being consumed that may have gone bad.
  - The MoWs volunteers were integral in making sure clients remained supported.
  
- **Bridges Connecting Communities**
  - Bridges Connecting Communities were offline in Knoxfield for four days. During this time, approximately 150 clients had left messages, however, Bridges were unable to access their database during this time.
  - Bridges is now looking at developing a risk assessment which may include generators.
  - AUSNET and the retailer did not have information that was accessible or accurate. They had listed 29 regions across Knoxfield, with estimates of when power would be back, but this information was reportedly difficult to interpret. This has identified an advocacy piece for Bridges.
  - While Bridges staff were able to work remotely, some clients were unaware of what was going on and had waited outside for collection.
  - Council was very supportive from Wednesday onwards.
  - Funding for the Vulnerable Person's register is no longer available, however, it is essential for the Knox region. There were 329 power dependent clients within Knox and they were contacted. However, there is an additional cohort of clients who are serviced who do not have family members or contacts who can check in on them.
  
- **General**
  - People who rely on medical devices charged by power, were unable to operate these.
  - There were reports of some residents being unable to open their garage without access to power, which meant they were unable to drive their car. This increased their vulnerability. It was noted a resident in Yarra Ranges had experienced a similar situation back in 2021. This resulted in the Yarra Ranges resident being trapped in her home for five days.
  - In addition to power, some residents lost communications and water. Fortunately, service providers such as Knox Infolink, the Your Library network, Orange Sky and more, were able to provide support to community.
  - Council's Rowville Community Centre reportedly had a number of people who accessed the Centre's showers.
  - Even though some people were prepared with generators and other items to cope with this type of emergency. Some residents found that their batteries and/or fuel had expired, which meant they were unable to rely on these back-ups. This identified a need for communicating the importance of regular maintenance.

- Fen was appreciative of the communication from Council and was able to share this with her clients including directing people on where to go for a hot shower or how to access a warm meal.
- The magnitude and unpredictability of the storm was incredible. In the Knoxfield area, it presented more like a tornado around the business and manufacturing community. But despite the destruction, it was heartening to see how people came together to support each other and clean-up debris.
- Fallen trees and debris were a big challenge. Cr Nicole had received reports from community who were angry/fearful that trees in their area had not being maintained. However, these concerns are often perceived, as there is a team of arborists who maintain the trees throughout the municipality.

**Action:**

- **Linda to request statistics from Customer Service which captured how many reports were made relating to tree damage.**
  - **Communications team may like to communicate the work Council's arborists perform throughout community.**
- **Is there anything else Council could do for communications?**
    - Key information is that people need to know **what** is going on and the **timeframes**.
    - The Vic Emergency app was overloaded and Council received over 8,500 calls.
    - In the past, community tended to rely on local emergency radio reports during a crisis. However, this seems to have fallen away. Eastern FM is Knox's local community station, but access to AM radio isn't common. The vast majority of Bridges clients listen to 3AW, however, it was reportedly difficult to interpret what AUSNET were saying.
    - There was a noticeable divide between those with digital access and those without. Going forward, further consideration needs to be given on how to communicate with vulnerable clients who are not digitally connected.
    - Given not all people have access to digital technology, other communication methods are required.
    - There was a suggestion that Council's website could be updated with key information eg highlighting which areas across Knox are offline.
    - Suggestion to create posters and display information at key locations eg Civic Centre and Your Library.
    - Encourage community groups and service providers to put Emergency Planning on their regular meeting agendas for short 5-minute conversations, but keeping this conversation front of mind, will help.
    - It's important to learn from the past, understand what works well and implement it going forward eg fire prone areas rely on 'phone trees'.
    - Positive lessons are being identified, as well as areas to continuously improve.
    - Could we utilise satellite technology, instead of digital eg Starlink?

## KAAAC Workplan for 2024

**We need to identify outcomes, so that at the end of 2024 we can reflect on whether we achieved our mission.**

- When looking at social isolation and loneliness, this could include:
  - Identify the need, find the reason and communicate benefits of social connection
  - Acknowledgement of the research being conducted on the topic of social isolation and loneliness by Swinburne University, Monash University and Bolton Clarke (to name a few). Therefore, Council can refer to this research, without having to replicate this. Instead, Council could concentrate on action based activities eg work with community to find the results.

### Communication

- How can we reach people better?
  - Share information
  - Provide information to community connectors and community leaders and empower them to support their individual networks
  - Communication tools could include information packs, talks, internet based information
  - How could we engage shop keepers better? eg display a poster outlining where people could go for connection if feeling lonely
  - Replicate the 'Be Kind' campaign, highlighting connection throughout Knox
  - Promote connection through the Zest4Life booklet. In addition, Sheridan could create content that relates to creating connections within community
  - We need to consider multiple channels of communication.
    - Brain bubble: what if Council collaborated with the various community newspapers across Knox, in an attempt to reach vulnerable people who are not digitally connected?
    - Are we using social media optimally? eg 'Are You Okay Day' is now widely known. Could we replicate something like this for social isolation?
    - Can we produce more flyers?
  - Recognising that social isolation and loneliness is a broad subject, could this be focused on something that is achievable? eg: "Men in Ferntree Gully, Boronia and Bayswater." Then create a project with measurable outcomes.
  - Turning up to a club or activity for the first time can be challenging for some people. Often there is a need to go with someone. The Living Our Best Life project offers this, however, there is a challenge in finding volunteer mentors.
  - A collaborative approach across Council and various service providers and social clubs is vital in solving this challenge together. If Council, Your Library, the community houses, Bridges, U3A Knox etc all worked on this together, then they could make a huge impact!
  - Suggestion to paint (or use decals) the community buses within Knox (not just Council buses, but include Bridges etc) in bright colours and call them the 'Knox friendship bus'. This would generate interest. Eastgate North could have similar signage/decals.

## Upcoming events (note this is not a complete list)

- **Age Friendly Cities 2023 survey - small group sessions**

Small group sessions will be scheduled to explore the common themes of the Age Friendly Cities 2024 survey and identify. Feedback from the survey and small group sessions will assist with the preparation of the progress report to be submitted to the World Health Organisation.

**Topic:** Community Safety

**Date:** Monday 26 February 2024

**Time:** 1.30 pm to 3pm

**Location:** Carrington Park Leisure Centre

**Topic:** Community Transport

**Date:** Tuesday 27 February 2024

**Time:** 1.30 pm to 3pm

**Location:** Eastgate North Conference Room

**Topic:** Stretching Your Weekly Budget

**Date:** Wednesday 28 February 2024

**Time:** 10.30am to 12pm

**Location:** Eastgate North Conference Room

**Topic:** Emergency Planning and Preparedness

**Date:** Thursday 29 February 2024

**Time:** 10.30am to 12pm

**Location:** Eastgate North Conference Room

- **Knox Festival**

**Date:** Saturday 2 March 2024

**Time:** 10am to 10pm

**Location:** Wally Tew Reserve, Ferntree Gully

- **Orana's Carer's Walk**

**Dates:** Thursday 7 March and Thursday 22 April 2024

**Time:** 9.30 am to 11am

**Location:** Meet at Orana Neighbourhood House and walk to Billy's Kitchen

- **Knox Seniors Park 'Come and Try' sessions**

**Dates:** Tuesday 5, 12, 19 & 26 March 2024

**Time:** 9.30 am to 11am

**Location:** Carrington Park, 20 O'Connor Road, Knoxfield



- **Zest4Life bus tour – The Nobbies**  
**Date:** Friday 15 March 2024  
**Time:** 8.30 am to 4pm
- **Guided Cultural Walk**  
**Date:** Saturday 16 March 2024  
**Time:** 10am to 11.30 am  
**Location:** Blind Creek
- **Become a Dementia Friend**  
**Date:** Wednesday 20 March 2024  
**Time:** 1.30 pm to 3pm  
**Location:** Knox Civic Centre, Knox City Council
- **Cultural Diversity Week - Multicultural Event**  
**Date:** Saturday 23 March 2024  
**Time:** 12pm to 4pm  
**Location:** Carrington Park, 20 O’Connor Road, Knoxfield
- **Dancing with Dementia**  
**Date:** Monday 22 April 2024  
**Time:** 10.00 am to 11.00 am  
**Location:** Knox Community Baptist Hall, Boronia
- **Music Takes Me Back**  
**Date:** Thursday 9 May 2024  
**Time:** 10.30 am to 12.00 pm  
**Location:** Knox Community Baptist Hall, Boronia
- **Healthy Brains with Dr Cassandra Szoek**  
**Date:** Tuesday 21 May 2024  
**Time:** 1.30 pm to 3pm  
**Location:** The new Knox Library at Westfield
- **Find Your Joy**  
**Date:** Thursday 30 May 2024  
**Time:** 10am to 2pm  
**Location:** U3A Knox, Ferntree Gully