

MINUTES

Meeting of Council

Held at the
Civic Centre
511 Burwood Highway
Wantirna South
On
Monday 22 July 2024

The Agenda for the Meeting of Council, Monday 22 July 2024, forms part of these Minutes and is attached in full at the end of the Minutes.

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



The meeting commenced at 7:00pm.

PRESENT:

<i>Cr J Dwight (Mayor)</i>	<i>Chandler Ward</i>
<i>Cr S Grasso (Deputy Mayor)</i>	<i>Dinsdale Ward</i>
<i>Cr M Timmers-Leitch</i>	<i>Collier Ward</i>
<i>Cr Y Allred</i>	<i>Baird Ward</i>
<i>Cr M Baker</i>	<i>Dobson Ward</i>
<i>Cr S Laukens</i>	<i>Friberg Ward</i>
<i>Cr L Cooper</i>	<i>Scott Ward</i>
<i>Cr D Pearce</i>	<i>Taylor Ward</i>
<i>Mr B Dobson</i>	<i>Chief Executive Officer</i>
<i>Mr G Curcio</i>	<i>Director - Customer and Performance</i>
<i>Mr G Thorne</i>	<i>Director – Infrastructure</i>
<i>Mr M Kelleher</i>	<i>Director - City Livability</i>
<i>Ms J Chalkley</i>	<i>Director – Connected Communities</i>
<i>Mr A Dowling</i>	<i>Manager, Governance and Risk</i>

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

“Knox City Council acknowledges we are on the traditional land of the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people and pay our respects to elders both past and present.”

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1 Apologies and Requests for Leave of Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Seymour.

2 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

Councillor Laukens foreshadowed declaring a general conflict of interest in Item 8.4 - Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme 2024-25.

3 Confirmation of Minutes

Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting of Council held on Monday 24 June 2024

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Dwight

SECONDED: Councillor Timmers-Leitch

That the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on Monday 24 June 2024 be confirmed subject to a correction to reflect the attendance of Councillor Laukens, Councillor Allred and Councillor Dwight at the Memorial Service of Mr Jospeh Cullen, CEO of 'Your Library'.

CARRIED

4 Presentations, Petitions and Memorials

Petition – Objection to Additional Public Housing on Karoo Road, Rowville

Councillor Laukens noted Council has received a petition with 21 signatures as at the date of submission on 8 July 2024 to formally object to the proposed construction of an additional six (6) Council units at 9 and 11 Karoo Road, Rowville.

In submitting the petition, the lead petitioner argues that local residents have significant concerns regarding the potential impact the development may have in the community in addition to ongoing disturbances caused by the existing Council home residents. The primary concerns relate to the following:

- Social issues and disturbances caused by existing Council home residents;
- The safety concerns caused by the dumping of excessive trash from Council home residents on the nature strip;
- Privacy Issues;
- Effect on community character; and
- Impact on property values

Cr Laukens emphasised that this public housing construction proposal on Karoo Road in Rowville has not been initiated by Council and falls under the remit of the State Government through the 'Homes Victoria' project.

Councillor Laukens noted the petition had been circulated to all Councillors and was raised at the Meeting for noting.

Councillor Laukens advised she would be liaising with her colleagues to provide a response on behalf of Councillors to the lead petitioner in due course.

5 Reports by Councillors

5.1.1 Councillor Cooper

Councillor Cooper:

- Noted there have been no reports of crime in the Wantirna South area in the past few months, with staff advising that Knox Police have notified Council that perpetrators of prior crimes have been caught.

5.1.2 Councillor Timmers-Leitch

Councillor Timmers-Leitch reported attending the following meetings:

- CEO Performance and Remuneration Committee Meeting
- Municipal Association of Victoria Women for Council Meeting at Kingston City Council
- VLGA Local Women Leading Change Handbook Launch
- Environment Advisory Committee

Councillor Timmers-Leitch also:

- Outlined there are less than 100 days remaining until the Local Government Elections in Victoria and encouraged candidates to think about their campaigns, noting there is a goal from the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Victorian Local Government Association for 1000 women to run for Council. Discussions are underway to encourage a diverse range of candidates, given more than 30% of Knox residents were born overseas.
- Invited any prospective Collier Ward candidates for a chat.

5.1.3 Councillor Grasso

Councillor Grasso reported attending the following meetings:

- Attended the ALGA National Assembly Conference where sessions were held regarding Artificial Intelligence impacts, demographic changes, disaster management and modern approaches to urban planning which form part of her Key Learnings report.
- Met with the Minister for Infrastructure and Local Government, The Hon. Catherine King MP and Mary Doyle MP to advocate for Knox projects including in Lewis Park.
- Enjoyed the production of 'Radium Girls' at 1812 Theatre.
- Opened a recent Print and Drawing exhibition at The Hut Gallery in Ferntree Gully with brilliant work available for sale
- Met with the Executive team and players at Fairpark Junior Football Club in a training session and observed their inclusivity as a club in providing fitness and social benefits.
- Participated in Story Time at Knox Library which is offered from Tuesday to Friday mornings for different age groups including in different community languages on Fridays.

- Attended the Business Tree Planting Event with the Knox Council Biodiversity team to educate the public on the inter-connectedness of flora and fauna along with the practice of indigenous tree and shrub planting.

Councillor Grasso also:

- Acknowledged enquiries regarding parking availability for workers at the Studfield Shopping strip.
- Noted the Immerse Public Art Festival will continue until 28 July and includes bus tours, pop-up art and performance art with installations in the Knox Community Arts Centre, Westfield Knox Ozone, Bayswater, Boronia Library, Millers Homestead, Stamford Park and more, as further information can be found via <https://www.knox.vic.gov.au/about-immerse>

5.1.4 Councillor Allred

Councillor Allred reported attending the following meetings:

- CEO Performance and Remuneration Committee Meeting
- Refugee Week Event – Building Connections between Multicultural Communities at the Knox Community Arts Centre
- National Tree Day Event at Taylors Lane Linear Reserve, Rowville

Councillor Allred also:

- Noted the reported and well-managed fire which damaged a toilet block at Tormore Reserve last month as well as more anti-social behaviour of fires being lit around Fairpark Reserve which have been reported. Council staff and Police are investigating these incidents and the Neighbourhood Policing team are patrolling the area while encouraging people to remain vigilant.
- Received reports regarding building defects in the new Fairpark Reserve pavilion which are being addressed by Council staff and the Mayor.
- Received concerns in person and through ‘Snap Send Solve’ regarding the condition of State-managed roads such as on Scoresby Road, Mountain Highway and Dorset Road; acknowledging the frustration of residents who are seeking road maintenance and will continue to advocate for active repairs and maintenance with relevant state bodies.

5.1.5 Councillor Pearce

Councillor Pearce:

- Attended the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) Conference to network and gain intelligence of sector challenges which include the financial sustainability challenges of rate-capping and the changes to the Local Government Act which he believes have been set up by the Government to suppress Councillors from criticising Government decisions.
- Based on discussions at ALGA, shared a contrast of the lack of resources at Kangaroo Island Council with 23 staff servicing over 900 residents.

- Noted the current parking permit system is attached to the vehicle registration and not a property which means they cannot be given to a visitor. Believes this issue should be revised urgently based on recent complaints from residents.

5.1.6 Councillor Laukens

Councillor Laukens reported attending the following meetings:

- Attended and encouraged attendance to the Scouts Gang Show ‘Once Upon A Crime’, praising the stamina of the children involved which included months of work from scout participants including the following groups from Knox:
 - 1st Ferntree Gully Scout Group
 - 1st Knoxfield Scouts Group
 - 1st Rowville Scouts
 - 1st The Basin Scout Group
 - 1st Wantirna South Scouts Group
 - 2nd/3rd Bayswater Scouts Group
 - 4th Knox Group
 - 8th Knox Scout Group
 - ASF 1st Rowville
 - Ferntree Gully Girl Guides
 - Heany Park Scout Group
 - Knoxfield Triple N Olaves Girl Guides.
- CEO Performance and Remuneration Committee Meeting
- Victorian Local Government Association – Election period Considerations for Councillors Session
- Eastern Transport Coalition Meeting
- ALGWA Dr Louise Mahler Workshop
- Catch-Up with Eastern Region Group of Councils Members and Municipal Association of Victoria Metropolitan East Delegates
- Attended the Immerse Public Art Trail Bus Tour which has prompted positive feedback from residents. More information can be found at <https://www.knox.vic.gov.au/about-immerse>

5.1.7 Councillor Dwight

Councillor Dwight:

- Participated in the Greater South East Melbourne (GSEM) Delegation to Canberra Jobs and Skills Roadmap Launch in Canberra, opened by the Minister for Skills and Training The Hon. Brendan O’Connor with attendees including Mary Doyle MP, The Hon. Catherine King MP, Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, The Hon. Andrew Giles MP and the Deputy Prime Minister The Hon. Richard Marles MP. Recognised the work of the Agenda Group in organising meetings with Ministers and Policy Advisors led by independent Board members and helped by Mayors, Chief Executive Officers and community representatives.

- Acknowledged the contributions of community representatives of the following groups with Ministers and Policy Advisors as part of the GSEM Jobs and Skills Roadmap Launch:
 - Local Learning and Employment Network
 - Chisholm TAFE
 - Federation University
 - South East Councils for Climate Change Alliance
 - Women/s Health in the South East
- As a result of the GSEM Jobs and Skills Roadmap Launch, a constructive meeting was organised with Bruce Dobson and the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations The Hon. Tony Burke MP.
- CEO Performance and Remuneration Committee Meeting
- Victorian Local Government Association Session – Election Period Considerations for Councillors
- NGA Listening Session – National Housing and Community Infrastructure
- Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly
- ALGWA Networking Breakfast
- Meeting with Mary Doyle MP, Canberra
- Radio Eastern 98.1FM Mayoral Monthly Interview
- Eastern Region Group Mayors Monthly Breakfast Meeting
- Eastern Region Group of Councils (ERG) committee meeting - Chair
- Chair, Eastern Region Group Members meeting with Municipal Association of Victoria Metro East Delegates, including President David Clark
- Environment Advisory Committee
- South East Councils Climate Change Alliance 2024 Leadership Forum
- National Tree Planting Day Event at Taylors Lane Linear Reserve, Rowville
- Immerse 2024 Public Art Trail Bus Tour

Councillor Dwight also:

- Outlined that the motions from Knox City Council at the Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly were put and carried, relating to the rising cost of insurance with consequent risks to residents and Councils; and the challenges of vulnerable people to attain digital ID's, as leaders wrestle with these emerging problems without viable solutions.
- Noted the advocacy of the Eastern Region Group of Councils on Plan for Victoria and Housing targets is gaining momentum with upcoming lunches to be held with elected representatives in August and September.
- Noted that the Windfall Gains Tax issue is drawing increasing attention, with concerns being raised about the State Government's potential removal of local government planning powers. There is hope that the State Government will recognise the value of local government expertise and communication in the planning process.
- Acknowledged the recent flooding of sports fields, reserves and parks; expressing appreciation for Council officers for cordoning off ovals to try and drain the surfaces.

- Outlined that the Forest Road Drain at Koolunga Native Reserve has been named 'Wayut Creek' (Stringybark). Thanked the Wurundjeri Land Council and Friends of Koolunga Native Reserve group for achieving this outcome.

5.1.8 Councillor Baker

Councillor Baker reported attending the following meetings:

- Knox Active Ageing Advisory Committee Meeting
- Ferntree Gully Football Netball Club President's Lunch
- NAIDOC Football Round at Talaskia Reserve
- Knox Disability Advisory Committee Meeting

6 Planning Matters

6.1 Report of Planning Applications Decided Under Delegation 1 June 2024 to 30 June 2024

SUMMARY

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

RECOMMENDATION

That the planning applications decided under delegation reports (between 1 June 2024 to 30 June 2024) be noted.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Baker

SECONDED: Councillor Grasso

That the planning applications decided under delegation reports (between 1 June 2024 to 30 June 2024) be noted.

CARRIED

7 Public Question Time

Question Time commenced at 7:29pm.

The following questions were raised with Council:

7.1.1 Question One - Robert Mason

As a result of several preschools being closed in recent times, what is Council's long term strategic plan for these facilities that are now under-utilised.

Will Council be undertaking a process to reactivate these facilities and return them for broader community use?-

The Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley responded:

- Strategic work is currently underway by Council Officers that will inform a future Council decision on the use of underutilised kindergarten sites.
- Officers are reviewing its Kindergarten Infrastructure Service Plan in collaboration with the Victorian Government Department of Education and this will provide a clearer picture of the municipality's requirements for sessional kindergarten and infrastructure over the next decade, also taking into consideration the changes to the reform roll-out.
- Council has also recently commenced work on a Strategic Property Prioritisation Framework that will support Council's ability to plan and prioritise its management of the asset portfolio. Council will be better able to proactively and strategically identify land and buildings that are surplus to needs or present alternative value-add opportunities.

7.1.2 Question Two - Darren Wallace

Is Council concerned by exponential spread of the local laws listed weeds, English Ivy (*Hedera helix*) in Knox, and particularly the areas of Ferntree Gully and The Basin?

The Director Infrastructure, Grant Thorne responded:

- Council is concerned about the spread of noxious and environmental weeds throughout the municipality, including in our sites of biological significance. Our Biodiversity team diligently manages these sites, employing a range of weed control measures including mechanical removal, chemical application, and even the innovative use of goats in select areas to reduce weed growth.
- Beyond areas of biological significance, Council actively collaborates with the community, Friends of Groups, and other authorities such as Melbourne Water and Parks Victoria to manage weed infestations which are everywhere. Knox has successfully secured annual grants through the Peri-urban Weed Management Partnerships (PWMP) to assist with weed control across the municipality. Director Thorne has previously provided you with detailed information regarding these weed management efforts.
- Of note, the PWMP grant for 2023/24 allocated \$15,000 to private property owners in The Basin, specifically targeting weed control on private land. This initiative demonstrates Council's commitment to addressing weed issues beyond public spaces.

7.1.3 Question Three - Darren Wallace

Can Council provide an update on the Environmental Weed Officer position, as previously flagged in numerous formal and informal discussions held with Council, including a presentation to the Council's Environment Advisory Committee last year?

The Director Infrastructure, Grant Thorne responded:

- Council appreciates your ongoing interest and engagement in this crucial environmental issue of environmental weeds. I acknowledge your submission and verbal presentation requesting resources for the identification, treatment, and control of environmental weeds as part of the engagement process for the 2024/25 Council budget.
- While additional funding has not been separately included in the budget, as previously discussed, we are internally exploring the possibility of reallocating existing resources to partially address this issue. While this is not a commitment to provide resources, it remains an option under consideration.
- Council operates within a constrained budget environment and must carefully consider the allocation of resources across all services provided to the community. We strive to maintain a thoughtful and balanced approach, recognising the need to address the various competing demands on Council services.

7.1.4 Question Four - Jessica Nixon

Please advise why the operator Belgravia Leisure is not held accountable for continuing to not meet the requirements of their current contract or uphold the values and beliefs of Knox City Council?

Your Council Health and Wellbeing Plan states that a priority is to enable to community to be active. Yet, you also agreed to the decision to axe the creche service. In addition, the outdoors pools have not been in operation for years, the facility has fallen into a state of disrepair and equipment is continuously broken. This is all fact.

Mayor Dwight responded:

- The decision to discontinue the service is a business decision and one Belgravia has had to make in consideration of the long-term viability of Leisureworks. It follows some significant changes to childcare and the requirements of providers under state legislation, which Belgravia has had to consider as they seek to continue operating this health and wellbeing service to the Knox community. While Knox Council oversees the contract arrangements, Belgravia is not subject to Knox Council's Health & Wellbeing Plan and we cannot impose an unsustainable service requirement on Belgravia.
- Monitored regularly by our Sports and Leisure Team, Belgravia is materially compliant with their contract terms and conditions and continues to meet the various obligations they have under the contract. The outdoor pool is currently closed and expected to remain closed. An independent audit was completed on the ageing outdoor aquatic infrastructure which deemed it not-operational due to significant structural issues. Council staff have engaged a specialist leisure contractor to provide recommendations regarding the planning process and potential future works on the outdoor area at Knox Leisureworks.

7.1.5 Question Five - Jessica Nixon

In addition to my first question, why was the new renewed contract agreed to without the Sport and Recreation team fact checking Belgravia Leisure?

This is in regards to creche attendance. Furthermore, why is the renewed contract not available for public viewing?

Mayor Dwight responded:

- Contracts of this nature typically contain a range of commercial in-confidence information as well as information defined as confidential under the Local Government Act 2020. As a result, such contracts are generally not publicly available. If there are any specific areas of interest or concern with regard to the contract, you are welcome to direct those specific queries in writing to officers who will consider what, if any, information from the contract can be disclosed.

Question Time Concluded at 7:44pm.

8 Officer Reports

8.1 Housing Monitoring Report for 2023 Calendar Year

SUMMARY

This report summarises the findings of Council's 16th annual Housing Monitoring Program for the 2023 calendar year. The Housing Monitoring Program is intended to assess Knox's housing development alignment with the six objectives of the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*.

The following are the highlights of the key findings in this report:

- **The trend in the number of new dwellings expected to be constructed has increased slightly since COVID.** The planning and subdivision permits approved in 2023 were 134. Taking into account demolitions, if all these residential planning permits were fully developed, this could potentially result in a net increase of 384 additional new dwellings in Knox. These figures are slightly above the 2021 and 2022 figure of 334 and 373 respectively. However, the 2023 figure was still lower than the housing approvals in the seven years before 2021 (2014-2020).
- **New dwellings approved in 2023 were more consistent with the preferred character nominated in the Housing Strategy 2015 than previous years.** The overall average percentage of new dwellings approved in 2023 whose typology was consistent with their Housing Strategy Area was 88%. This was a significant improvement over the 2022 figure of 69%. In fact, 2023 had the highest average percentage of dwellings being sited in their preferred Housing Strategy Areas since 2016. The second highest was 78% in 2020, and the lowest was 68% in 2016. The significant improvements in 2023 suggested that the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* continued to deliver positive results by encouraging appropriate development across the municipality.
- **There was a significant increase in dwelling density within Local Living, but a marginal increase within Bush Suburban, Knox Neighbourhood and Activity Areas, when compared to 2022.** The analysis of approved planning permits by Housing Strategy Area in 2022, with reference to dwelling density per hectare, showed that the Bush Suburban areas and Knox Neighbourhood areas increased by 1 dwelling per hectare each, while Activity Areas increased by 3 dwellings per hectare. However, the dwelling density per hectare in Local Living increased by 15 dwellings per hectare when compared to 2022. These outcomes were in alignment with the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*, because the strategy encouraged lower density development in Bush Suburban and Knox Neighbourhood areas but supported high density development in the Local Living and Activity Areas.
- **There was a considerable increase in apartment approvals in 2023, compared with previous years, whilst aged care development remained stagnant.** Approved planning permits in 2023 have yielded 59 apartments – a noticeable growth from 2022, where no single apartment was approved (4 apartments were approved in 2021). However, just like 2022, no residential aged-care facility was approved in 2023. This was in sharp contrast with 2021, where 214 beds in residential aged-care facilities were approved.
- **There was a small increase in building permits issued in 2023 when compared to the previous year.** Six hundred and forty-three (643) building permits were issued in 2023 compared with 588 in 2022. But the 2023 figure was still not a marked improvement. In fact, while 2022 had the lowest figure since 2017, approvals in 2023 were the third lowest. As

building permits provide more certainty as to what is likely to be built in Knox than planning permits, it is important to track the number of building approvals, as this gives a clearer indication of whether the housing challenge could be addressed within the short term or not.

- **Escalating housing costs, very low availability of affordable rental options, and an identified shortfall in social housing remain critical policy concerns in Knox in 2023.** It was positive to observe that 19 social housing projects were added to the social housing stock in Knox in 2023. This was a noteworthy increase as only four social housing projects were delivered in Knox during 2022. However, a huge shortfall remained between social housing need and social housing supply in Knox. To increase the provision of social housing, Council continues to pursue policies and partnership opportunities to help facilitate solutions that can help address the identified shortfall.
- **VCAT decisions on planning permits was at its lowest in 2023.** With respect to coherence between Council and Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) decisions on residential planning permits, VCAT decided 12 residential planning applications for Knox in 2023. This was down from 14 in 2022 and 2021. Since 2012, the lowest VCAT cases recorded in Knox has been in 2023.
- **Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) targets for Knox in 2022-2023 were achieved (100%) on both potable water consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction.** This implied that all permits for applicable new dwellings in 2022-2023 met both targets. This was equally the case in 2021-2022 financial year.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Note and adopt the 16th Housing Monitoring Program Annual Report for 2023.
2. Note the issues highlighted in the Annual Report and consider these issues as part of the ongoing review of the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*.
3. Use the evidence in the Annual Report to continue to strongly advocate to State and Federal Government for an increase in resources for social and affordable housing in Knox as outlined in Action 2.1 of the adopted Knox Social and Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2023 – 2027.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Cooper

SECONDED: Councillor Allred

That Council:

1. **Note and adopt the 16th Housing Monitoring Program Annual Report for 2023;**
2. **Note the issues highlighted in the Annual Report and consider these issues as part of the ongoing review of the Knox Housing Strategy 2015; and**
3. **Use the evidence in the Annual Report to continue to strongly advocate to State and Federal Government for an increase in resources for social and affordable housing in Knox as outlined in Action 2.1 of the adopted Knox Social and Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2023 – 2027.**

CARRIED

8.2 Minor Grants Program Monthly Report and Individual Excellence Grants Update (Quarter 4)

SUMMARY

This report summarises the grant applications recommended for approval in July 2024 for the 2024-2025 Minor Grants Program. All applications have been assessed against the criteria set out in the Minor Grants Program Procedure.

Applications under the Minor Grants Procedure are limited to a maximum of \$3,000.00 within the current financial year.

This report also summarises the Excellence Grants for Individuals awarded in the last quarter of the 2023-2024 financial year. Under the Excellence Grants for Individuals Program, applicants who are selected to represent either Victoria or Australia in a competitive endeavour or an elite performance may receive funding assistance of \$150.00 for events within Victoria, \$250.00 for interstate events and \$400.00 for international events. The report also recommends rescission of the redundant Excellence Grants for Individuals Policy.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to:

1. Approve seven applications for a total of \$14,554.42 (excluding GST) as detailed below:

Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested (inc. GST)	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
Eastern Emergency Relief Network	Emergency Bedding & Manchester	\$2,000.00	\$1,818.18
Mr. Perfect Incorporated	Ferntree Gully Community BBQ's	\$2,500.00	\$818.18
Wantirna South Cricket Club	Club Maintenance Equipment	\$778.00	\$778.00
We Are One Club	Karaoke Activity	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
Upper Ferntree Gully CFA	Storm Salvage & Rescue Equipment	\$3,000.00	\$2,727.27
Liberty Avenue Three-Year-Old Kindergarten Inc	Teaching and Learning with Technology	\$2825.00	\$2,568.18
Fairpark Junior Football Club Inc	Fridge Replacement	\$2844.60	\$2,844.60
Total		\$16,947.60	\$14,554.42

2. Defer two applications requesting a total of \$3,807.00, as detailed below:

Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
Friends of Koolunga Native Reserve Inc	30 Years and Beyond	\$807.00	
Girl Guides Assoc of Vic – Knox District	Replacement and removal of defective ducted heater	\$3,000.00	
Total		\$3,807.00	

3. Refuse two applications requesting a total of \$6,000 as detailed below:

Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested	Reason for ineligibility
Lighthouse Foundation	Safe outdoor recreational spaces for vulnerable youth in Knox	\$3,000.00	This project is ineligible per the Minor Grants Program Procedure point 6.18 – for items normally part of a reasonable operating budget for the applicant organisation (e.g., salaries, rental, maintenance, utilities, cleaning, insurance etc.)
Geetanjali Australia Inc	Geetanjali	\$3,000.00	This project is ineligible per the Minor Grants Program Procedure point 6.6 - Must hold adequate public liability insurance appropriate to the activity outlined in the application.
Total		\$6,000.00	

4. Note that should the recommended grants be approved by Council, the remaining Minor Grants Program budget for 2024-2025 will be \$140,590.59 after GST adjustments.
5. Note the Excellence Grants for Individuals awarded in Quarter 4 of the 2023-2024 financial year as set out in Attachment 2, with a total value of \$750.00.
6. Note the Excellence Grants for Individuals Procedure has been developed and implemented in accordance with the Council-wide Grant Framework Policy, and consequently rescind the Excellence Grants for Individuals Policy (Attachment 4).

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Baker

SECONDED: Councillor Laukens

That Council resolve to:

1. Approve seven applications for a total of \$14,554.42 (excluding GST) as detailed below:

Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested (inc. GST)	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
Eastern Emergency Relief Network	Emergency Bedding & Manchester	\$2,000.00	\$1,818.18
Mr. Perfect Incorporated	Ferntree Gully Community BBQ's	\$2,500.00	\$818.18

Wantirna South Cricket Club	Club Maintenance Equipment	\$778.00	\$778.00
We Are One Club	Karaoke Activity	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
Upper Ferntree Gully CFA	Storm Salvage & Rescue Equipment	\$3,000.00	\$2,727.27
Liberty Avenue Three-Year-Old Kindergarten Inc	Teaching and Learning with Technology	\$2825.00	\$2,568.18
Fairpark Junior Football Club Inc	Fridge Replacement	\$2844.60	\$2,844.60
Total		\$16,947.60	\$14,554.42

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Girl Guides Assoc of Vic – Knox District	Replacement and removal of defective ducted heater	\$3,000.00	
Total		\$3,807.00	

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Geetanjali Australia Inc	Geetanjali	\$3,000.00	This project is ineligible per the Minor Grants Program Procedure point 6.6 - Must hold adequate public liability insurance appropriate to the activity outlined in the application.
Total		\$6,000.00	

4. Note that should the recommended grants be approved by Council, the remaining Minor Grants Program budget for 2024-2025 will be \$140,590.59 after GST adjustments.

5. **Note the Excellence Grants for Individuals awarded in Quarter 4 of the 2023-2024 financial year as set out in Attachment 2, with a total value of \$750.00.**
6. **Note the Excellence Grants for Individuals Procedure has been developed and implemented in accordance with the Council-wide Grant Framework Policy, and consequently rescind the Excellence Grants for Individuals Policy (Attachment 4).**

CARRIED

8.3 Review of Decision Making Framework and Use of Synthetic Surfaces on Council's Active Reserves Policy

SUMMARY

In September 2021, Council received a report exploring the benefits and constraints related to the use of synthetic surfaces for field sports. Council was also provided with a decision-making framework regarding the development and use of these types of fields to assist with case-by-case decisions.

The resolution resulting from that report was as follows:

That the Council:

1. Note the officer's report regarding synthetic surfaces when compared to conventional turf sporting fields;
2. Note that proposals to develop synthetic playing surfaces will be assessed on a case-by-case basis;
3. For the purpose of community consultation on the officer's recommendation that the south-west soccer pitch at RD Egan Lee Reserve be converted to a synthetic soccer pitch and the hockey proposal currently underway, endorse the Decision-Making Framework set out in section 2.4 and Attachment 1 of this report, given the time sensitivity of these proposals; and
4. Receive a further report reviewing the Decision-Making Framework following additional consultation with Councillors, and before any further assessments are determined.

This report responds to the last resolution (4), to receive a further report reviewing the decision making framework that has been developed to respond to proposals for large scale synthetic sports fields such as a hockey or soccer pitch.

The report also builds in a review of the Use of Synthetic Turf on Council's Active Reserves Policy, which was last reviewed in 2019 and refers to the use of limited smaller synthetic surface improvements including:

- Cricket pitch surrounds;
- Cricket pitch winter wicket covers;
- Boundary areas/run off areas; and
- Football/Soccer Goal Squares (hybrid synthetic).

The updated Policy also references the decision making framework and how it is to be utilised regarding large-scale developments for the future.

RECOMENDATION

That Council adopts the updated Use of Synthetic Turf on Council's Active Reserves Policy, (refer to Attachment 2) including the corresponding Synthetic Surface Development - Decision Making Framework (Refer to Attachment 1)

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Cooper

SECONDED: Councillor Timmers-Leitch

That Council adopts the updated Use of Synthetic Turf on Council's Active Reserves Policy, (refer to Attachment 2) including the corresponding Synthetic Surface Development - Decision Making Framework (Refer to Attachment 1).

CARRIED

A Division was called by Councillor Dwight

For the motion: Councillor Baker, Councillor Cooper, Councillor Grasso, Councillor Laukens, Councillor Pearce and Councillor Timmers-Leitch

Against the motion: Councillor Allred and Councillor Dwight

Abstention: Nil

CARRIED 6:2

8.4 Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme 2024-2025

SUMMARY

This report presents the recommendations of the Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme (LMCWGS) Panel for Council's 2024-2025 program allocation for funding. The annual LMCWGS supports community sporting and leisure organisations to undertake facility improvements on land owned or managed by Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Approves a funding allocation of \$75,778.64 (including GST) from the 2024-25 Leisure Minor Capital Works Grants Scheme Program to the applicant clubs nominated in Attachment 1.
2. Specifies that additional grant conditions are required for the sporting organisations listed in Attachment 2.
3. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person as the Chief Executive Officer selects) to inform applicant clubs of Council's decision.

Pursuant to Section 130 of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act) and Chapter 5 of the Governance Rules of Knox City Council, Councillor Laukens declared a general conflict of interest in this item on the grounds that she is a Committee Member for Knox Community Gardens Society Inc. who is a grant applicant under this item and has been aware of and participated in the preparation of this grant application on their behalf.

Councillor Laukens left the meeting at 8:11pm before the discussion and vote on item 8.4

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Allred

SECONDED: Councillor Grasso

That Council:

1. **Approves a funding allocation of \$75,778.64 (including GST) from the 2024-25 Leisure Minor Capital Works Grants Scheme Program to the applicant clubs nominated in Attachment 1.**
2. **Specifies that additional grant conditions are required for the sporting organisations listed in Attachment 2.**
3. **Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person as the Chief Executive Officer selects) to inform applicant clubs of Council's decision.**

CARRIED

Councillor Laukens returned to the meeting at 8:15pm after the vote on item 8.4

8.5 Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians Policy Review

SUMMARY

The Acknowledgment of Traditional Custodians Policy No 2005/17 (the Policy) was due for review in June 2021 and deferred to align with the development of Council's Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-2025. A review of the Policy commenced in October 2023, including a focus on understanding Traditional Owner land boundaries and aligning the Acknowledgment with contemporary contexts. The review also incorporated the development of draft Acknowledgement Guidelines, a new addition to the Policy. The purpose of the Guidelines is to further expand, educate and contextualise how Council can respectfully acknowledge Traditional Owners and Country at events, meetings, in statements and significant occasions.

A copy of the draft Policy with tracked changes is included as Attachment 1 and a draft clean copy with Acknowledgement Guidelines as Attachment 2.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to adopt the draft Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians Policy and Guidelines consistent with Attachment 2 of this report.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Laukens

SECONDED: Councillor Timmers-Leitch

That Council resolve to adopt the draft Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians Policy and Guidelines consistent with Attachment 2 of this report, and subject to the following amendments:

- 1. On page 5 Section 7 Acknowledgment Guidelines under heading "Past Examples of wording used by Knox City Council", include the traditional place name (Mount Corhanwarrabul) alongside reference to the Dandenong Ranges.**
- 2. On page 6 under heading "When is a Welcome to Country held?", replace the sentence "Elders are invited to give a Welcome to Country before significant public events, forums and functions." with "Elders are invited to give a Welcome to Country at the commencement of or during significant public events, forums and functions."**

CARRIED

8.6 Contract 3299: Kindergartens in Knox

SUMMARY

Council resolved in August 2023 to cease being an Early Years Manager (EYM) and an approved provider of sessional kindergarten (outside its two Hubs) by December 2024. Council values and supports the ongoing provision of sessional kindergarten in the Knox municipality, and to this end further resolved to make available 26 existing standalone kindergarten facilities to non-Council kindergarten service providers to provide sessional kindergarten as of 1 January 2025. This new arrangement brings Council in line with the sessional kindergarten operational model of most comparable local government areas in Victoria.

Primarily the Victorian Government is responsible for leading the delivery of education and development of services to children, through funding inclusive of “Free Kinder”, policy setting, and regulating the provision of kindergarten, in both sessional and long day care settings. In Council’s capacity as an infrastructure owner, it will lease existing stand-alone sessional kindergarten infrastructure to non-Council providers in response to our community expectations. This will ensure access to a mixed market of kindergarten to support free, quality early learning stand-alone sessional kindergarten to Knox families.

Council officers have undertaken an extensive procurement process, shadowed by the Victorian Government Department of Education to secure suitable non-Council sessional kindergarten providers to provide high quality kindergarten to the children of Knox. Given the scale and scope of the procurement, an independent Probitry Advisor, Hunt & Hunt Lawyers was engaged to ensure that good governance protocols were utilised throughout the process.

A two-stage procurement (tender) process, in-line with Council’s Procurement Policy, commenced with a Stage 1 Expression of Interest publicly advertised in October 2023. Nine conforming applications were received from sessional kindergarten providers who were then invited to submit their application to the Stage 2 Request for Proposal. Stage 2 commenced February 2024 and eight conforming applications were received, one sessional kindergarten provider subsequently withdrawing at this time.

The Stage 2 Request for Proposal process (including an information session, site visits, clarification and negotiation meetings, reference and financial checks) was conducted through March to June 2024. The Evaluation Panel has recommended five service providers, a mix of EYM’s and independent sessional kindergarten providers for the provision of high-quality sessional kindergarten from Council sessional kindergarten facilities (per Confidential Attachment 1). The Victorian Government Department of Education will grant service approvals (licenses) for these providers to operate stand –alone sessional kindergarten from leased kindergarten buildings commencing 1 January 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolves to:

1. Accept the tender submitted by the appointed Early Years Managers and independent providers (per Confidential Attachment 1) for the leasing of Council kindergarten facilities under *Contract 3299: Provision of Sessional Kindergarten in Council Facilities*.
2. Note the statutory process regarding the lease of land has been completed in accordance with Section 115 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

3. Enter into a lease for the kindergarten buildings listed for the terms outlined (per Confidential Attachment 1), for the purpose of providing sessional kindergarten services to the appointed tenderers. The annual rent payable is \$450 (including GST), increasing by 4% on the anniversary of the agreement, plus outgoings.
4. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person as the Chief Executive Officer delegates) to negotiate and execute all required leases.
5. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person the Chief Executive Officer delegates) as per Section 125 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, to communicate the content of the confidential attachments to the extent necessary at their discretion, including for the purpose of informing staff and the community about the content of the report and/or Council's decisions.
6. Note that following the execution of the lease:
 - a. Communications to announce appointed providers (tenants) and sites will commence, to staff, families and the wider community.
 - b. Council and the appointed providers (tenants) will apply to the Victorian Government Department of Education for transfer of service. The appointed providers will apply for service funding approval to commence kindergarten service provision from 1 January 2025.
 - c. Officers will commence discussions with appointed providers to explore future opportunities for Council's existing kindergarten workforce.
 - d. Officers will commence transition activities to ensure kindergarten service provision can commence from 1 January 2025.
 - e. Council will formally relinquish its role as an Early Years Manager with the Victorian Government Department of Education as of 31 December 2024.
 - f. Council will focus on its role as municipal planner and infrastructure owner and collaborate with non-Council providers to support continued access to quality early childhood education for the children and families of Knox.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Cooper

SECONDED: Councillor Laukens

That Council resolves to:

1. **Accept the tender submitted by the appointed Early Years Managers and independent providers (per Confidential Attachment 1) for the leasing of Council kindergarten facilities under *Contract 3299: Provision of Sessional Kindergarten in Council Facilities*.**
2. **Note the statutory process regarding the lease of land has been completed in accordance with Section 115 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.**
3. **Enter into a lease for the kindergarten buildings listed for the terms outlined (per Confidential Attachment 1), for the purpose of providing sessional kindergarten services to the appointed tenderers. The annual rent payable is \$450 (including GST), increasing by 4% on the anniversary of the agreement, plus outgoings.**
4. **Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person as the Chief Executive Officer delegates) to negotiate and execute all required leases.**
5. **Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person the Chief Executive Officer delegates) as per Section 125 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, to communicate the**

content of the confidential attachments to the extent necessary at their discretion, including for the purpose of informing staff and the community about the content of the report and/or Council's decisions.

6. Note that following the execution of the lease:
- a. Communications to announce appointed providers (tenants) and sites will commence, to staff, families and the wider community.
 - b. Council and the appointed providers (tenants) will apply to the Victorian Government Department of Education for transfer of service. The appointed providers will apply for service funding approval to commence kindergarten service provision from 1 January 2025.
 - c. Officers will commence discussions with appointed providers to explore future opportunities for Council's existing kindergarten workforce.
 - d. Officers will commence transition activities to ensure kindergarten service provision can commence from 1 January 2025.
 - e. Council will formally relinquish its role as an Early Years Manager with the Victorian Government Department of Education as of 31 December 2024.
 - f. Council will focus on its role as municipal planner and infrastructure owner and collaborate with non-Council providers to support continued access to quality early childhood education for the children and families of Knox.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

MOVED: Councillor Laukens

SECONDED: Councillor Baker

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

CARRIED

The substantive motion was put and CARRIED.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED: Councillor Pearce

SECONDED: Councillor Cooper

That Council adjourn the Meeting for 10 Minutes.

CARRIED

The Meeting was adjourned at 8:40pm and resumed at 8:51pm with all Councillors present except Councillor Seymour.

8.7 Contract 3353: Cyclic Arboricultural Services

SUMMARY

This report evaluates and recommends the appointment of a contractor for the delivery of proactive street tree maintenance services under Contract 3353 – Cyclic Arboricultural Services. This contract will commence 23 July 2024 and continue until 22 July 2026 with no extension options.

The scope of works includes proactive tree auditing, pruning, and removal, with an emphasis on supporting Knox Councils Urban Forest. This contracted tree maintenance service is primarily compliance based, with a key focus on adhering to specific vegetation clearances aligning to power lines a key focus.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to:

1. Award Contract 3353 - Cyclic Arboricultural Services, to Active Tree Services Pty Ltd (ABN 56 002 919 299), as a lump sum program, for a period of two (2) years, commencing 23 July 2024 until 22 July 2026.
2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person they nominate) to formalise and execute all required contract documentation.
3. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person they nominate) to execute all parts of this contract including CPI increase; and
4. Advise all tenderers accordingly.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Laukens

SECONDED: Councillor Timmers-Leitch

That Council resolve to:

1. Award Contract 3353 - Cyclic Arboricultural Services, to Active Tree Services Pty Ltd (ABN 56 002 919 299), as a lump sum program, for a period of two (2) years, commencing 23 July 2024 until 22 July 2026.
2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person they nominate) to formalise and execute all required contract documentation.
3. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person they nominate) to execute all parts of this contract including CPI increase; and
4. Advise all tenderers accordingly.

CARRIED

8.8 Community Engagement Policy

SUMMARY

The Community Engagement Policy has been reviewed and updated to reflect community, officer and Councillor feedback. The updated policy focusses on Council's commitment to undertaking genuine community engagement to inform its decisions, with strengthened principles to guide the design of community engagement programs.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the Community Engagement Policy as set out in Attachment 1.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Cooper

SECONDED: Councillor Baker

That Council endorse the Community Engagement Policy as set out in Attachment 1.

CARRIED

8.9 Lease Agreement - Victorian Electoral Commission

SUMMARY

Under the standard agreement between each individual Victorian Council and the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC), Councils can provide premises for the VEC to use to as an election office in their municipality, or alternatively the VEC will source a venue under a commercial lease at Council's expense.

Officers have been liaising with the VEC to locate a suitable venue for the 2024 Knox general election available between 5 August to 6 December 2024. A Council-owned venue has been identified adjacent to Picket Reserve at 4 Mossfield Avenue, Ferntree Gully which formerly accommodated the Knox Gymnastics Club.

As the venue is proposed to be exclusively occupied by the VEC, this report seeks authorisation from Council for the Chief Executive Officer (or such person as the Chief Executive Officer selects) to negotiate suitable terms and execute a formal lease agreement between Council and the VEC.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to:

1. Enter into a lease between Knox City Council (Lessor) and the Victorian Electoral Commission (Lessee) for the premises at 4 Mossfield Avenue, Ferntree Gully from 5 August to 6 December 2024 for the purpose of the 2024 Knox Council election and generally in accordance with the provisions of this report.
2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person as the Chief Executive Officer selects) to negotiate terms for the lease agreement; and
3. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person as the Chief Executive Officer selects) to prepare and execute all lease documentation required to execute the above-mentioned lease agreement once satisfied with these negotiations.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Timmers-Leitch

SECONDED: Councillor Baker

That Council resolve to:

1. **Enter into a lease between Knox City Council (Lessor) and the Victorian Electoral Commission (Lessee) for the premises at 4 Mossfield Avenue, Ferntree Gully from 5 August to 6 December 2024 for the purpose of the 2024 Knox Council election and generally in accordance with the provisions of this report.**
2. **Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person as the Chief Executive Officer selects) to negotiate terms for the lease agreement; and**
3. **Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person as the Chief Executive Officer selects) to prepare and execute all lease documentation required to execute the above-mentioned lease agreement once satisfied with these negotiations.**

CARRIED

9 Supplementary Items

Nil.

10 Notices of Motion

NOTICE OF MOTION 152

I hereby give notice that it is my intention to move the following motion at the Council Meeting on 22 July 2024:

That in relation to the 2014 adopted Stamford Park Masterplan (the Masterplan), Council:

1. Requests that a report on the implementation status of the Masterplan be presented at a Council meeting no later than March 2025 (unless deferred to a later date in consultation with the Mayor) to provide Council and the community with a comprehensive update on this major initiative.
2. Request the report referred to in Resolution 1 above include, but not necessarily be limited to:
 - a) A brief history of the project, including key milestones, decision points and announcements since the Masterplan was adopted;
 - b) A financial synopsis detailing:
 - i. The initial projected costs and funding sources for each Masterplan stage
 - ii. The actual total expenditure on the project for each Masterplan stage
 - iii. The revenue received from land sales;
 - c) An overview of variations (whether delivered or proposed) for each Masterplan stage compared to the adopted original Masterplan;
 - d) The current and projected ongoing maintenance costs associated with Stamford Park and relevant funding sources; and
 - e) A summary of Council's agreement with Melbourne Water for ongoing management and maintenance of the wetlands/Corhanwarrabul Creek flood plain.

Notice of Motion 152 was put forward by Councillor Seymour who was an apology for this Council meeting. For the purposes of efficiency under the Governance Rules and at the request of Councillor Seymour, the Mayor, Councillor Dwight proposed it be allowed to lapse and a Notice of Motion with the same content will be resubmitted to a future Council meeting.

Notice of Motion LAPSED.

11 Urgent Business

Nil.

12 Questions Without Notice

Nil.

13 Confidential Items

13.1 South East Metropolitan Advanced Waste Processing Procurement

PROCEDURAL MOTION

CLOSURE OF MEETING

MOVED: Councillor Timmers-Leitch

SECONDED: Councillor Cooper

That Council resolve to close the meeting in accordance with Section 66(2) of the Local Government Act 2020 in order to consider Item 13.1 – South East Metropolitan Advanced Waste Processing Procurement, because it relates to:

- legal privileged information, being confidential communication between Council and its lawyer created for the dominant purpose of the lawyer providing legal advice to Council;
- private commercial information, that is a trade secret possessed by an affected party and gives them an advantage over their competitors; and
- private commercial information, that if released, would unreasonably expose an affected party to disadvantage because it would release financial information about the business that is not generally available to their competitors.

CARRIED

THE MEETING WAS CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC AT 9:07pm

MEETING CLOSED AT 9:12pm

Minutes of Meeting confirmed at the
Meeting of Council
held on Monday, 26 August 2024

.....
Chairperson

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

AGENDA



Meeting of Council

To be held at the

Civic Centre

511 Burwood Highway

Wantirna South

On

Monday 22 July 2024 at 7:00 PM

This meeting will be conducted as a hybrid meeting

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Bruce Dobson
Chief Executive Officer

1 Apologies and Requests for Leave of Absence

2 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

3 Confirmation of Minutes

Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting of Council held on Monday 24 June 2024

4 Presentations, Petitions and Memorials

5 Reports by Councillors

6 Planning Matters

6.1 Report of Planning Applications Decided Under Delegation 1 June 2024 to 30 June 2024

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

SUMMARY

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

RECOMMENDATION

That the planning applications decided under delegation reports (between 1 June 2024 to 30 June 2024) be noted.

1. REPORT

Details of planning applications decided under delegation from 1 June 2024 to 30 June 2024 are attached. The applications are summarised as follows:

Application Type	No.
Building & Works: Residential	4
Other	3
Subdivision	13
Units	12
Tree Removal / Pruning	13
Variation to Restrictive Covenant	2
Signage	7
TOTAL	54

2. CONFIDENTIALITY

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

Attachments

Nil

Knox City Council

Planning Applications Decided Under Delegation

1 June 2024 and 30 June 2024

Ward	No/ Type	Address	Description	Decision
Baird	2024/9037	83 Power Road BORONIA VIC 3155	Four lot subdivision (approved unit development)	19/06/2024 Approved
Baird	2024/9036	14 Wilson Street FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	Two lot Subdivision (Approved unit development)	21/06/2024 Approved
Baird	2024/9041	13 McMahons Road FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	Two lot subdivision (approved unit development)	26/06/2024 Approved
Baird	2024/6194	9 Benbow Crescent BORONIA VIC 3155	The Pruning of one (1) Eucalyptus melliodora (Yellowbox) and one (1) Eucalyptus tereticornis (Forest Red Gum)	21/06/2024 Approved
Baird	2024/6218	CB219 Pavilion 16 Tormore Road BORONIA VIC 3155	Buildings and Works (Sports Pavilion additions and upgrades)	4/06/2024 Approved
Baird	2024/9038	2 Davey Street BORONIA VIC 3155	Two lot Subdivision (Approved unit development)	17/06/2024 Approved
Baird	2023/6143	12 Loretto Avenue FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	The development of the land for two (2) double storey dwellings	20/06/2024 Notice of Decision
Baird	2024/6267	19 & 21 Iris Crescent BORONIA VIC 3155	Display of business identification signage	20/06/2024 Approved
Baird	2023/6287	268 Boronia Road BORONIA VIC 3155	Construction of three (3) double storey dwellings, tree removal and access to a road in a Transport 2 Zone	7/06/2024 Approved
Baird	2023/6449	89 Burke Road FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	Development of two (2) double-storey dwellings	19/06/2024 Notice of Decision
Baird	2023/6464	5/924 Mountain Highway BAYSWATER VIC 3153	Construction of a mezzanine office within the footprint of the existing factory and the reduction of the car parking requirements under Clause 52.06	7/06/2024 Approved
Chandler	2024/6212	AGE CARE 67 Mount View Road THE BASIN VIC 3154	Removal of one (1) Hesperocyparis lusitanica (Mexican Cypress)	24/06/2024 Approved

Ward	No/ Type	Address	Description	Decision
Chandler	2024/6215	3 Teak Court BORONIA VIC 3155	Removal of one (1) Liquidambar styraciflua (Sweetgum), two (2) Grevillea robusta (Silky Oak), one (1) Photinia robusta (Photinia) and one (1) Betula pendula (Silver Birch)	22/06/2024 Approved
Chandler	2024/9035	9 Sycamore Crescent BORONIA VIC 3155	Removal of one (1) Hesperocyparis lusitanica (Mexican Cypress)	26/06/2024 Approved
Chandler	2024/6201	112 Albert Avenue BORONIA VIC 3155	Removal of one (1) Allocasuarina torulosa (Forest She-Oak) and one (1) Pittosporum eugenioides (Varigated Pittosporum)	21/06/2024 Approved
Chandler	2024/6164	8 Batavia Avenue BORONIA VIC 3155	Removal of one (1) Eucalyptus obliqua (Messmate) and one (1) Liquidambar styraciflua (Sweetgum)	21/06/2024 Approved
Chandler	2024/6232	1 & 2/13 Owen Street BORONIA VIC 3155	Removal of one (1) Eucalyptus nicholii (Narrow Leaved Black Peppermint)	24/06/2024 Approved
Chandler	2024/6257	7 Camelia Crescent THE BASIN VIC 3154	Habitat Pruning of one (1) Eucalyptus obliqua (Messmate)	25/06/2024 Approved
Chandler	2024/9030	19 Interman Road BORONIA VIC 3155	Small second dwelling (under 60sqm) to the rear of the existing dwelling	6/06/2024 Approved
Chandler	2024/6132	11 Casuarina Avenue BORONIA VIC 3155	Removal of one (1) Eucalyptus obliqua (Messmate) and one (1) Eucalyptus sideroxyylon (Ironbark)	6/06/2024 Approved
Chandler	2024/6182	23 Bayview Crescent THE BASIN VIC 3154	Buildings and works (construction of a garage and an attached carport to the garage)	20/06/2024 Approved
Collier	2024/6155	329 Wantirna Road WANTIRNA VIC 3152	Three Lot Subdivision (approved unit development)	12/06/2024 Approved
Dinsdale	2024/6120	8 Armstrong Road BAYSWATER VIC 3153	The construction of two (2) double storey dwellings on the land	25/06/2024 Approved
Dinsdale	2024/6107	29 Tate Avenue WANTIRNA SOUTH VIC 3152	Variation to Restrictive Covenant (allow an alternative construction material)	26/06/2024 Approved
Dinsdale	2023/6393	40 Sasses Avenue BAYSWATER VIC 3153	Construction of four (4) double storey dwellings	5/06/2024 Notice of Decision
Dinsdale	2023/6399	3 Victoria Road BAYSWATER VIC 3153	The construction of three (3) double storey dwellings on the land	12/06/2024 Approved

Ward	No/ Type	Address	Description	Decision
Dinsdale	2023/6443	202 Scoresby Road BORONIA VIC 3155	Construction of eight (8) dwellings on the land (seven (7) double storey and one (1) single storey dwellings) and access to a road in a Transport 2 Zone	17/06/2024 Approved
Dinsdale	2023/6466	390 Boronia Road BORONIA VIC 3155	Variation to Restrictive Covenant (number of dwellings)	20/06/2024 Approved
Dinsdale	2023/6185	7 Mark Street BAYSWATER VIC 3153	Construction of two (2) double storey dwellings and one (1) single storey dwelling and works within the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay	19/06/2024 Approved
Dinsdale	2024/6028	16 Willison Street BAYSWATER VIC 3153	Development of two (2) single storey dwellings	6/06/2024 Approved
Dinsdale	2024/6163	189 Stud Road WANTIRNA SOUTH VIC 3152	Display of electronic promotional signage in association with an electric vehicle charging station	7/06/2024 Approved
Dobson	2024/6103	11 Edward Street UPPER FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	Buildings and Works - Additions to the existing dwelling and the removal of one (1) Grevillea robusta (Silky Oak)	21/06/2024 Approved
Dobson	2024/6189	9 Walbundry Avenue FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	Habitat Pruning of three (3) dead Eucalyptus sp	22/06/2024 Approved
Dobson	2024/6245	2/14 Veronica Street FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	Removal of one (1) Eucalyptus nicholii (Narrow Leaved Black Peppermint)	25/06/2024 Approved
Dobson	2024/6174	24 Ferndale Road UPPER FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	Buildings and works (alterations and additions to the existing dwelling) and associated vegetation removal	19/06/2024 Approved
Dobson	2024/6088	930 Burwood Highway FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	Use and Development of the Land for a food and drink premises (Convenience Restaurant) and display of signage	17/06/2024 Approved
Friberg	2024/6177	1 Lynn Drive FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	Three (3) Lot subdivision (Approved development site)	21/06/2024 Approved
Friberg	2024/6183	6 Coringa Court KNOXFIELD VIC 3180	Three (3) lot subdivision (Approved development site)	22/06/2024 Approved
Friberg	2024/6180	1736 Ferntree Gully Road FERNTREE GULLY VIC 3156	Double Sided Internally Illuminated Advertising Sign	13/06/2024 Approved
Scott	2024/6211	1/77 David Street North KNOXFIELD VIC 3180	The removal of one (1) Eucalyptus radiata (Narrow Leaved Peppermint) and the pruning of one (1) Eucalyptus obliqua (Messmate)	5/06/2024 Approved
Scott	2024/6056	9 Rebecca Court WANTIRNA SOUTH VIC 3152	Construction of two (2) single storey dwellings	19/06/2024 Approved

Ward	No/ Type	Address	Description	Decision
Taylor	2024/6181	1/150 Kelletts Road ROWVILLE VIC 3178	Double Sided Internally Illuminated Advertising Sign	13/06/2024 Approved
Taylor	2024/6179	1225 Stud Road ROWVILLE VIC 3178	Double Sided Internally Illuminated Advertising Sign	13/06/2024 Approved
Tirhatuan	2024/6214	2 Illawarra Avenue ROWVILLE VIC 3178	Removal of one (1) Eucalyptus camaldulensis (River Red Gum) and one (1) Eucalyptus viminalis (Manna Gum)	22/06/2024 Approved
Tirhatuan	2023/6550	31 Debra Street ROWVILLE VIC 3178	Construction of two double storey dwellings and two lot subdivision	6/06/2024 Approved
Tirhatuan	2023/6486	1/14 Corporate Avenue ROWVILLE VIC 3178	Five lot Subdivision (Approved Development Site)	6/06/2024 Approved
Tirhatuan	2024/6178	1328 Stud Road ROWVILLE VIC 3178	Double Sided Internally Illuminated Advertising Sign	13/06/2024 Approved
Tirhatuan	2024/6061	18 Bareena Avenue ROWVILLE VIC 3178	Construction of two double storey dwellings and two lot subdivision	13/06/2024 Approved
Tirhatuan	2023/6485	1/14 Corporate Avenue ROWVILLE VIC 3178	Seven Lot Subdivision (Approved Development Site)	6/06/2024 Approved
Tirhatuan	2023/6482	1/14 Corporate Avenue ROWVILLE VIC 3178	Seven (7) lot subdivision (Approved Development Site)	6/06/2024 Approved
Tirhatuan	2023/6484	1/14 Corporate Avenue ROWVILLE VIC 3178	Six Lot Subdivision (Approved Development Site)	6/06/2024 Approved
Tirhatuan	2023/6483	1/14 Corporate Avenue ROWVILLE VIC 3178	Nine (9) lot subdivision (Approved Development Site)	6/06/2024 Approved
Tirhatuan	2024/6152	1 & 2/7 Hi-Tech Place ROWVILLE VIC 3178	Two Lot Subdivision (Existing Building)	11/06/2024 Approved
Tirhatuan	2024/6186	Stud Park SC 1101 Stud Road ROWVILLE VIC 3178	Installation of one (1) externally facing electronic signage (LCD screen)	13/06/2024 Approved

7 Public Question Time

8 Officer Reports

8.1 Housing Monitoring Report for 2023 Calendar Year

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Decision
Author	Social Researcher, Seregious Be-ere
Manager:	Manager City Futures, Shiranthi Widan
Executive:	Director, City Liveability, Matt Kelleher

SUMMARY

This report summarises the findings of Council's 16th annual Housing Monitoring Program for the 2023 calendar year. The Housing Monitoring Program is intended to assess Knox's housing development alignment with the six objectives of the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*.

The following are the highlights of the key findings in this report:

- **The trend in the number of new dwellings expected to be constructed has increased slightly since COVID.** The planning and subdivision permits approved in 2023 were 134. Taking into account demolitions, if all these residential planning permits were fully developed, this could potentially result in a net increase of 384 additional new dwellings in Knox. These figures are slightly above the 2021 and 2022 figure of 334 and 373 respectively. However, the 2023 figure was still lower than the housing approvals in the seven years before 2021 (2014-2020).
- **New dwellings approved in 2023 were more consistent with the preferred character nominated in the Housing Strategy 2015 than previous years.** The overall average percentage of new dwellings approved in 2023 whose typology was consistent with their Housing Strategy Area was 88%. This was a significant improvement over the 2022 figure of 69%. In fact, 2023 had the highest average percentage of dwellings being sited in their preferred Housing Strategy Areas since 2016. The second highest was 78% in 2020, and the lowest was 68% in 2016. The significant improvements in 2023 suggested that the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* continued to deliver positive results by encouraging appropriate development across the municipality.
- **There was a significant increase in dwelling density within Local Living, but a marginal increase within Bush Suburban, Knox Neighbourhood and Activity Areas, when compared to 2022.** The analysis of approved planning permits by Housing Strategy Area in 2022, with reference to dwelling density per hectare, showed that the Bush Suburban areas and Knox Neighbourhood areas increased by 1 dwelling per hectare each, while Activity Areas increased by 3 dwellings per hectare. However, the dwelling density per hectare in Local Living increased by 15 dwellings per hectare when compared to 2022. These outcomes were in alignment with the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*, because the strategy encouraged lower density development in Bush Suburban and Knox Neighbourhood areas but supported high density development in the Local Living and Activity Areas.
- **There was a considerable increase in apartment approvals in 2023, compared with previous years, whilst aged care development remained stagnant.** Approved planning permits in 2023 have yielded 59 apartments – a noticeable growth from 2022, where no single apartment was

approved (4 apartments were approved in 2021). However, just like 2022, no residential aged-care facility was approved in 2023. This was in sharp contrast with 2021, where 214 beds in residential aged-care facilities were approved.

- **There was a small increase in building permits issued in 2023 when compared to the previous year.** Six hundred and forty-three (643) building permits were issued in 2023 compared with 588 in 2022. But the 2023 figure was still not a marked improvement. In fact, while 2022 had the lowest figure since 2017, approvals in 2023 were the third lowest. As building permits provide more certainty as to what is likely to be built in Knox than planning permits, it is important to track the number of building approvals, as this gives a clearer indication of whether the housing challenge could be addressed within the short term or not.
- **Escalating housing costs, very low availability of affordable rental options, and an identified shortfall in social housing remain critical policy concerns in Knox in 2023.** It was positive to observe that 19 social housing projects were added to the social housing stock in Knox in 2023. This was a noteworthy increase as only four social housing projects were delivered in Knox during 2022. However, a huge shortfall remained between social housing need and social housing supply in Knox. To increase the provision of social housing, Council continues to pursue policies and partnership opportunities to help facilitate solutions that can help address the identified shortfall.
- **VCAT decisions on planning permits was at its lowest in 2023.** With respect to coherence between Council and Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) decisions on residential planning permits, VCAT decided 12 residential planning applications for Knox in 2023. This was down from 14 in 2022 and 2021. Since 2012, the lowest VCAT cases recorded in Knox has been in 2023.
- **Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) targets for Knox in 2022-2023 were achieved (100%) on both potable water consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction.** This implied that all permits for applicable new dwellings in 2022-2023 met both targets. This was equally the case in 2021-2022 financial year.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Note and adopt the 16th Housing Monitoring Program Annual Report for 2023.
2. Note the issues highlighted in the Annual Report and consider these issues as part of the ongoing review of the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*.
3. Use the evidence in the Annual Report to continue to strongly advocate to State and Federal Government for an increase in resources for social and affordable housing in Knox as outlined in Action 2.1 of the adopted Knox Social and Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2023 – 2027.

1. DISCUSSION

The Housing Monitoring Program Report seeks to measure progress against the six objectives in the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* by examining data related to planning approvals, housing construction, and population demographics. This analysis is framed around a set of indicators that seeks to measure different aspects of housing in Knox, particularly new dwellings that have been approved through the planning system in 2023. The Knox Housing Monitoring Program - Annual Report for 2023, from 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023 (Attachment 1) outlines the findings of an analysis of indicators of housing and residential development in Knox, including:

- types and sizes of dwellings in approved planning permits;
- alignment with Housing Strategy Areas;
- dwelling density;
- housing affordability, social housing and residential aged care facilities;
- tree canopy in residential areas;
- sustainability measures in proposed dwellings;
- walkability;
- VCAT decisions; and
- Integrated Place-Based Plans.

Summary of Key Findings

Objective 1: A diversity of housing is provided in appropriate locations

An analysis of the planning and subdivision permits approved in 2023 revealed that if all permits were fully developed, there would be a net increase of 384 dwellings in Knox within the medium-term. This was a marginal increase over the 2021 and 2022 numbers. For the new dwellings to be built, Knox would record a net loss of 89 detached and four dual occupancy houses – a slight reduction from the net loss of 124 detached and six dual occupancy dwellings in 2022. Like most previous years, no villa units, townhouses, or apartments were demolished to make way for new developments. In total, 88% of the total new dwellings approved in 2023 were the preferred type for their Housing Strategy Area. This was the highest record since 2016, and a significant improvement over the 2022 figure of 69%. Thus, only 12% were of a type that was denser than the preferred dwellings for the residential land on which they were located. However, in each case of these non-preferred houses, the distinctive characteristics of the site and/or proposed development implied that the required neighbourhood character outcomes could still be met. It is important to state that 17% of the proposed developments were in the Strategic Investigation Sites¹¹. This was currently outside the Housing Strategy Areas. However, the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* does not have an explicit definition of the typology of dwellings that are preferred in the Strategic Investigation Sites.

Also, the planning permits approved in 2023 revealed that the number of dwellings per hectare in the Housing Strategy Areas will produce fewer dwellings per hectare in Bush Suburban (13 dwellings) and Knox Neighbourhood (21 dwellings); and higher dwelling density per hectare in Local Living (54 dwellings) and Activity Areas (70 dwellings). This aligns with the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*, resulting in higher density dwellings in the Local Living and Activity Areas, and lower density development in Bush Suburban areas and Knox Neighbourhood areas. This respects the neighbourhood character of these areas. A significant increase was observed in the Local Living, when compared to the 2022 dwelling density per hectare of 39 dwellings in the area. However, the three other Housing Strategy Areas recorded marginal increases (of between 1 to 3 dwellings per hectare) when compared to 2022.

Objective 2: Residential development responds to community needs, and allows people to age-in-place

The 2021 census figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) revealed that 45.7% of households in Knox are lone person and couple only households. However, the number of small dwellings (dwellings of two bedrooms or less) approved by Council in 2023, was 32%. This figure, as it has been in other recent years, was below the community's current requirement and the forecasted growth requirement. In 2023, although small dwellings grew noticeably from 2022 by 14%, more improvements are required. A lower number of smaller dwellings could limit the

housing choice for ageing residents in Knox looking to downsize, first homebuyers, couple only households or anyone keen to reduce their cost of living, since housing constitutes the biggest cost item on most households' expenditure.

Access to affordable housing opportunities remained a thorny issue in Knox in 2023. A paltry 19 rentals and 1 property sale were affordable to households within the 'very low income' bracket in 2023. Low-income households had slightly more rentals options, however there were a very limited number of properties available for purchase. For instance, in 2023, low-income households could only purchase about 64 of the 488 (13%) properties sold in Knox. Social housing options were also limited, as the substantial gap between demand and supply of social and affordable housing in Knox, continued to widen. Verified data (as of 30 September 2023) showed that 3,450 people in Knox, were on the waiting list of the Victorian Housing Register, for social or affordable housing. Therefore, the gap between supply and demand stood at 584 in 2023.

Apartments usually yield small dwellings. Approved planning permits in 2023 yielded 59 apartments – a noticeable growth from 2022, where no single apartment was approved (4 apartments were approved in 2021). However, just like 2022, no residential aged-care facility was approved in 2023. This is in sharp contrast to 2021, where 214 beds in residential aged-care facilities were approved. However, residential aged care places in Knox continues to be marginally above the national minimum benchmark.

Objective 3: Energy, water, and waste efficient design are increased in residential dwellings

The Environmental Sustainability Design (ESD) assessments that must accompany planning permit applications for two or more new additional dwellings, indicated that just like in 2021-22, all buildings assessed in 2022-23 met the best practice target reduction for potable water consumption (25%) and greenhouse gas emissions reduction (50%). The ESD data for 2022-23 revealed that in practice an average of 39% of potable water consumption will be reduced (a slight decline from 41.3% in 2021-22). In the same fiscal year, the average greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction would be 61%, for planning applications approved (a marginal improvement from 60.3% in 2021-22). The 2022-23 fiscal year ESD data further suggested that over three million litres of water tank capacity was approved in Knox and 830kW of solar panels were committed to for installation through the planning scheme in Knox within the same period. This will contribute to the reduction of GHG emissions emanating from electricity consumption in residential buildings.

Objective 4: Housing design in Knox better responds to neighbourhood identity and creates a stronger sense of place

One way of assessing the proximity of services to people is to use the Walkscore Index. New residential developments in the high Walkscore areas of Knox are more desirable as residents in those neighbourhoods would have access to critically important amenities and socio-economic infrastructure and services. Almost half (47%) of the net new dwellings approved in planning permits in 2023, were in walkable locations in Knox. This was a considerable improvement over the 2022 and 2021 figures of 32% and 31% respectively. This means 47% of the dwellings had Walkscores of above 70, that is, in "Very Walkable" locations. It is noteworthy to report that the permits approved in 2023 recorded the second highest number of approved net new dwellings located in "Very Walkable" areas of Knox. The highest score was 48% in 2016 and 2019. Also, 56% of approved net new dwellings in 2023 were in areas that were considered more walkable than the average score for their suburb. This was a decline over the 2022 and 2021 figures of 67% and 59% respectively.

Objective 5: Protect and enhance the landscape and environmental values of natural areas of significance

One of the defining features of Knox is its leafy green feel, an aesthetic deeply cherished by the residents. It is therefore increasingly important to ensure that as Knox's population continues to increase, residential development does not significantly erode Knox's unique and most valued environmental and ecological resources. The planning permits approved in 2023 established that the number of dwellings per hectare were fewer in the Bush Suburban and Knox Neighbourhood areas. This aligned with the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*, resulting in higher density dwellings in the Local Living and Activity Areas, and lower density development in the Bush Suburban and Knox Neighbourhood areas.

No new tree canopy data has been captured beyond what was reported in the 2021 and 2022 Housing Monitoring reports. Tree canopy data captured by the then Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) in 2018 puts Knox's overall tree canopy coverage at 18%, and the urban areas at 16.3%. The data showed a 6% decline in native vegetation cover in Knox since the late 1980s. Hence, the *Knox Biodiversity Resilience Strategy 2024 – 2034* has recommended that Council should explore and take concrete steps to establish a means of mapping canopy regularly in order to establish and track the success of canopy change over time.

Objective 6: Development responds to neighbourhoods in an integrated and balanced manner

To attain an integrated and balanced development, Council, through the Knox Planning Scheme has outlined explicit policies and strategies for the municipality. Coherence between Council's planning application decisions and the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal's (VCAT) decisions is significantly important in gauging the consistency with the Knox Planning Scheme.

Overall, 12 residential planning cases were decided by VCAT from Knox in 2023. The breakdown revealed that in 5 of the cases, VCAT upheld Council's refusals and in 5 other appeals lodged, the Tribunal overturned Council's refusals. Unlike previous years where VCAT usually affirms all Council's approvals, in 2023 the Tribunal overturned 1 of Council's approvals. Council failed to determine 1 case, and an appeal was lodged at VCAT, and the Tribunal ruled that a permit should be granted. It is important to note that since the adoption and implementation of the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*, the lowest number of residential cases lodged at VCAT from Knox, was in 2023. Interestingly, 2021 and 2022 also recorded the second lowest VCAT cases lodged from Knox. If this declining trend of fewer appeals submitted to VCAT continues, it could be presumed that either planning permit applicants and neighbours are increasingly becoming satisfied with Council's decisions on planning permits or community members have limited capacity to actively engage in the planning appeal processes.

Table 1. Summary of Progress Towards Housing Strategy Objectives in 2023

Council Initiative is on Track/Achieved		Further Improvement Required	Results do not Indicate a Definite Direction
Objective	Indicative Result of Council's Housing Related Action	Target	Achievement Rating
1	134 approved permits could result in a net of 384 additional new dwellings in Knox	N/A	
	88% of dwellings approved are consistent with their Housing Strategy Area	50%	
	Dwelling density per hectare: Bush Suburban 13, Knox Neighbourhood 21, Local Living 54, and Activity Areas 70	N/A	
2	Dwelling diversity: Small dwellings 32%, 3 bedrooms 23%, 4+ bedrooms 45%	46% small dwellings	
	59 apartments approved in 2023; no residential aged care facility approved in 2023	N/A	
	Residential aged care places in Knox were marginally above the national minimum benchmark	78 RAC ¹ places /1000 people 70yrs+	
	Rising housing costs, very low availability of affordable rental options, and a shortfall in social housing remain key policy concerns	584 social and affordable housing needed in 2023	
3	100% of approved development of two or more dwellings met Environmentally Sustainable Design targets in water reduction and Greenhouse Gas emissions in 2023	100%	
4	47% of net new dwellings approved in 2023 were in very walkable locations in Knox	50+%	
5	Tree canopy cover 18% in Knox, and 16.3% in Knox urbanised areas ²	30% by 2050	
6	VCAT decided 12 residential planning applications for Knox in 2023	N/A	

2. ENGAGEMENT

This report has been prepared by Council's Research and Geospatial Analytics team. The City Strategy and Planning team, and the City Planning & Building Department were consulted to collate the required data and information.

¹ RAC (Residential Aged Care)

²It is important to note that while Knox endorsed the [Living Melbourne: Our Metropolitan Urban Forest \(2019\)](#) target of achieving 30% tree canopy coverage by 2050, there is no current data to accurately assess this target. For a more reliable assessment of this Action, current tree canopy data is required. This explains why the Tree Canopy Assessment Rating has remained grey. Also, currently it is difficult to ascertain how Council is doing with respect to tree canopy target until we get to the year 2050, to determine whether the 30% canopy target has been met or not (For instance, Council can have incremental tree canopy targets for 2025, 2030, 2035, 2040 and 2045). There needs to be incremental canopy targets in the lead up to the 2050. Without this, even if current tree canopy data is available, the *Housing Monitoring Program* report cannot state with certainty whether Council is on track or not with respect to tree canopy cover until we reach 2050.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct social implications of this report, but it does suggest areas of continued further policy focus in areas related to housing, liveability and sustainability. The *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* seeks where possible, to address residents' concerns about social issues such as the availability of affordable housing. This report has highlighted an area where Council appears to be delivering good social outcomes for residents (residential aged care) and an area where supply in Knox appears not to be meeting demand (social and affordable housing).

4. CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS

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

The Housing Monitoring Program - Annual Report for 2023 presents data on outcomes related to climate change (for example, tree canopy cover, walkability and sustainability adaptations in proposed developments). It is anticipated that this information will inform decisions that impact on Council's Net Zero 2030 target, the Community Net Zero 2040, and exposure to climate risks or climate change adaptation. However, it is important to note that the implementation of the recommendations in this report is considered to have no direct impact upon these things.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* seeks in part to address residents' concerns about the impact of residential development on neighbourhood amenity and character. The *Knox Community Plan 2021-2031* and *Council Plan 202-2025* also seeks to encourage environmentally sustainable design outcomes that deliver more efficient use of resources and reductions in waste. In line with this, the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* aims to strengthen Council's approach to balancing residential development that meets the diverse needs of the community and protect the environmental and neighbourhood character values.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The Housing Monitoring Program - Annual Report for 2023 was completed within the existing City Futures 2023-2024 budget. It is anticipated that the Housing Monitoring Program will continue to be completed within proposed annual budgets.

7. RISKS

Council officers have reviewed the potential risks connected to this report and have identified no known risks associated with this report.

8. KNOX COMMUNITY AND COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025

Neighbourhoods, Housing, and Infrastructure

Strategy 2.1 - Plan for and support diverse housing to meet changing community needs.

9. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officers contributing to and responsible for this report have no conflicts of interest requiring disclosure under Chapter 5 of the Governance Rules of Knox City Council.

10. STATEMENT OF COMPATIBILITY

There are no legislative obligations under the Human Rights Charter, Child Safe Standards or the Gender Equity Act that are incompatible with the recommendation in this report.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

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

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment 1 - Housing Monitoring Program Report for 2023 [**8.1.1** - 53 pages]

knox



Knox Housing Monitoring Program Annual Report for 2023

Knox City Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the City of Knox, the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation.

Disclaimer

This report is provided for information and it does not purport to be complete. While care has been taken to ensure the content in the report is accurate, we cannot guarantee that the report is without flaw of any kind. There may be errors and omissions or it may not be wholly appropriate for your particular purposes. In addition, the publication is a snapshot in time based on historic information which is liable to change. The City of Knox accepts no responsibility and disclaims all liability or any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information contained in this report.

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Knox Housing Monitoring Program

Annual Report for 2023

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Executive Summary

This report seeks to provide the measured progress against the six objectives in the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* by examining data related to planning approvals, housing construction, and population demographics. This analysis is framed around a set of indicators that seeks to measure different aspects of housing in Knox, particularly new dwellings that have been approved through the planning system in 2023.

Key Highlights

The following are the highlights of the key findings in this report:

- **The trend in the number of new dwellings expected to be constructed has increased slightly since COVID.** The planning and subdivision permits approved in 2023 were 134. Taking into account demolitions, if all these residential planning permits were fully developed, this could potentially result in a net increase of 384 additional new dwellings in Knox. These figures are slightly above the 2021 and 2022 figure of 334 and 373 respectively. However, the 2023 figure was still lower than the housing approvals in the seven years before 2021 (2014-2020).
- **New dwellings approved in 2023 were more consistent with the preferred character nominated in the Housing Strategy 2015 than in previous years.** The overall average percentage of new dwellings approved in 2023 whose typology was consistent with their Housing Strategy Area was 88%. This was a significant improvement over the 2022 figure of 69%. In fact, 2023 had the highest average percentage of dwellings being sited in their preferred Housing Strategy Areas since 2016. The second highest was 78% in 2020, and the lowest was 68% in 2016. The significant improvements in 2023 suggested that the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* continued to deliver positive results by encouraging appropriate development across the municipality.
- **There was a significant increase in dwelling density within Local Living, but a marginal increase within Bush Suburban, Knox Neighbourhood and Activity Areas, when compared to 2022.** The analysis of approved planning permits by Housing Strategy Area in 2022, with reference to dwelling density per hectare, showed that the Bush Suburban areas and Knox Neighbourhood areas increased by 1 dwelling per hectare each, while Activity Areas increased by 3 dwellings per hectare. However, the dwelling density per hectare in Local Living increased by 15 dwellings per hectare when compared to 2022. These outcomes were in alignment with the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*, because the strategy encouraged lower density development in Bush Suburban and Knox Neighbourhood areas but supported high density development in the Local Living and Activity Areas.
- **There was a considerable increase in apartment approvals in 2023, compared with previous years, whilst aged care development remained stagnant.** Approved planning permits in 2023 have yielded 59 apartments – a noticeable growth from 2022, where no single apartment was approved (4 apartments were approved in 2021). However, just like 2022, no residential aged-care facility was approved in 2023. This was in sharp contrast with 2021, where 214 beds in residential aged-care facilities were approved.
- **There was a small increase in building permits issued in 2023 when compared to the previous year.** Six hundred and forty-three (643) building permits were issued in 2023 compared with 588 in 2022. But the 2023 figure was still not a marked improvement. In fact, while 2022 had the lowest figure since 2017, approvals in 2023 were the third lowest. As building permits provide more certainty as to what is likely to be built in Knox than planning permits, it is important to track the number of building approvals, as this gives a clearer indication of whether the housing challenge could be addressed within the short term or not.
- **Escalating housing costs, very low availability of affordable rental options, and an identified shortfall in social housing remain critical policy concerns in Knox in 2023.** It was positive to observe that 19 social housing projects were added to the social housing stock in Knox in 2023. This was a noteworthy increase as only four social housing projects were delivered in Knox during 2022. However, a huge shortfall¹ remained between social housing need and

¹ As of 2023, an estimated 584 social and affordable housing are needed in Knox.

social housing supply in Knox. To increase the provision of social housing, Council continues to pursue policies and partnership opportunities to help facilitate solutions that can help address the identified shortfall.

- **VCAT decisions on planning permits was at its lowest in 2023.** With respect to coherence between Council and Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) decisions on residential planning permits, VCAT decided 12 residential planning applications for Knox in 2023. This was down from 14 in 2022 and 2021. Since 2012, the lowest VCAT cases recorded in Knox has been in 2023.
- **Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) targets for Knox in 2022-2023 were achieved (100%) on both potable water consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction.** This implied that all permits for applicable new dwellings in 2022-2023 met both targets. This was equally the case in 2021-2022 financial year.

Summary of Key Findings

Objective 1: A diversity of housing is provided in appropriate locations

An analysis of the planning and subdivision permits approved in 2023 revealed that if all permits were fully developed, there would be a net increase of 384 dwellings in Knox within the medium-term. This was a marginal increase over the 2021 and 2022 numbers. For the new dwellings to be built, Knox would record a net loss of 89 detached and four dual occupancy houses – a slight reduction from the net loss of 124 detached and six dual occupancy dwellings in 2022. Like most previous years, no villa units, townhouses, or apartments were demolished to make way for new developments. In total, 88% of the total new dwellings approved in 2023 were the preferred type for their Housing Strategy Area. This was the highest record since 2016, and a significant improvement over the 2022 figure of 69%. Thus, only 12% were of a type that was denser than the preferred dwellings for the residential land on which they were located. However, in each case of these non-preferred houses, the distinctive characteristics of the site and/or proposed development, implied that the required neighbourhood character outcomes could still be met. It is important to state that 17% of the proposed developments were in the Strategic Investigation Sites². This was currently outside the Housing Strategy Areas. However, the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* does not have an explicit definition of the typology of dwellings that are preferred in the Strategic Investigation Sites.

Also, the planning permits approved in 2023 revealed that the number of dwellings per hectare in the Housing Strategy Areas will produce fewer dwellings per hectare in Bush Suburban (13 dwellings) and Knox Neighbourhood (21 dwellings); and higher dwelling density per hectare in Local Living (54 dwellings) and Activity Areas (70 dwellings). This aligns with the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*, resulting in higher density dwellings in the Local Living and Activity Areas, and lower density development in Bush Suburban areas and Knox Neighbourhood areas. This respects the neighbourhood character of these areas. A significant increase was observed in the Local Living, when compared to the 2022 dwelling density per hectare of 39 dwellings in the area. However, the three other Housing Strategy Areas recorded marginal increases (of between 1 to 3 dwellings per hectare) when compared to 2022.

Objective 2: Residential development responds to community needs, and allows people to age-in-place

The 2021 census figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) revealed that 45.7% of households in Knox are lone person and couple only households. However, the number of small dwellings (dwellings of two bedrooms or less) approved by Council in 2023, was 32%. This figure, as it has been in other recent years, was below the community's current requirement and the forecasted growth requirement. In 2023, although small dwellings grew noticeably from 2022 by 14%, more improvements are required. A lower number of smaller dwellings could limit the housing choice for ageing residents in Knox looking to downsize, first homebuyers, couple only households or anyone keen to reduce their cost of living, since housing constitutes the biggest cost item on most households' expenditure.

Access to affordable housing opportunities remained a thorny issue in Knox in 2023. A paltry 19 rentals and 1 property sale were affordable to households within the 'very low income' bracket in 2023. Low-income households had slightly

² In specific terms, this is made up of a total of 79 dwellings – 45 apartments and 34 townhouses.

more rentals options, however there were a very limited number of properties available for purchase. For instance, in 2023, low-income households could only purchase about 64 of the 488 (13%) properties sold in Knox. Social housing options were also limited, as the substantial gap between demand and supply of social and affordable housing in Knox, continued to widen. Verified data (as of 30 September 2023) showed that 3,450 people in Knox, were on the waiting list of the Victorian Housing Register, for social or affordable housing. Therefore, the gap between supply and demand stood at 584 in 2023.

Apartments usually yield small dwellings. Approved planning permits in 2023 yielded 59 apartments – a noticeable growth from 2022, where no single apartment was approved (4 apartments were approved in 2021). However, just like 2022, no residential aged-care facility was approved in 2023. This is in sharp contrast to 2021, where 214 beds in residential aged-care facilities were approved. However, residential aged care places in Knox continues to be marginally above the national minimum benchmark.

Objective 3: Energy, water, and waste efficient design are increased in residential dwellings

The Environmental Sustainability Design (ESD) assessments that must accompany planning permit applications for two or more new additional dwellings, indicated that just like in 2021-22, all buildings assessed in 2022-23 met the best practice target reduction for potable water consumption (25%) and greenhouse gas emissions reduction (50%). The ESD data for 2022-23 revealed that in practice an average of 39% of potable water consumption will be reduced (a slight decline from 41.3% in 2021-22). In the same fiscal year, the average greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction would be 61%, for planning applications approved (a marginal improvement from 60.3% in 2021-22). The 2022-23 fiscal year ESD data further suggested that over three million litres of water tank capacity was approved in Knox and 830kW of solar panels were committed to for installation through the planning scheme in Knox within the same period. This will contribute to the reduction of GHG emissions emanating from electricity consumption in residential buildings.

Objective 4: Housing design in Knox better responds to neighbourhood identity and creates a stronger sense of place

One way of assessing the proximity of services to people is to use the Walkscore Index. New residential developments in the high Walkscore areas of Knox are more desirable as residents in those neighbourhoods would have access to critically important amenities and socio-economic infrastructure and services. Almost half (47%) of the net new dwellings approved in planning permits in 2023, were in walkable locations in Knox. This was a considerable improvement over the 2022 and 2021 figures of 32% and 31% respectively. This means 47% of the dwellings had Walkscores of above 70, that is, in “Very Walkable” locations. It is noteworthy to report that the permits approved in 2023 recorded the second highest number of approved net new dwellings located in “Very Walkable” areas of Knox. The highest score was 48% in 2016 and 2019. Also, 56% of approved net new dwellings in 2023 were in areas that were considered more walkable than the average score for their suburb. This was a decline over the 2022 and 2021 figures of 67% and 59% respectively.

Objective 5: Protect and enhance the landscape and environmental values of natural areas of significance

One of the defining features of Knox is its leafy green feel, an aesthetic deeply cherished by the residents. It is therefore increasingly important to ensure that as Knox’s population continues to increase, residential development does not significantly erode Knox’s unique and most valued environmental and ecological resources. The planning permits approved in 2023 established that the number of dwellings per hectare were fewer in the Bush Suburban and Knox Neighbourhood areas. This aligned with the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*, resulting in higher density dwellings in the Local Living and Activity Areas, and lower density development in the Bush Suburban and Knox Neighbourhood areas.

No new tree canopy data has been captured beyond what was reported in the 2021 and 2022 Housing Monitoring reports. Tree canopy data captured by the then Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) in 2018 puts Knox’s overall tree canopy coverage at 18%, and the urban areas at 16.3%. The data showed a 6% decline in native vegetation cover in Knox since the late 1980s. Hence, the *Knox Biodiversity Resilience Strategy 2024 – 2034* has recommended that Council should explore and take concrete steps to establish a means of mapping canopy regularly in order to establish and track the success of canopy change over time.

**Objective 6: Development responds to neighbourhoods in an integrated and balanced manner**

To attain an integrated and balanced development, Council, through the Knox Planning Scheme has outlined explicit policies and strategies for the municipality. Coherence between Council's planning application decisions and the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal's (VCAT) decisions is significantly important in gauging the consistency with the Knox Planning Scheme.

Overall, 12 residential planning cases were decided by VCAT from Knox in 2023. The breakdown revealed that in 5 of the cases, VCAT upheld Council's refusals and in 5 other appeals lodged, the Tribunal overturned Council's refusals. Unlike previous years where VCAT usually affirms all Council's approvals, in 2023 the Tribunal overturned 1 of Council's approvals. Council failed to determine 1 case, and an appeal was lodged at VCAT, and the Tribunal ruled that a permit should be granted. It is important to note that since the adoption and implementation of the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*, the lowest number of residential cases lodged at VCAT from Knox, was in 2023. Interestingly, 2021 and 2022 also recorded the second lowest VCAT cases lodged from Knox. If this declining trend of fewer appeals submitted to VCAT continues, it could be presumed that either planning permit applicants and neighbours are increasingly becoming satisfied with Council's decisions on planning permits or community members have limited capacity to actively engage in the planning appeal processes.

Table 1. Summary of Progress Towards Housing Strategy Objectives in 2023

	Council Initiative is on Track/Achieved	Further Improvement Required	Results do not indicate a Definite Direction
Objective	Indicative Result of Council's Housing Related Action		Achievement Rating
1	134 approved permits could result in a net of 384 additional new dwellings in Knox		N/A
	88% of dwellings approved were consistent with their Housing Strategy Area		50%
	Dwelling density per hectare: Bush Suburban 13, Knox Neighbourhood 21, Local Living 54, and Activity Areas 70		N/A
2	Dwelling diversity: Small dwellings 32%, 3 bedrooms 23%, 4+ bedrooms 45%		46% small dwellings
	59 apartments approved in 2023; no residential aged care facility approved in 2023		N/A
	Residential aged care places in Knox were marginally above the national minimum benchmark		78 RAC ³ places /1000 people 70yrs+
	Rising housing costs, very low availability of affordable rental options, and a shortfall in social housing remain key policy concerns		584 social and affordable housing needed in 2023
3	100% of approved development of two or more dwellings met Environmentally Sustainable Design targets in water reduction and Greenhouse Gas emissions in 2023		100%
4	47% of net new dwellings approved in 2023 were in very walkable locations in Knox		50+%
5	Tree canopy cover 18% in Knox, and 16.3% in Knox urbanised areas ⁴		30% by 2050
6	VCAT decided 12 residential planning applications for Knox in 2023		N/A

³ RAC (Residential Aged Care)

⁴It is important to note that while Knox endorsed the [Living Melbourne: Our Metropolitan Urban Forest \(2019\)](#) target of achieving 30% tree canopy coverage by 2050, there is no current data to accurately assess this target. For a more reliable assessment of this Action, current tree canopy data is required. This explains why the Tree Canopy Assessment Rating has remained grey. Also, currently it is difficult to ascertain how Council is doing with respect to tree canopy target until we get to the year 2050, to determine whether the 30% canopy target has been met or not (For instance, Council can have incremental tree canopy targets for 2025, 2030, 2035, 2040 and 2045). There needs to be incremental canopy targets in the lead up to the 2050. Without this, even if current tree canopy data is available, the *Housing Monitoring Program* report cannot state with certainty whether Council is on track or not with respect to tree canopy cover until we reach 2050.

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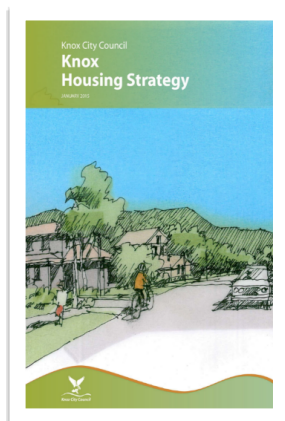
This is the 16th annual Knox Housing Monitoring Program report. It assesses and reports on the performance or the progress made against the six objectives of the [Knox Housing Strategy 2015](#) for the 2023 calendar year.

Policy Context



Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 seeks to integrate long-term land use, infrastructure and transport planning, so as to meet the city's future environmental, population, housing and employment needs. It is the Victorian Government's strategy for supporting employment, housing and transport, while building on Melbourne's distinctiveness, liveability and environmental sustainability. One of the key goals of this policy is to direct new housing toward areas with existing services, jobs and public transport. This Plan has two important effects on housing in Knox. One is to deliver housing efficiently, where the infrastructure and services can best support it. The other is to protect existing neighbourhoods and areas with particular significance from overdevelopment.

The Knox Housing Strategy 2015 is consistent with Outcome 2 of the *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* by promoting and supporting a scaled, balanced and responsive environmental significance. The overall vision of the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* is expected to be achieved through six interrelated objectives: an approach to residential development to accommodate population growth and the community's changing housing needs. The adoption of this balanced approach recognises that some parts of Knox will need to accommodate change, and in other areas change should be gradual and limited in order to protect and enhance Knox's green and leafy character and areas of significance.



Objective 1: A diversity of housing is provided in appropriate locations.

Objective 2: Residential development better responds to the community's current and future needs and allows people to age-in-place.

Objective 3: Energy, water, and waste efficient design is increased in dwellings.

Objective 4: Housing design better responds to neighbourhood identity and creates a stronger sense of place.

Objective 5: Protect and enhance the landscape and environmental values of natural areas of significance.

Objective 6: Development responds to neighbourhoods in an integrated and balanced manner.

The *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* divides Knox into four Housing Strategy areas – Bush Suburban, Knox Neighbourhood, Local Living, and Activity Areas (See Map 1 on p.8) – and provides clear guidance on what types of dwellings are preferred and permissible in each area.

Each area has different levels of change anticipated and different types of dwelling preferred:

- **Bush Suburban** and **Knox Neighbourhood** areas are expected to undergo less change, preserving areas of environmental significance (including native vegetation and wildlife habitat), landscape value and neighbourhood character.
- **Local Living** and **Activity Areas** are expected to see more change, accommodating medium and higher density development to provide additional housing capacity and choice, to serve the municipality's changing housing needs.

In 2021, Council adopted a new Community Plan and a new Council Plan which both highlighted the continuing importance of housing as a critical area of focus for Council. A key direction of the [Community Plan 2021-2031](#) and the [Council Plan 2021-2025](#) is "Neighbourhoods, housing and infrastructure". This key direction expressly focuses attention on supporting a greater diversity in the housing mix within Knox, and ensuring better access to public transport among others, as important outcomes. The *Council Plan 2021-2025* commits Council to several actions to achieve positive housing outcomes for the community, including commencing a review of the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* (this is currently underway), and Council's adoption of the [Knox Social and Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2023 – 2027](#) to increase the supply of social and affordable housing, as a key and concrete step towards addressing homelessness in Knox.

A Remark on Total versus Net Dwelling Changes

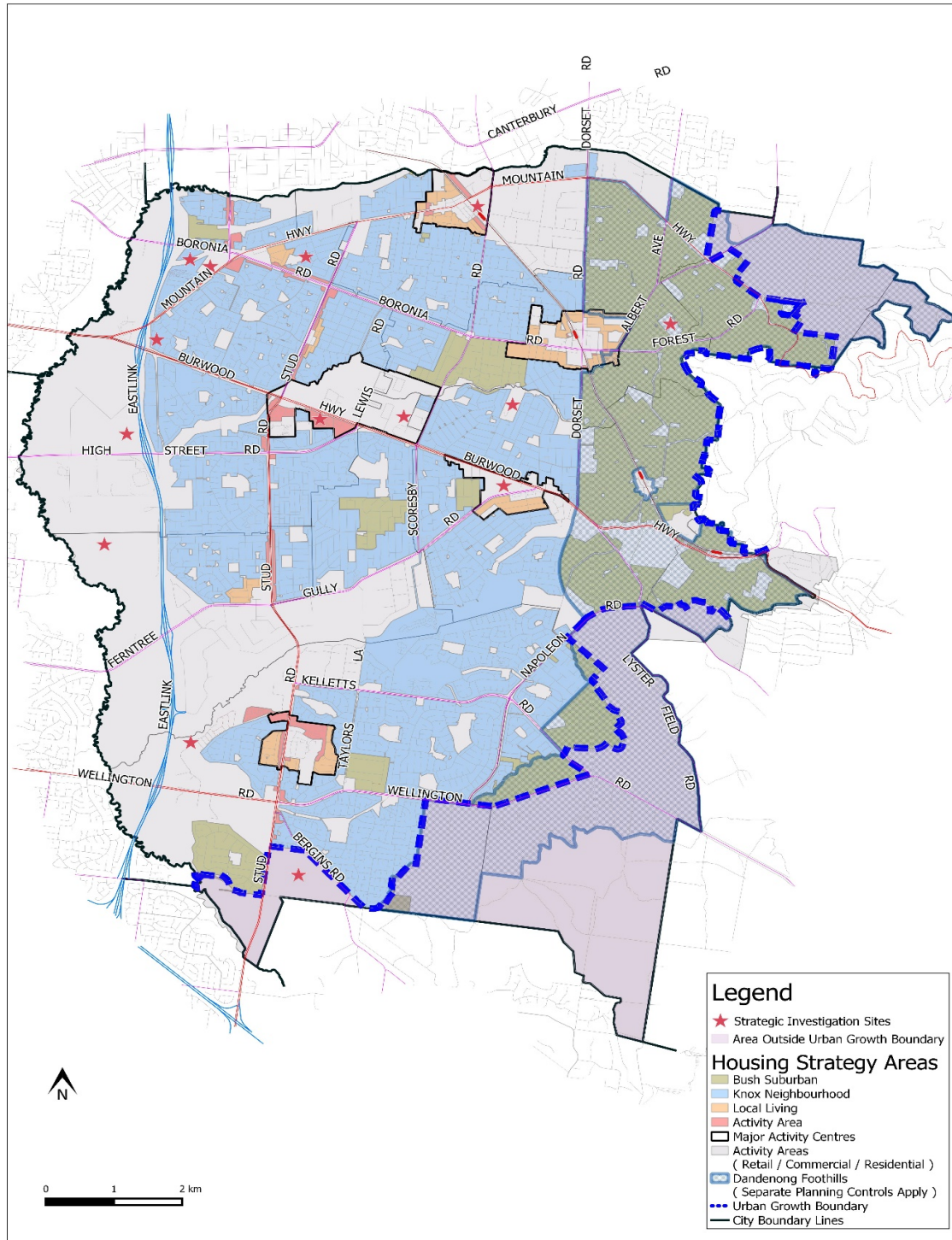
Approved planning permits for subdivisions and additional dwellings (not including planning permits for one new dwelling) are used in this report as an indicator of what dwellings are likely to be built, and where⁵. Two approaches for counting the number of dwellings approved in planning permits are used in this report:

- **Total new dwellings** are all new dwellings possible from approved planning permits. This measure does not account for demolitions and provides the best information about the size and type of dwellings being approved. Total new dwellings are used to demonstrate how permit approvals align with the objectives of the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*.
- **Net new dwellings** are the increase in dwellings possible from approved planning permits, beyond what exists in Knox already. It subtracts demolitions from total new dwellings. Net new dwellings is a measure of growth in Knox's housing supply.

For example, an approved planning permit to replace a detached house with five new townhouses would be counted as five total new townhouses and an increase of four net new dwellings.

⁵ Approved planning permits are indicative of what may be built, but not all planning permits are enacted. Planning permits usually expire after two years (if not commenced), although extensions can be granted for an additional two years.

Map 1. Residential Areas as defined in the Knox Housing Strategy 2015 and the 14 Strategic Investigation Sites



Overview of Planning Permits Approved in 2023

<p>134</p>	<p>planning permits resulting in at least one additional dwelling were approved in 2023. This was the third lowest number since the years following the global financial crisis (2009 and 2010). This decline could probably be attributable to the COVID-19 Pandemic and other factors.</p>
<p>384</p>	<p>net new dwellings are possible from the planning permits approved in 2023, which was slightly above the 2022 figure.</p>
<p>93</p>	<p>proposed demolitions possible from approved permits.</p>
<p>0</p>	<p>beds in residential aged care facilities approved in planning permits in 2023. In 2022, no residential aged care facility was also approved in planning permits.</p>
<p>50%</p>	<p>of net new dwellings possible from approved planning permits were in Bayswater and Rowville. No single dwelling approved in Upper Ferntree Gully and Lysterfield in 2023.</p>
<p>59</p>	<p>apartments approved in planning permits in 2023. This was the highest number of apartments approved in planning permits since 2019, when 105 apartments were approved. In 2022 no apartments were approved in planning permits. Only four apartments were approved in 2021.</p>



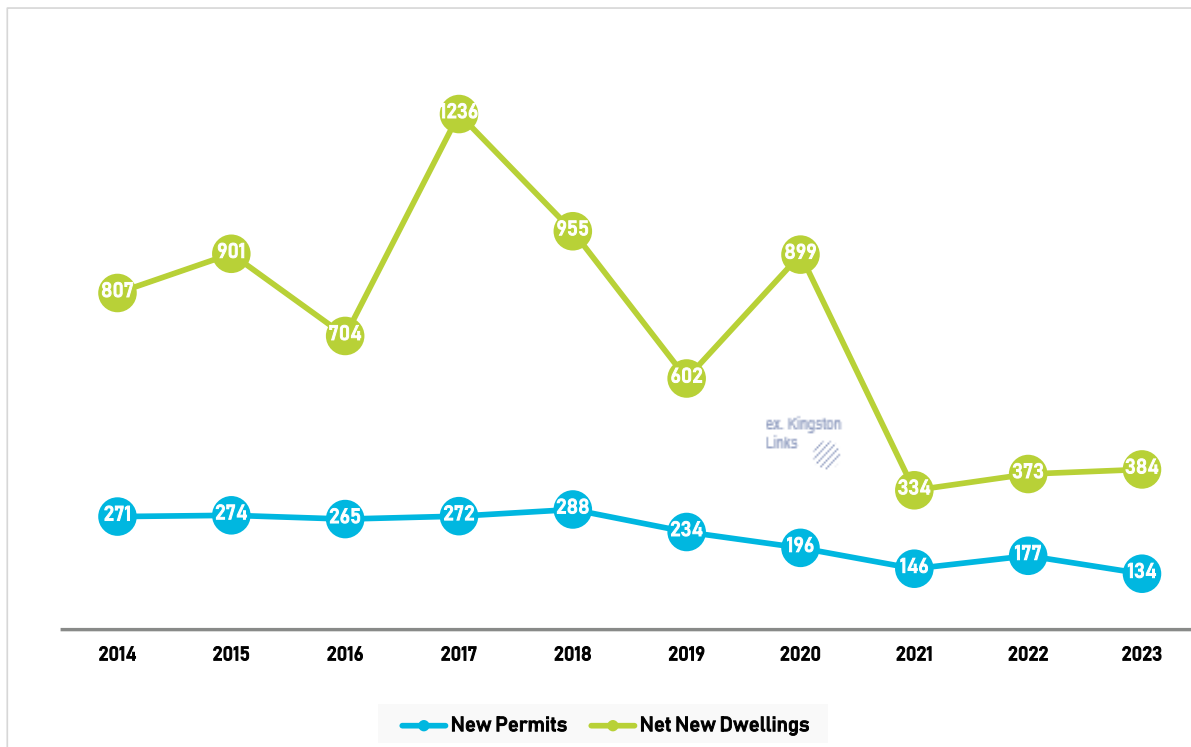
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From Figure 1 below, the potential net growth in dwellings from planning permits approved⁶ in 2023 was marginally higher than approvals in 2022 and 2021. However, this number is still significantly lower than the net new dwellings approved between 2014 and 2020. There appears to be a gradual growth of net new dwellings being approved in Knox, since the lowest number recorded in 2021.

Figure 1. Approved Planning Permits and possible Net Growth in Dwellings

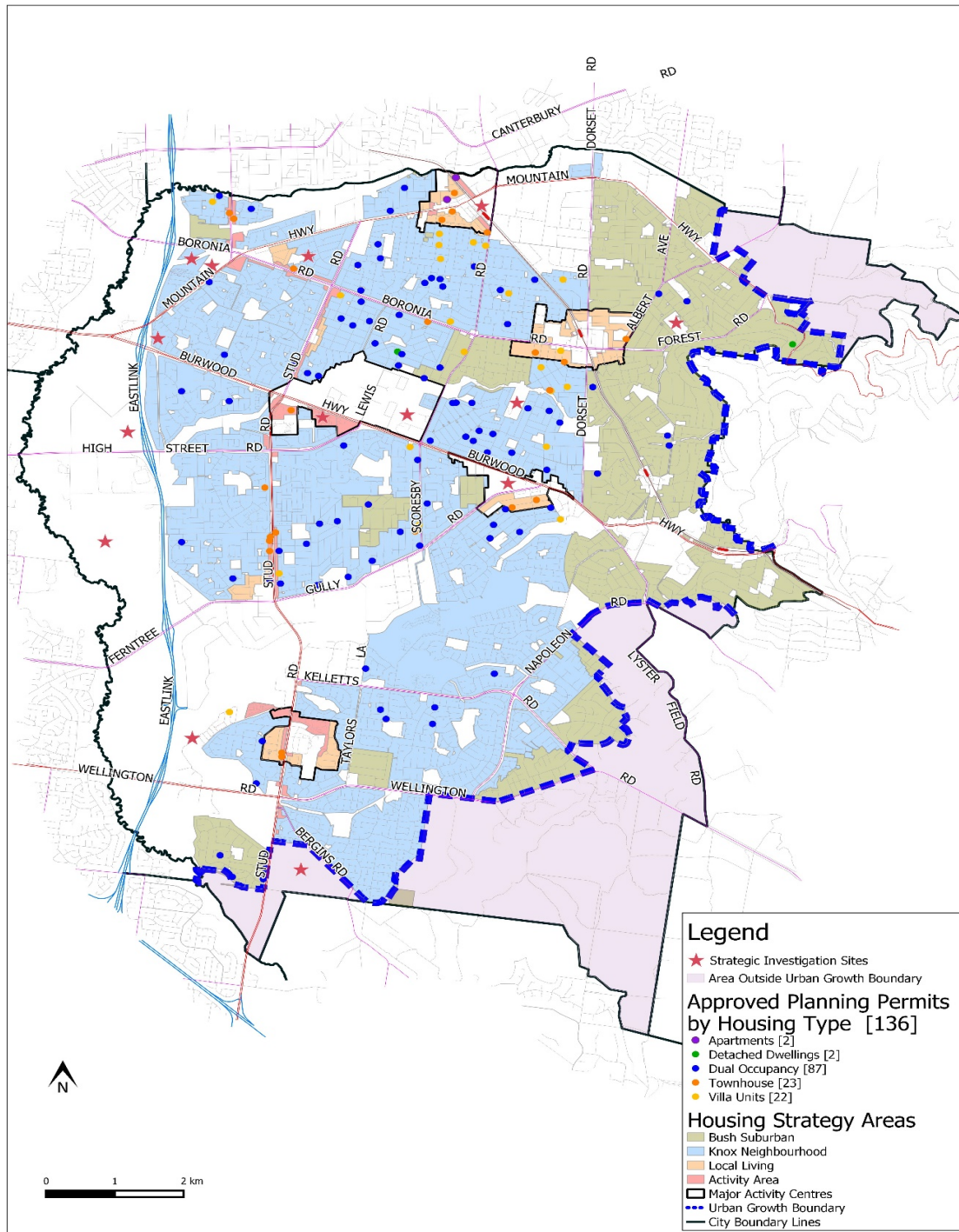
The number of approved planning permits yielding at least one new dwelling, and possible net growth in dwellings from these permits were the third lowest in a decade.



⁶ This includes planning permits approved by Council at the direction of VCAT.

Map 2. Planning Permits Approved in 2023

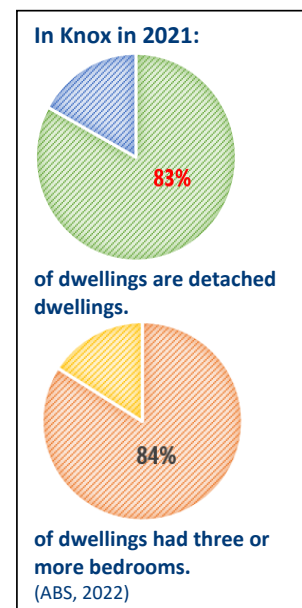
These permits will yield at least one net new dwelling if enacted.



1. A diversity of housing is provided in appropriate locations (Objective 1)

Why is this Objective Important

A diversity of housing is needed to respond to the changes in household sizes and structure Knox is experiencing. Within Knox, 83% of dwellings are detached dwellings with 84% being houses of three bedrooms or more (ABS, 2022). The *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* and the *Council Plan 2021-2025* are addressing this by encouraging the development of diverse types and sizes of dwellings to meet the changing needs of the Knox community. Although the demand for larger detached houses in Knox is likely to continue, having a mix of housing options ensures that Council caters to the needs of present and future residents at all stages of life and of diverse socio-economic status. Council also seeks to protect and improve the “green and leafy” character of Knox that the community values. This requires encouraging the development of diverse housing with increased densities in Activity Areas and Local Living areas (close to transport, shops and services) to provide more housing choices, while discouraging intensive development in Bush Suburban and Knox Neighbourhood areas, to preserve these neighbourhoods’ green and leafy character and areas of environmental significance. In other words, the different types of housing development need to align with the character of the different neighbourhoods. Whilst housing diversity is critically important, the provision of diverse dwelling types should not unduly compromise the character of the neighbourhoods.



How are we Tracking this Objective?

In 2023, townhouses⁷ accounted for 42% (down from 55% in 2022) of the total new dwellings approved (see Figure 2). Except for 2020, townhouses have always been the dominant housing typology in Knox since 2015. The classification shows that, out of the 24 townhouse developments approved in planning permits, 9 permits were approved for four dwellings or less, and 15 were five dwellings or more. In fact, a third of the 15 permits approved for townhouse development, were for 12 dwellings or more.

The proposed location of approved dwelling applications gives an indication as to whether the preferred sites for the different housing typology is being followed. This report gives a detailed account of this. Table 2 (See p. 14) shows the number of dwellings in approved planning permits and the preferred dwelling typology for each of the four Housing Strategy Areas, as well as areas outside the Housing Strategy Areas and the Urban Growth Boundary. Some villa units were approved in the Bush Suburban and Knox Neighbourhood areas (Lots under 1,000m²), plus townhouses were also approved in Knox Neighbourhood areas (Lots under 1,000m² and Lots over 1,000m²). Although these were not the preferred dwelling types in these areas, the unique characteristics of these sites and/or the proposed developments, could still produce the desired neighbourhood and landscape character outcomes.

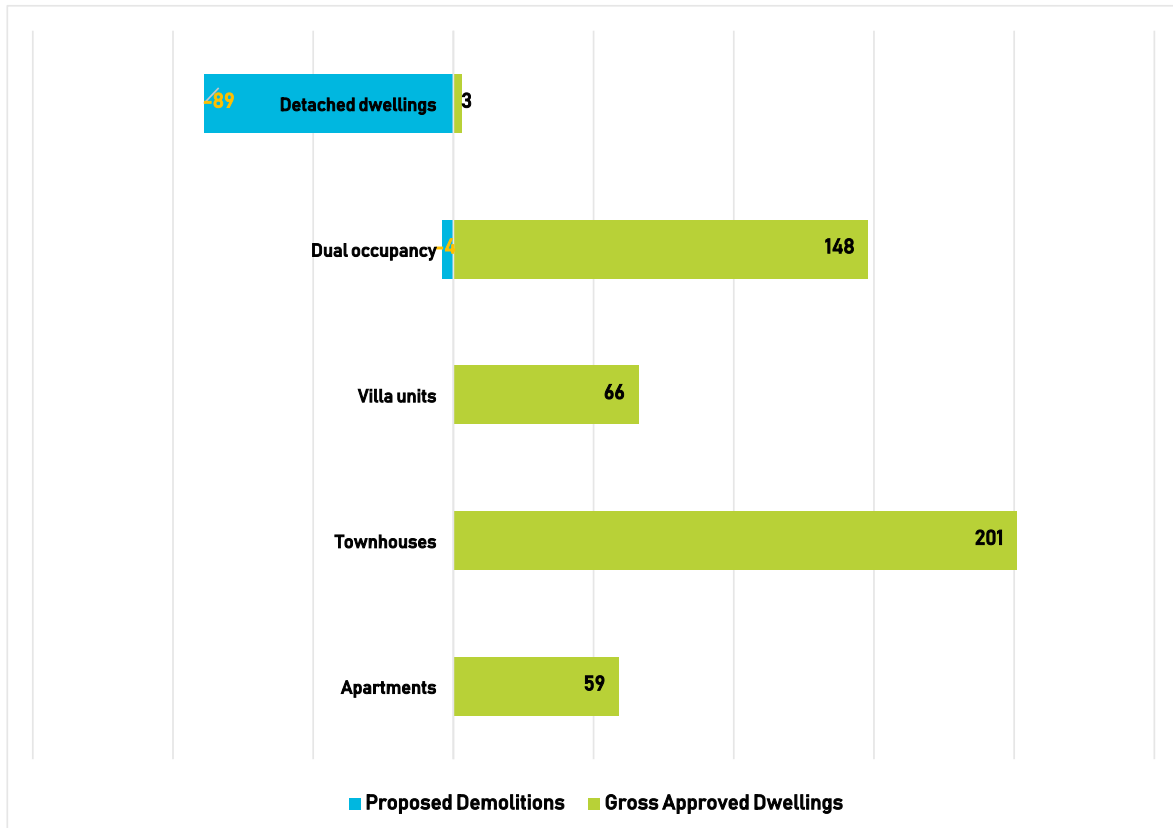
⁷ See Attachment 1 for the definition of dwelling type.



The proportion of total new dwellings that were the preferred dwelling type is shown in Figure 3. While Figure 4 shows the total number of new dwellings approved per hectare in each of the four Housing Strategy Areas. See Attachment 2 for the trend in net growth in dwellings, by type, over the past nine years.

Figure 2. Total New Dwellings and Demolitions by Approved Planning Permits

Townhouses are the largest dwelling typology in 2023, it accounted for more than 40% of total new dwellings in approved planning permits. All but four demolitions in approved planning permits were detached dwellings.





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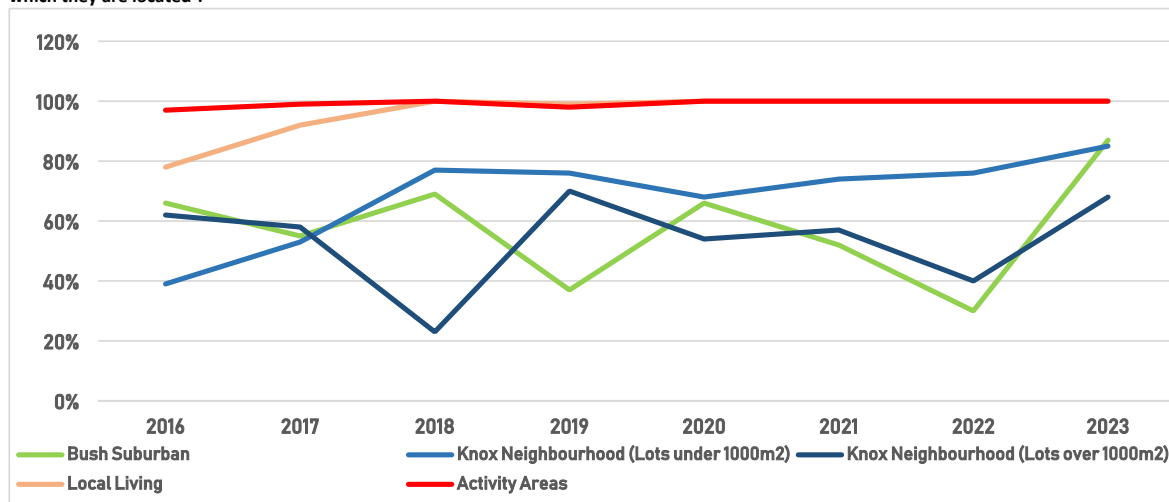
Table 2. Number of new Dwellings by Typology in Knox Housing Strategy Areas

Area Type		Net New dwellings	Total new dwellings	Detached dwellings	Dual Occupancy	Villa units	Townhouses	Apartments /Mixed used
Outside Housing Strategy Areas	All lots - includes rural and other zones	79	79	0	0	0	34	45
Bush Suburban	All lots - min. subdivision	17	23	1	19	3	0	0
Knox Neighbourhood	Lots under 1000m ²	97	149	0	126	20	3	0
	Lots over 1000m ²	54	65	2	1	43	19	0
Local Living	All lots - additional controls	75	88	0	2	0	86	0
Activity Areas	All lots - additional controls from local plans may apply	62	73	0	0	0	59	14
Commercial Areas	All lots - additional controls from local plans may apply	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

PREFERRED HOUSING TYPE
 PERMISSIBLE BUT NOT PREFERRED
 NON-PREFERRED HOUSING TYPE

Figure 3. Preferred Dwellings in Housing Strategy Areas

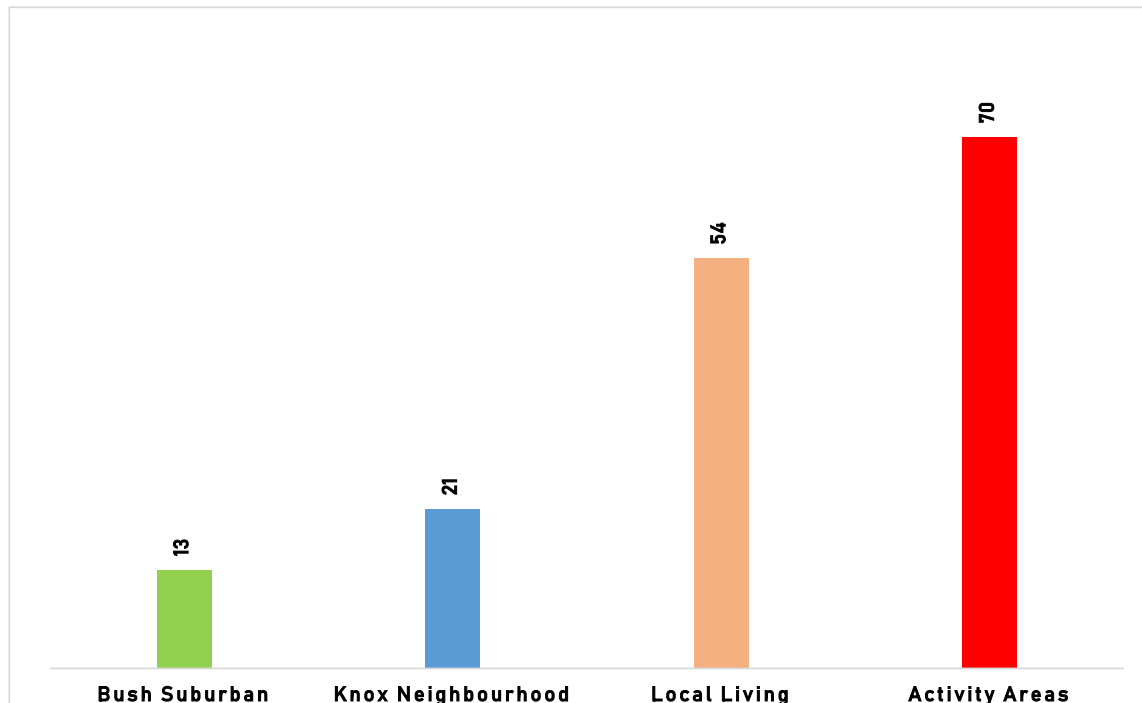
Almost all new dwellings approved in **Local Living** and **Activity Areas** since 2018 have been the preferred type for the Housing Strategy Areas in which they are located⁸.



⁸ It is important to note that the unusually low 2018 figure for large Knox Neighbourhood lots was influenced by a single application for 294 townhouses at the site of the former Wantirna Caravan Park that is inconsistent with the preferred character type for Knox Neighbourhood approved at VCAT after being refused by Council.

Figure 4. Dwelling Units per Hectare in Housing Strategy Areas

The number of total new dwelling units per hectare approved in 2023 was much higher in **Local Living** and **Activity Areas** than **Bush Suburban** area.



The trend in Figure 4 above, aligns with the approach to housing development described in the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* – where low scale development is encouraged in Bush Suburban and Knox Neighbourhood areas, and high scale development is preferred in Local Living and Activity Areas.

Analysis

Analysis of the planning permits approved in 2023 shows a net loss of detached dwellings. This pattern has continued since 2017, except for 2020 where there was a net growth in detached dwellings (see Attachment 2 for a time series graph). Also, planning permits approved in 2023 recorded the third lowest net loss in detached dwellings since 2015.

Townhouses have been the most common dwelling typology approved in planning permits since 2015. The only break in this trend was in 2020 where the approved subdivision of the former Kingston Links Golf Club site, resulted in approximately 500 new detached dwellings, which effectively put detached dwellings ahead of townhouses for that year⁹. To be specific, 42% of the total new dwellings approved in planning permits in 2023 were townhouses. This is however a decline from the 2022 figure, where townhouses constituted 55% of total dwellings approved in Knox.

Apartments have bounced back in 2023, as no apartments were approved in 2022 and only 4 apartments were approved in 2021. There is a parity between the apartments approved in 2020 and 2023 (in both years, 59 apartments were approved). Similar to 2022, no residential aged care facility was approved in planning permits in 2023. This is a clear departure from the trends in recent years¹⁰.

⁹ Development at Kingston Link is shown in Figure 1. These dwellings were not counted among the 899 approved dwellings in 2020.

¹⁰ There were 230 rooms, 226 rooms and 214 rooms in residential aged care approved in Knox in planning permits in 2019, 2020 and 2021 respectively.

Since 2016, the highest average score of the preferred dwelling typology in Knox was achieved in 2023, where on average 88% of the dwellings approved in planning permits were the preferred typology in their housing strategy areas. The second highest average score was 77% in 2020 and the lowest score was 68% recorded in 2016. This suggests an incremental improvement in dwellings being approved in alignment with their preferred housing strategy areas.

In 2023, the preferred dwellings approved in Bush Suburban areas and large Knox Neighbourhood areas have shown significant improvements over 2022. In fact, in 2023, preferred dwellings approved in the Bush Suburban areas and small Knox Neighbourhood areas have recorded their highest score since 2016.

In line with past trends (except in 2016, 2017 and 2019) all dwellings approved in planning permits in 2023 in Local Living areas and Activity Areas were the preferred dwelling typology.

It is critical to point out that 17% of the proposed development approved in planning permits in 2023 were located outside the four¹¹ main housing strategy areas of Knox, within the Strategic Investigation Sites. As the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* has no clear guidance as to what dwelling typology is preferred in the 14 Strategic Investigation Sites identified in the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*, a future Council initiative would be to clearly define the preferred dwelling topology in these sites. This will be addressed as part of the ongoing review of the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*.

The planning permits approved in 2023 revealed that the number of dwellings per hectare in the housing strategy areas will produce fewer dwellings per hectare in Bush Suburban and Knox Neighbourhood (see Figure 4 for more details). This aligns with 2022 and the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*, resulting in higher density dwellings in the Local Living and Activity Areas, and lower density development in Bush Suburban areas and Knox Neighbourhood areas. This respects the neighbourhood character of these areas.

In practical terms, a dwelling in a Bush Suburban area is on a larger parcel of land (~797m²) compared to a dwelling in Activity Areas (~142m²)¹². For the associated graph see Figure 17 under Attachment 2. This provides the required space for canopy trees to be retained or planted in the Bush Suburban areas, compared to Activity Areas or Local Living areas. Areas of biological significance will also be protected in the Bush Suburban areas as envisaged by the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*.

It is worthy to note that between 2022 and 2023, the number of dwellings per hectare have increased by between 4% and 8%, in the Activity Areas, the Bush Suburban and Knox Neighbourhood areas. However, the dwelling density per hectare in the Local Living areas increased markedly by 38% within the same period. If this margin of growth in dwelling density continues in the Local Living areas, the dwelling density per hectare is more likely to surpass the density in the Activity Areas within a decade.

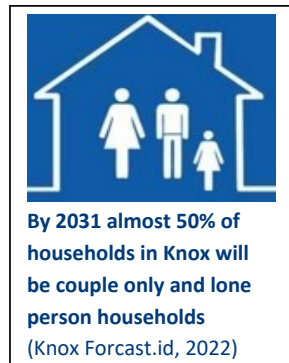
¹¹ Although we have four housing strategy areas, Knox Neighbourhood area is sub-divided into Small (Lots under 1,000m² and Large (Lots over 1,000m²). Different dwellings are therefore preferred in the two.

¹² In 2023, the number of square metres per dwelling unit are as follows: Bush Suburban (797m²); Knox Neighbourhood (467m²); Local Living (186m²) and Activity Areas (142m²).

2. Residential development better responds to the community's needs, and allows people to age-in-place (Objective 2)

Why is this Objective Important?

Knox needs more small houses (one to two bedrooms), now and in the future, to accommodate an increasing number of smaller households. This is necessary because almost 50% of households in Knox will be couple only and lone person households by 2031 ([Forecast.id](#), 2022). This forecast implies that couple only and lone person households will exceed households with children. To address this, the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* proposes to align the mix of available dwellings with the current and future housing needs of the community – by directly encouraging the development of more small dwellings that can meet the housing needs of small households and improve affordability. Affordability is particularly important as larger detached dwellings are becoming increasingly out of reach for a greater percentage of new homebuyers. Smaller houses tend to be relatively less expensive to buy and maintain, which provides more flexibility and choices for young people looking to get into the housing market, elderly residents planning to downsize, and anyone else looking to reduce their expenditure on housing or the cost of living.



If a substantial number of smaller houses are provided in Knox, the housing needs of many residents will be met. It is particularly crucial that Knox residents can remain part of their community as they age (aging-in-place), rather than be pushed to relocate or find suitable and affordable accommodation outside the municipality. The provision of smaller dwellings and residential aged care homes, contribute to making housing available to homebuyers seeking smaller dwellings and the elderly, respectively.

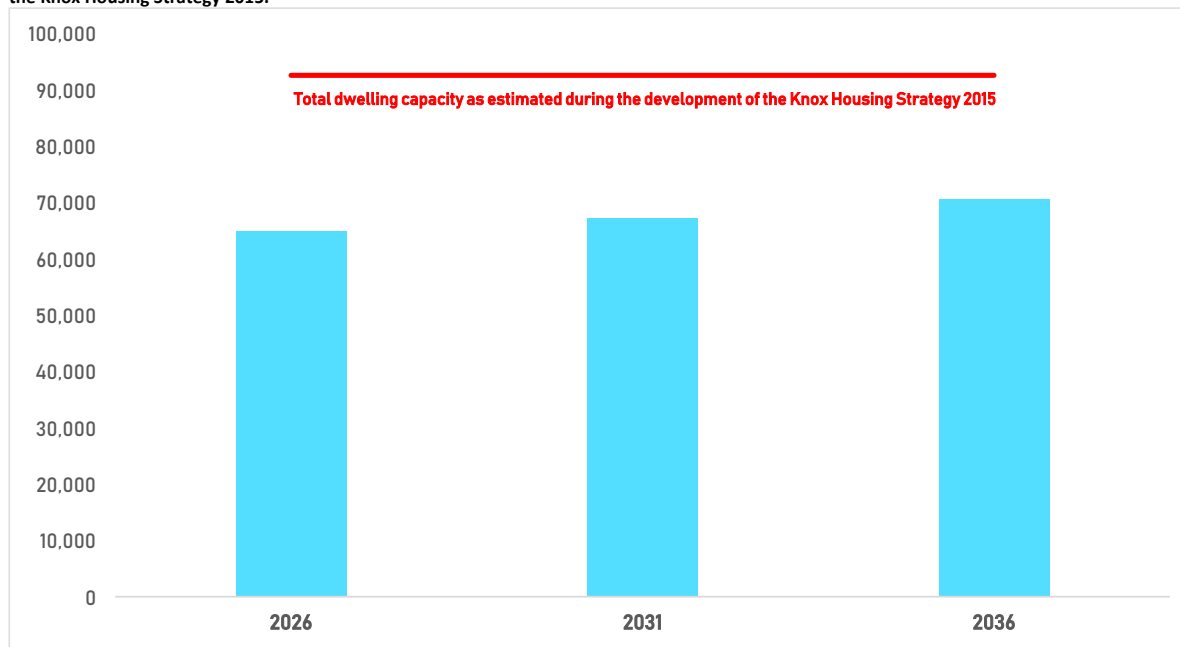
How are we Tracking this Objective?

Knox can benefit by understanding its capacity to accommodate more dwellings in the future. Furthermore, the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* estimated that theoretically, Knox had the capacity for 36,362 additional dwellings (in addition to the existing dwellings in Knox as of 2015) giving a total of 92,500 dwellings if each lot was developed to its full capacity within the constraints and parameters of the Knox Planning Scheme as of 2015. Based on the Victorian Government's *Victoria in Future* (VIF) projections¹³ ([DTP, 2023](#)), future housing growth can be accommodated within the estimated capacity in the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* until 2036, and probably beyond (see Figure 5). These capacity estimates are based on broad assumptions made within the policy context of the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*, the [Knox Residential Design Guidelines 2015](#), the *Knox Planning Scheme* and other relevant Council plans or documents. Therefore, these approximations could change if any of the documents that underpinned or informed the projections were to be revised. As the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* is currently being reviewed, some future changes may occur.

¹³ VIF dwelling projections are applied here as they are calculated using a top-down approach. In contrast to the forecasting method employed by id Consulting Pty Ltd (abbreviated as .id in some sections of this report) on behalf of Council, in which only local factors are taken into account, the VIF projections include assumptions about state level growth and allocate this to local government areas.

Figure 5. Forecast Dwelling Capacity in Knox

The current VIF forecast dwelling capacity in Knox can be accommodated within applicable planning provisions based on the estimated capacity in the Knox Housing Strategy 2015.



To analyse the projections against reality, forecasted dwelling growth needs to be looked at against actual housing development data in recent years. In this respect, one effective method of assessing the actual number of new dwellings built in Knox against the forecast housing figures, is to analyse the data on building permits in Knox. Building permits affirm that housing development plans and specifications fully comply with building regulations and pave the way for onsite building work to commence. In this purview, building permits are therefore a more suitable and reliable indicator of actual dwelling growth than planning permits. This is because planning permits primarily show what could possibly be built, in the next two-to-four year window, if approved plans are duly enacted.

Building approvals data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) demonstrates that building permits were granted for the construction of a total of 5,530 dwellings in Knox between 2017 and 2023 (ABS, 2024). This figure is equivalent to an annual average of 790 dwellings per year. However, this building approval figure is misleading as it overestimates the real increase in dwellings because the ABS building permit data does not take into consideration demolitions¹⁴. To determine the actual number of dwellings to be built, it is therefore essential to estimate the number of dwellings that were demolished within the same period. To estimate the number of houses that were demolished to make space for the new dwellings in building permits, the correlation between new dwellings and demolitions in approved planning permits has been used as a proxy in this report.

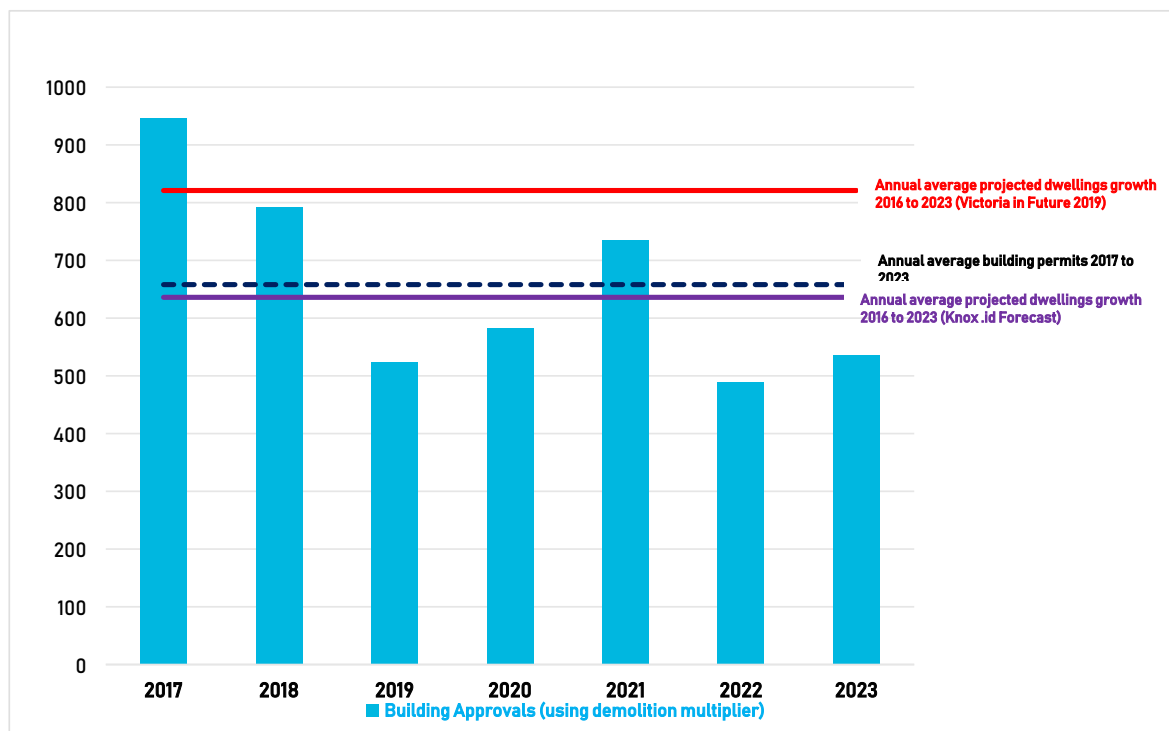
¹⁴ But from the planning permit we know that some existing dwellings are demolished for the construction of new ones.



In Knox there was one dwelling demolished for every six dwellings approved in planning permits over the last seven years, that is 2017 to 2023. Applying this rate to building permits produces an annual average of 658 new dwellings per year, constructed within Knox between 2017 and 2023. It is important to comprehend that this figure falls between the forecast of 821 new dwellings annually by the Victorian Government in the *Victoria in Future* projections and the forecast of 636 new dwellings per year calculated by id Consulting Pty Ltd¹⁵ on the Council’s behalf (See Figure 6)¹⁶. This suggests that the estimate applied in this report is reliable¹⁷.

Figure 6. Annual Average Building Permits Growth versus Projected Dwellings Growth in Knox

The number of new dwellings based on building permits (adjusted to account for demolitions) in Knox remains broadly in line with dwelling growth projected by the Victorian Government and an independent forecast projection derived on behalf of Council.



The ABS Census (2021) data revealed that lone person and couple only households are almost half (45.7%) of all households in Knox. Yet, over the past six years, dwellings of four or more bedrooms were more prevalent in approved planning permits than other dwelling sizes. In 2023, for instance 68% of approved net new dwellings were large dwellings – three or more bedrooms (See Figure 7). This is an improvement over 2022, where over 80% of net new dwellings were large dwellings.

In terms of actual numbers, a net total of 122 small dwellings (two bedrooms or less) were approved in planning permits in Knox in 2023. This represents 32% of approved net new dwellings. Compared to previous years, this is the fourth lowest figure since 2016 (Figure 8), but a marked increase over 2022.

¹⁵ id Consulting Pty Ltd is abbreviated as .id in some sections of this report.

¹⁶ The significant alignment between building permit data and the dwelling forecasts prepared by the Victorian Government on behalf of Council is anticipated because building approvals are taken into consideration in computing these forecasts.

¹⁷ Using the planning permits to demolition ratio and transferring that to building permits.



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Figure 7. Net Growth in Dwellings by Bedrooms

The planning permits approved in 2023 would see 32% of net growth, being small dwellings (two bedrooms or less).

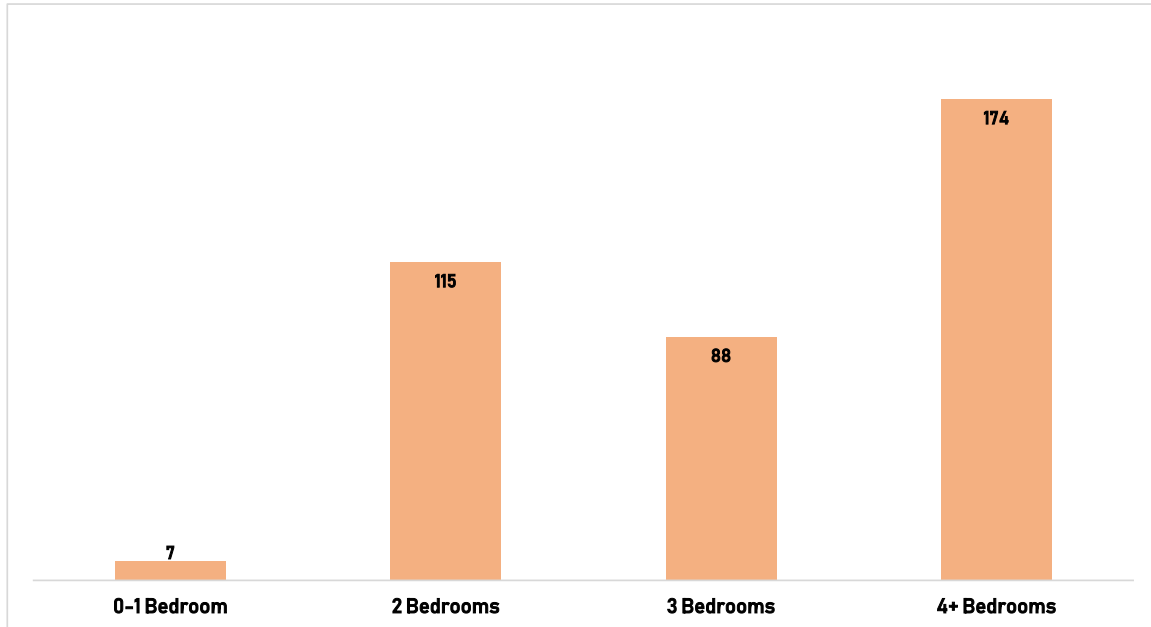
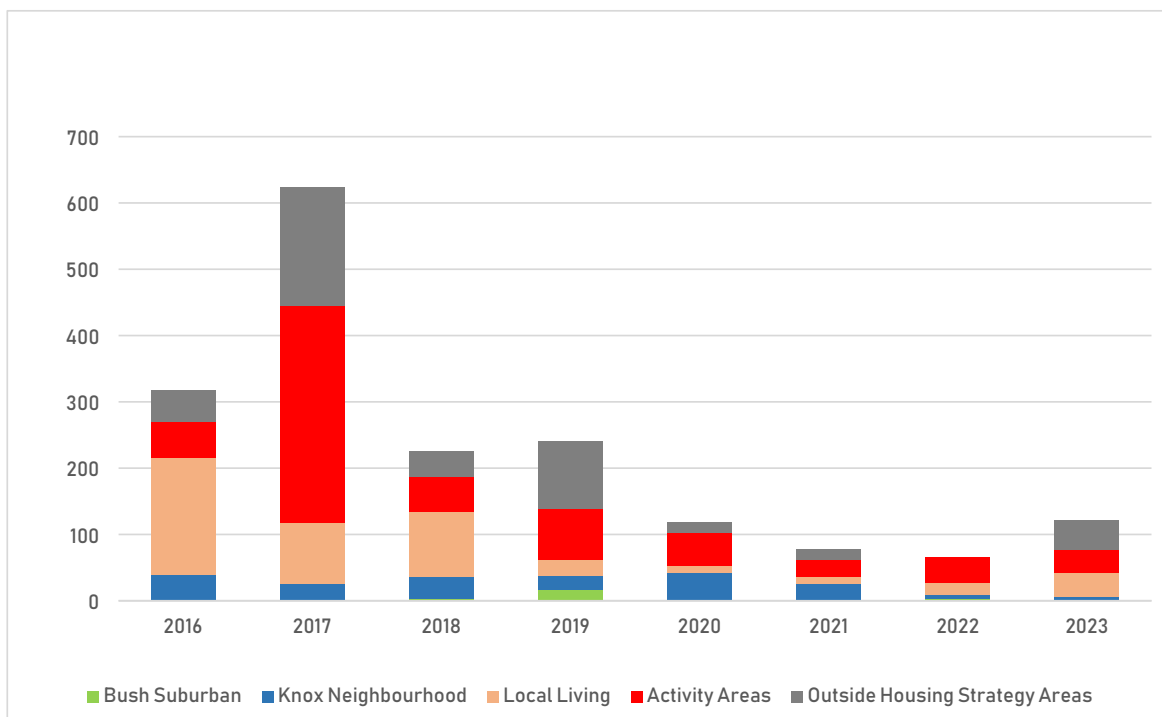


Figure 8. Net Growth in Small Dwellings

Over the last eight years, approved planning permits in 2023 produced the fourth lowest number of net new small dwellings (two bedrooms or fewer) – Apart from 2017, the net growth in small dwellings has consistently been lower than forecast growth for small households.

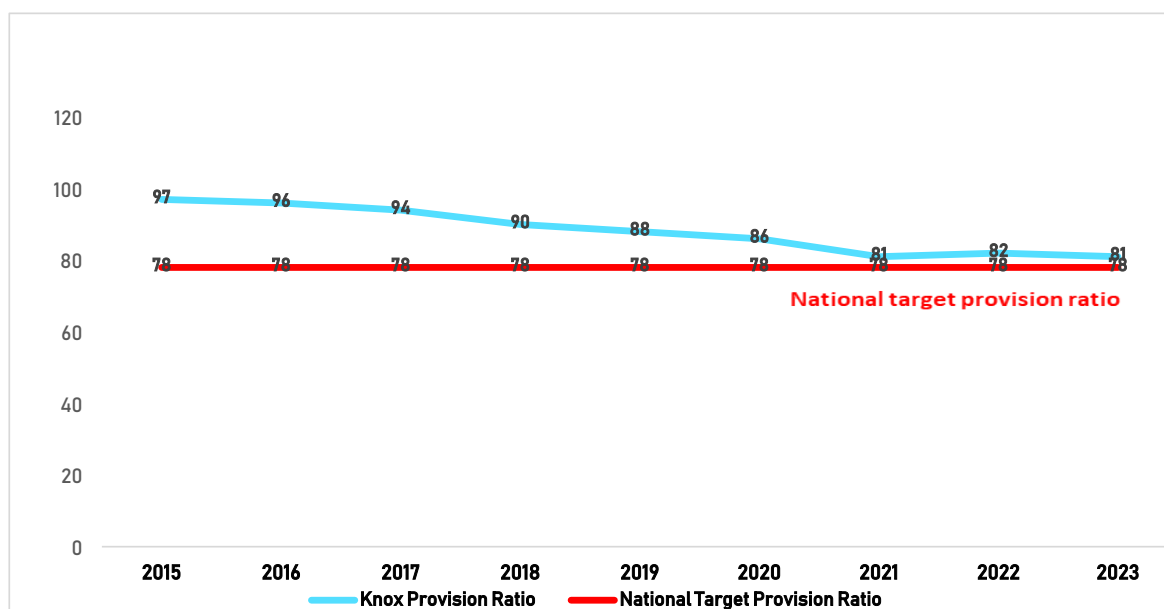




Residential aged care facilities play a vital role in providing dignified accommodation for the elderly. As Knox’s population continues to age, the provision of residential aged care facilities to accommodate the increasing population of senior citizens will be critically important. The available data showed that as of June 2023, Knox had 1,618 places, usually a single room with an ensuite (AIHW, 2024). Updated population estimates by the ABS showed that the number of people aged 70 years and over in Knox was 20,197 (ABS, 2023). This gives a ratio of 81 places in residential aged care facilities per 1,000 residents aged 70 and above (See Figure 9). The 2023 ratio, and that of 2021 were the lowest compared to previous years, since 2015. Meanwhile, the Australian Government’s target provision ratio for operational residential aged care places continues to be 78 places per 1,000 people aged 70 years and over (ACFA, 2021, p iv, 17)¹⁸. Therefore, Knox has marginally exceeded this target in 2023 by 3 residential aged care places (See Figure 9). In fact, the target has been exceeded since 2015. While the 2023 ratio is a positive outcome, Knox is very close to the minimum national provision ratio.

Figure 9. Residential Aged Care Places in Knox in 2023

There were approximately 81 residential aged care places in Knox per 1,000 residents aged 70+ in 2023



Social housing provides affordable housing for low-income households. Knox has 1,522 social housing dwellings as of June 2023¹⁹(Homes Victoria 2023). This amounts to an increase of 19 dwellings between July 2022 and 30th June 2023. Comparatively, this is a measurable improvement over the previous years. This is the case, as Knox rose by only four social housing dwellings between July 2021 and 30th June 2022. Using DFFH’s accessible data on social housing and affordable housing lettings, the deficit in social and affordable dwellings in Knox was estimated to be 584 in 2023. In

¹⁸ The national target for home care is 45 per 1,000 residents 70 years and over. However, the home care target ratio has already been exceeded, reaching 53.6 mainstream home care packages available for every 1,000 people aged 70 and over as of 30 June 2020 (ACFA, 2021). The residential aged care places per 1,000 people aged 70 years and over was reduced from 86 places per 1,000 residents aged 70 and over to the current 78 places per 1,000 people 70 years and over. This report has cited the most current ACFA report.

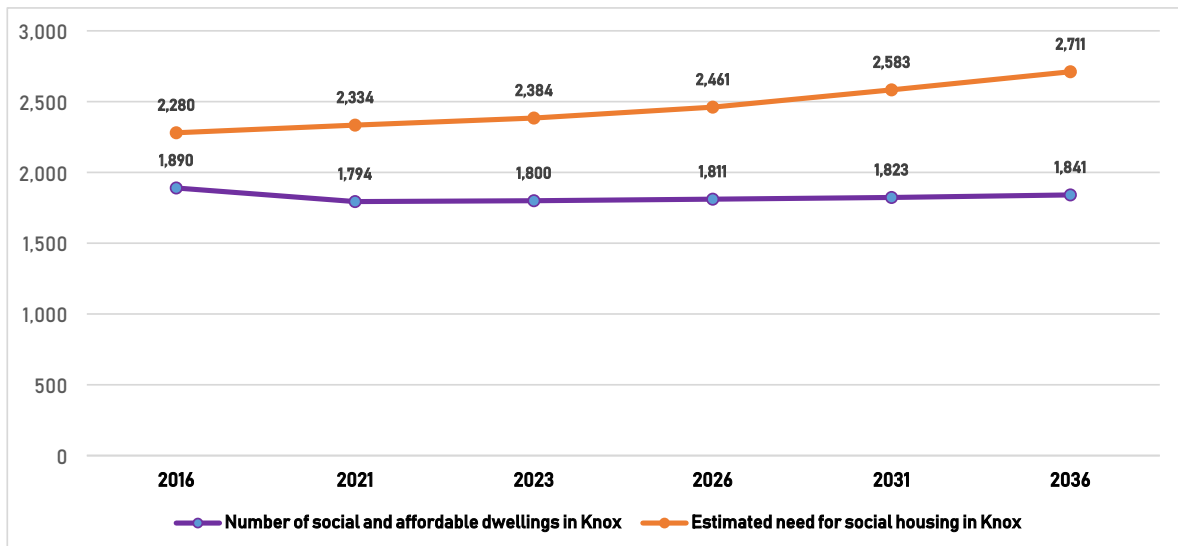
¹⁹ The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) notes that more than 6,300 social housing dwellings are being completed or are under way across Victoria. If these homes are completed the social housing stock in Knox will increase. This is because 159 dwellings funded by Homes Victoria is being built in Knox (KCC, 2023). But the updated data at the end of February 2024 on Homes Victoria website shows that 149 houses were funded in Knox; 29 have been completed and 120 are underway.



comparison to 2022, this is an increase of 26 dwellings²⁰. This growing trend is projected to continue without significant interventions in the provision of social and affordable housing in Knox (See Figure 10).

Figure 10. Gap between Supply and estimated Need for Social and Affordable Housing in Knox

There is a growing gap between supply and estimated need for social and affordable housing in Knox.



Housing affordability is fundamentally determined by rental and house prices. Within the twelve months prior to June 2023, the median house price was \$946,000 and the median unit price was \$651,000 ([Knox Housing .id](#)). This means that only 65 (13%) of the 488 dwellings²¹ sold in Knox were considered affordable to households within the very low and low-income brackets²². Similarly, only 1,636 (36%) of the 4,545 rental properties in Knox were affordable to households in the very low and low-income groups (See Figure 11). Thus, the affordability of housing and rental properties has slightly worsened as compared to 2022 where 14% of housing and 38% of rental properties were affordable to people of the same income brackets respectively.

²⁰ The gap between the 2021 and 2022 increased by 18 dwellings.

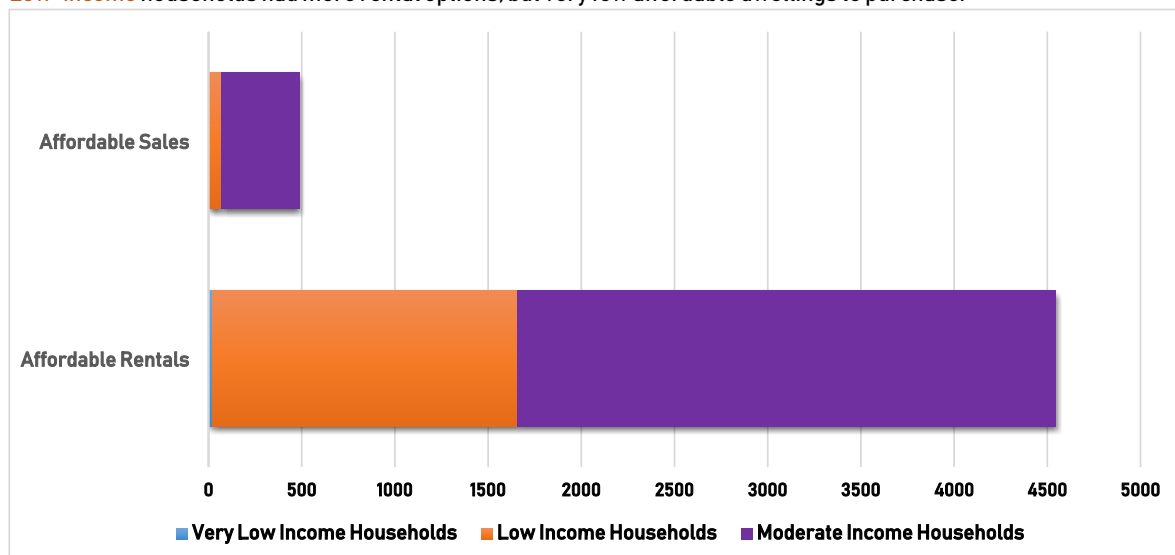
²¹ The 488 dwellings were considered affordable to the very low, low and moderate-income brackets. Thus, the moderate-income group could afford 87% of the houses or units sold within Knox within the period under consideration.

²² This Report follows the Department of Infrastructure and Knox City Council in defining Affordable Housing as a “Well-located housing, appropriate to the needs of a given household, where the cost (whether mortgage repayment or rent) is no more than 30% of that household’s income. Exceeding the mark places one under ‘housing stress,’ particularly in the lower 40% of the income distribution scale” (Department of Infrastructure, 2002, p.182; Knox City Council, 2015, p.6). In this report, very low income is household income of less than \$53,900 per annum. Low income is a household income of between \$53,900 to \$86,230 per annum. Moderate income households ranges from \$86,230 to \$129,350.

Figure 11. Affordable Sales and Rentals in Knox in 2023

In the year preceding June 2023, only 1 sale and 19 rentals were affordable to households on a **very low-income**.

Low-income households had more rental options, but very few affordable dwellings to purchase.



Analysis

The updated Victorian Government’s population and dwelling projections (*Victoria in Future - VIF, 2023*) showed that it is possible for Knox to accommodate more population and dwellings. To be specific, the Victorian Government’s updated dwelling growth for Knox from 2026 to 2036, as captured in the VIF, can be fully accommodated within the estimated dwelling capacity that the Knox municipality can house as outlined in the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*. Based on the projected population, by 2036 there will be a difference of nearly 14,000 people between the updated population forecast by the Victorian Government and id Consulting Pty Ltd (in June, 2023). This disparity might be due to shifts in the population in many Melbourne suburbs across Australia, because of the recent COVID-19 Pandemic. Interestingly, the higher estimate of 191,530 people documented in the Victorian Government VIF, can be accommodated almost entirely (96%) in Knox by 2036, if Knox is developed to its full capacity (92,500 dwellings) by 2036, and if each dwelling accommodates at least two residents on average.

Residential dwelling approvals in Knox showed positive signs of recovery, following the lowest building permit approvals in 2022, compared to the previous five years. This is good news for Knox as the media ([that used ABS data](#)) reported that Victoria had the lowest building approvals compared to the previous 10 years. This was foreshadowed by the Victorian Building Authority – VBA (2022) as it noted that building approvals increased during the 2021-2022 financial year for other building activity, but residential building approvals reduced as compared to the 2020-2021 financial year across Victoria. Although Knox’s building approval numbers have rebounded, it may take a few years for approved building permits to be translated into dwellings on the ground. Therefore, the effects of the low building approvals in 2022, might still translate into low building activity in Knox in the next couple of years.

Growth in small dwellings, two bedrooms or less, has fallen behind the rising numbers of small households in Knox. It is anticipated that lone person and couple only households will constitute nearly 50% of the Knox population by 2031 (ABS, 2022). From the planning permits approved in 2023, approximately nearly one-third (122 dwellings of 384 net new dwellings) of the dwellings approved were small dwellings. Despite this, the 2023 figure is a 14% improvement over the 2022 record of 18% small dwellings approved in Knox. A trend analysis shows that in years where larger subdivisions were approved in planning permits, a larger number of smaller dwellings were approved. When



apartments were approved in significant numbers in planning permits in a particular year (i.e. 2019, 2020 and 2023), this increased the number of smaller dwellings. While 59 apartments were approved in 2023, no apartments were approved in the planning permits in 2022. If the approval of apartments could be sustained, the rising gap between supply and demand for small dwellings in Knox, will be gradually reduced in the medium to long term.

Just like 2021, no small dwelling was approved in the Bush Suburban area in 2023. Small dwellings have consistently been approved in low numbers in the Bush Suburban areas. In contrast, over 85% of small dwellings are in the Activity Areas and Local Living areas, in most years²³. These areas have nearly an equal number of small dwellings and usually have greater proximity to shops and public transport. This makes these locations ideal for the elderly and lone person households. The provision of high-density dwellings (in the form of apartments/small dwellings) in the Activity Areas and Local Living areas is in line with the objective of the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*.

The provision ratio regarding residential aged care facilities in Knox has marginally exceeded the Australian Government's national target. Although Knox is currently still above the minimum target, aged care places in Knox have been declining progressively since 2015. This suggests that within the next decade, Knox could fall below the minimum target provision ratio of 78 residential aged care places per 1,000 people aged 70 and over, if the current number of aged care places remains unchanged. This is because people aged 70 and over in Knox are increasing. For example, people aged 70 and over increased from 10.2% in 2016 to 12.4% in 2021 (ABS, 2022).

In the past two years (2022 and 2023), no residential aged care facility was approved in a planning permit. However, a few residential aged care facilities were approved in planning permits within the last five years. These include a 214-bed residential aged care facility approved in 2021, and three other residential aged care facilities approved in 2019 and 2020. If these facilities are developed soon, Knox could maintain its position above the national minimum provision ratio for residential aged care places. To ensure that Knox does not fall below the Australian Government minimum provision threshold for residential aged care places within the next decade, Council may need to work with private developers of aged care facilities, to address the landscape and environmental concerns that previous proposed residential aged care facilities posed (especially in 2022 planning permits applications).

A significant share of a household's budgets goes toward housing costs. Therefore, housing affordability is a major determinant of both the cost of living and the standard of living. In Knox, very few dwellings and units were affordable to households in the very low-income brackets (below \$53,900 per annum) to rent or purchase. This was the case, because a paltry 19 rentals and 1 property sale were affordable to households within the 'very low income' brackets in 2023 ([Knox Housing.id](#)). Low-income households (\$53,900 to \$86,230 per annum) have slightly more rentals options, however only a limited number of property options to purchase. In the 12 months prior to June 2023, low-income households could only purchase approximately 64 of the 488 properties on the market ([Knox Housing.id](#)) As of 30th September 2023, the Victorian Housing Register recorded 3,450 Priority Access and Register of Interest applicants who were on the waiting list for social housing within Knox²⁴ ([Homes Victoria, 2024](#)). This number had declined by 559 applicants, from 4,009 in December 2022. The high number of applicants for social housing is a testament to the housing affordability challenge (Pawson, 2022). The current housing affordability challenge has largely pushed many potential renters out of the rental market in Knox.

²³ In 2023, small dwellings were only 57% in Local Living and Activity Areas. This could be because almost 37% of the small dwellings were approved outside the Housing Strategy Areas (Strategic Investigation Sites).

²⁴ It is important to note that *as applicants can select up to five location preferences; a single applicant can therefore be counted anywhere from one to five times in the data set*. On average, an applicant selects 2 to 3 location preferences.



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Knox has responded to the housing affordability predicament through a new housing strategy. The central focus of the *Knox Social and Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2027* is to expand the supply of social housing²⁵. The provision of more social housing could partly address the housing affordability challenge. However, the gap between social housing demand and supply is continuing to widen in Knox (see Figure 10). The *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* has highlighted that Council could influence the social housing market through a partnership with social housing providers. It also signals that although it is difficult to influence the private housing market, opportunities could be explored by Council to define a minimum supply of social or affordable housing, to be constructed by private developers. In addition, further negotiating with permit applicants whose applications would produce a large number of dwellings, could increase a developer's contribution to the social and/or affordable housing supply. In fact, a 5% voluntary contribution to social housing by private developers has been proposed in the *Knox Social and Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2027*. If these proposals are fully explored and implemented, the provision of social and affordable housing could improve within Knox.

The rate at which new social housing dwellings are added to the current stock within Knox, could be a pointer to how soon the deficit could be reduced. The social housing tally in Knox grew by 19 dwellings between 2022 and 2023. This is a noticeable improvement, since only four social housing dwellings were added to Knox's stock between 2021 and 2022. Excitingly, the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing indicates that over 6,000 social housing projects are either completed or being built in Victoria (DFFH, 2022). It has been identified in the *Knox Social and Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2027*, that 159 homes financed through Homes Victoria are under development in the Knox municipality²⁶. If these houses are completed, the social housing stock in Knox will improve substantially. It is also important to note that additional opportunities equally exist for new social housing provision in Knox. These include a proposal to negotiate with developers for a voluntary contribution to social housing in private land developments. Again, as part of planning applications, negotiating with permit applicants whose applications would produce large dwellings to contribute to social and/or affordable housing supply in the Knox local government area, are some of the other opportunities highlighted.

²⁵ The *Knox Affordable Housing Action Plan 2015-2020* equally highlighted the need to increase social and affordable housing in Knox: <https://tinyurl.com/mr3haub5>

²⁶ The 159 (slightly revised down to 149) homes are likely to be Knox's share of the 6,300 social housing projects under development across Victoria.

3. Energy, water, and waste efficient design are increased in dwellings (Objective 3)

Why is this Objective Important?

The Knox [Climate Response Plan 2021 – 2031](#) notes that 37% of emissions come from residential and commercial stationary energy, which mainly refers to the consumption of electricity. Therefore, more sustainable and efficient housing is needed in Knox to improve the comfort for residents, reduce emissions and their impacts on the environment, and minimise living costs. In this regard, the adoption of acceptable Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) standards in new residential buildings would improve efficiency in energy and water usage, as well as ensure that dwelling designs are waste efficient. This will deliver better quality, more accessible and more sustainable housing in Knox. These actions will directly minimise the adverse impact on the environment and the ecology, and substantially mitigate the effects of residential development on the changing climate. The Knox *Climate Response Plan 2021–2031* provides some strategies to making dwellings in Knox more environmentally friendly, climate responsive and sustainable.

An estimated 2.3 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalent emissions in Knox in 2021 (Residential emissions, 31%)
 Source: [Snapshot Climate Report, 2021](#)

How are we Tracking this Objective?

Properly designed and resource efficient buildings and developments are critical to creating more sustainable and liveable cities. Council seeks to make Knox a sustainable and climate responsive municipality. Through the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*, Council is encouraging all residential developments to utilise sustainable design features, including water sensitive urban design. In fact, Council requires that all developments of two or more dwellings, undergo a Sustainable Design Assessment (SDA) before a planning permit is issued. This measure is to ensure that new residential buildings meet the satisfactory environmental performance and efficiency standards, in relation to water usage, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, among other key sustainability standards. In specific terms, the SDA report must encapsulate two key indicators of sustainability, these being measures for reducing potable water consumption and GHG emissions. From the Built Environment Sustainability Scorecard (BESS) data for the 2022-2023 financial year²⁷, the best practice target of a 25% reduction in potable water consumption and the greenhouse gas emissions target of a 50% reduction, was achieved in all cases²⁸ (100%) (See Figure 12).

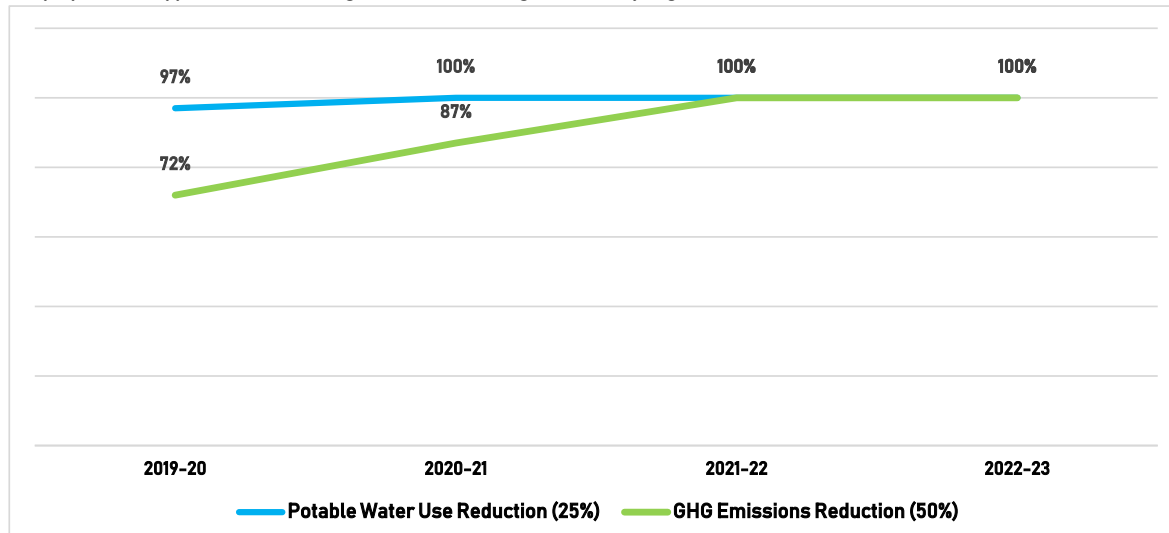
²⁷ BESS is an initiative of the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE); this data is current to 30 June 2023. It is important to clarify that this is the first time BESS data is directly reported more broadly in the Housing Monitoring Report. Previous Reports have used Knox's internal ESD data. However, this is currently unavailable fully for the 2022-23 financial year. We have reported this data in this year's Report because the Knox ESD Team notes that "We have done a general cross check with internal data to make sure it has a number in line with what our internal data says." The ESD Team further acknowledges that "The data in this report (BESS) is not perfect, as there are a few projects that were done but not approved, and some projects that were approved, but have probably not yet been built. I would say the BESS report is fit for purpose for our aim of reporting on ESD measures achieved through the planning process."

²⁸ It is worthy to note that application for elevated ESD requirements has been submitted to the Minister for Planning. When the new ESD requirements are approved they will be tracked and reported in future Housing Monitoring Program Annual reports.



Figure 12. Applicable new Buildings Assessed as meeting Sustainability Targets

The proportion of applicable* new buildings assessed as meeting sustainability targets.



Analysis

It is pertinent to note that Council revised its approach to ESD permit conditions and endorsed sustainability measures on developments in 2019-2020. This revision was to ensure that ESD commitments on approved development plans were delivered upon construction. This means that the ESD data on potable water reduction and GHG emissions reduction for the 2019-2020 (reported in Figure 12 above) are not comparable with the ESD data of the subsequent years (2020-2021 to 2022-2023) presented in Figure 12. Therefore, the ESD data from the 2020-21 to 2022-23 financial years are consistent and comparable. The ESD outcomes for 2022-2023 demonstrated that approved permits of two or more dwellings in Knox had met (100%) or exceeded the best practice target of 25% reduction in potable water consumption. Similarly, in the same financial year, approved development of two or more dwellings in Knox had reached (100%) or surpassed the best practice target of 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions reduction. This implied that all permits for applicable new dwellings²⁹ in 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 met both targets. This was not the case in both ESD targets in 2020-2021, where the target for potable water consumption reduction was achieved, but the GHG emissions reduction benchmark was not realised.

The ESD data for 2022-2023 revealed that in practice an average of 39% of potable water consumption was reduced. This constituted a 2% decline from the 2021-2022 figure of 41.3%. Similarly, in the same financial year, the average GHG reduction was 61%. This was a marginal improvement over the 2021-2022 GHG emissions reduction figure of 60.4%.

The BESS data identified that over three million litres of water tank capacity of water was approved in Knox in the 2022-2023 fiscal year, plus 830kW of solar panels were committed to for installation. This would contribute to a reduction of GHG emissions, emanating from electricity consumption in residential buildings.

Over time, further analysis would show more explicitly how Knox is progressing on these two ESD benchmarks. The time series analysis will likely show that the “best practice” definition is not fixed, rather it varies as standards shift.

²⁹ Applicable new dwellings mean additional new dwellings of two or more



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Hence, an approved development that meets the best practice target in potable water consumption and greenhouse gas emissions in 2022-2023 for instance, may miss the best practice benchmark in subsequent years. For example, on 21st July 2022, Knox was part of 24 Councils in Victoria that lodged an application for a planning scheme amendment with the State Government, requesting to introduce planning policy that elevates sustainability requirements for new buildings and encourages a transition towards net zero carbon development. The application for the elevated ESD requirements is still pending a decision by the Minister for Planning. If this application is approved, altering the “best practice” benchmark, it will make it difficult to consistently track the ESD benchmarks and analyse progress over time.

4. Housing design is improved to better respond to neighbourhood identity and create a stronger sense of place (Objective 4)

Why is this Objective Important?

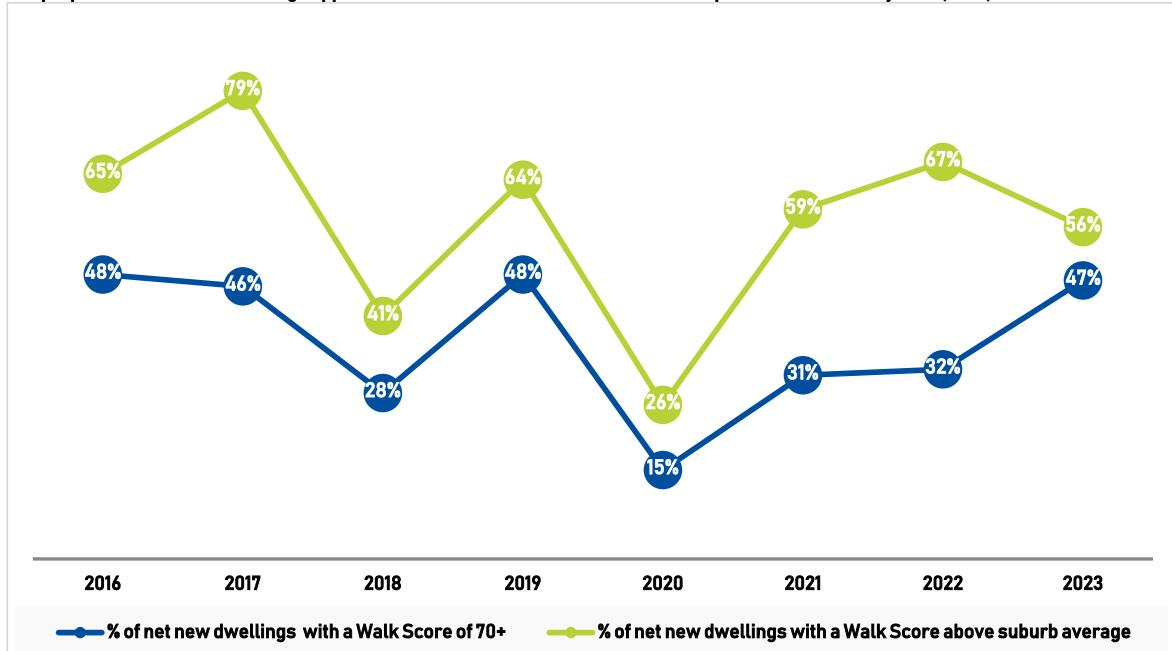
Over the decades the Knox municipality has been known for its green and leafy neighbourhoods, quiet streets, and a mix of city and country feel. The low scale and low-density residential development patterns in Knox are responsible for the quiet streets, green and leafy character and natural feel that have attracted many people to the Knox municipality. However, this form of residential development has largely made Knox a car dependent city, leading to increasing air pollution and reduced access to amenities, services, and social infrastructure for the residents. As land values have significantly increased over the years, redevelopment has introduced new housing typology into the housing mix in Knox's neighbourhood. This change is altering the look and feel of the municipality.

How are we Tracking this Objective?

One way of assessing the proximity of services to people is to use the [Walkscore Index](#). Walkscore is an index developed to estimate the 'walkability' of a place. It examines the proximity of local shops, services, schools, entertainment and jobs, to develop a walkability score on a scale of 1 to 100 (Steiniger et al. 2019). Areas that score below 50 are classified as "Car Dependent", those with scores of 51-70 are categorized as "Somewhat Walkable", scores of 71-90 are considered as "Very Walkable", and places that score over 90 are regarded as a "Walker's Paradise".

The Walkscore website can be used to determine scores from individual addresses and by suburbs or neighbourhoods (Steiniger et al. 2019). Therefore, the Housing Monitoring Program report examines the individual Walkscores for each of the planning permits approved, as well as how they compare against their suburb's average score. New residential developments in high Walkscore areas of Knox are more desirable as residents in those neighbourhoods would have access to critical amenities and socio-economic infrastructure and services.

Figure 13. Proportion of Dwellings Approved in Walkable Areas of Knox
 The proportion of net new dwellings approved in the **more walkable areas** of Knox improved over the last years' (2022) score.



Another important measure outlined in the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*, under the neighbourhood identity objective, is loss of trees and backyard space in Bush Suburban and Knox Neighbourhood areas. Tree canopy data published by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning in 2022 (DELWP now known as DEECA – Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action) indicated that there were about 250,000 trees on residential zoned land in Bush Suburban and Knox Neighbourhood areas (DELWP 2022). Future releases (if any) of this data may offer an indicative measure of change over time.

It is imperative to note that the results presented in Figure 4, which validated that low numbers of new dwellings per hectare were approved in Bush Suburban and Knox Neighbourhood areas, supported Council’s decision-making process to minimising tree loss, thus maintaining a green leafy natural environment.

Analysis

Figure 13 above shows that nearly half (47%) of the net new dwellings approved in 2023 in Knox had Walkscores of above 70, that is, in “Very Walkable” locations. This was a noticeable improvement over the 2022 figure of 32%. It is interesting to state that the permits approved in 2023 recorded the second highest number of approved net new dwellings located in “Very Walkable” areas of Knox. The highest was 48% in 2016 and 2019. Intriguingly, 56% of approved net new dwellings in 2023 were in areas that were regarded more walkable than the average score for their suburb. This is a decline over the 2022 figure of 67%. Since 2016, approved planning permits in 2023 recorded the third lowest score, where new dwellings were located in more walkable areas than the average score for their suburb. This implies that there were relatively more permit approvals in areas closer to activity centres in 2023.

Even though 59 apartments were approved in 2023, the percentage of net new dwellings with a walkability score above their suburb average in 2023 was lower than in 2022, where no single apartment was approved in a planning permit. Apartment buildings normally accommodate a large number of dwellings, compared to other dwelling

typologies, and are usually located in or near activity centres where walkability tends to be high. Therefore, each approved apartment development often contributes significantly to increasing the number of very walkable dwellings approved. It was somewhat surprising to observe that approved dwellings in 2022 where no apartments were approved, recorded the second highest walkability score compared to their suburbs and outperformed 2023 where 59 apartments were approved. This clearly suggested that while apartments usually improved Walkscores, other dwelling typologies can equally improve walkability if they are located closer to services, such as shops, schools, health facilities, plus sports and recreational facilities.

It was refreshing to note that the majority (47%) of the net new dwellings approved in 2023 were in “Very Walkable” locations and a quarter (25%) were in “Somewhat Walkable” areas. This was in contrast with 2022 where the majority of the net new dwellings were in “Somewhat Walkable” areas. In 2023, 28% of the approved net new dwellings were sited in “Car Dependent” areas, in comparison to 24% (a lower share) in 2022. The fact that nearly half of all approved net new dwellings were located in “Very Walkable” areas was a positive development, and thus, responds strongly to the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*, which places emphasis on accessibility and locating more dwellings in close proximity to services, shops and schools.

The Basin, Lysterfield, Rowville, and Upper Ferntree Gully have been generally categorised as “Car Dependent” suburbs by Walkscore. However, some approved net new dwellings were still identified in “Somewhat Walkable” and “Very Walkable” areas in these suburbs. For instance, a quarter of the approved net new dwellings in Rowville in 2023 were in “Very Walkable” areas and 10% were in “Somewhat Walkable” locations, although Rowville is broadly categorised as a “Car Dependent” suburb. Therefore, the specific location of a dwelling is more important than the suburb in which it is located.

5. Protect and enhance the landscape and environmental value of natural areas of significance (Objective 5)

Why is this Objective Important?

One of Knox's defining features is its leafy green feel, an aesthetic cherished by the community. The municipality enjoys a unique natural setting, located at the foot of the Dandenong Ranges, traversed by creeks and wetlands which provide a tranquil habitat for native animals and a serene ambiance for residents. These characteristics bring the feel of bushland and natural spaces into Knox's neighbourhoods, which is valued by Knox residents. However, this green and leafy character of Knox is seen to be under threat from development. As the Knox population grows, residential development will increase as well. Therefore, it will be critically important to ensure that new development does not deplete Knox's unique and most cherished sources of environmental and ecological value over time.

The Knox [Biodiversity Resilience Strategy 2024 – 2034](#) notes that there are 118 sites of biological significance identified across the Council that serve to protect areas of remnant and indigenous vegetation. While Knox enjoys a spectacular natural setting, native vegetation covers just under 5% of Knox's municipality ([Lorimer, 2010](#)). Unfortunately, over a quarter of the native plant species found in Knox are at risk of extinction within one to two decades, if effective preventative measures are not taken. To protect the green and leafy character of Knox and respond to endangered species, Council has a well-established policy³⁰, in addition to planning controls on vegetation and residential design, to protect and preserve the significant landscape and environmental values of the area. More importantly, in January 2024 Council adopted the [Biodiversity Resilience Strategy 2024 – 2034](#), which clearly outlines important goals and actions for sustaining biodiversity resilience in Knox over the next decade. The strategy approaches and seeks to sustain biodiversity resilience through the three-pronged primary focus areas: tree canopy and vegetation cover, habitat connectivity and climate change resilience (BRS³¹, 2024).



13 dwellings were approved per hectare in Bush Suburban Areas in 2023.



Knox has 118 Sites of Biological Significance; native vegetation covers less than 5% of Knox (Lorimer, 2010).

How are we Tracking this Objective?

There are distinctive and significant biological and landscape values in the Bush Suburban areas, consisting of flora and fauna that is critically important to both Knox and Greater Melbourne. The *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* prioritises the protection of the natural environment over urban development in the Bush Suburban areas, which resulted in only 13 dwellings per hectare in the Bush Suburban areas in 2023 (See Figure 4). This represents the lowest number of dwellings per hectare, compared to the other housing strategy areas. In comparative terms, the Activity Areas had 70 dwellings per hectare in 2023.

The Dandenong Foothills area is part of the Bush Suburban area, which has long held an important place in Knox. The Foothills area has had its own special set of planning controls since 2006. This has successfully preserved the unique

³⁰ The *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* notes that the *Knox Residential Design Guidelines 2015 (updated 2019)* aim to enhance the 'green and leafy' image of Knox.

³¹ Biodiversity Resilience Strategy (BRS)

nature of the area. The *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* stresses the need to maintain a very low scale of change in the Dandenong Foothills (see Map 1). The dwellings per hectare in the Bush Suburban area also applies to the Dandenong Foothills, so it experiences a lower scale of change compared to all the other housing strategy areas.

Native vegetation provides a habitat for plants and animals and makes land more productive and contributes to human well-being. The *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* encourages the planting of native and indigenous vegetation. This is important as it is difficult to maintain native and indigenous vegetation and tree canopy, during multi dwelling development, which usually leads to the removal of large canopy trees to make way for multi-dwelling developments. The associated reduction in private open space tends to limit tree planting prospects and suppresses good tree health. Outside of the urban and built-up areas, Knox's native tree cover has declined by an estimated 6% (about 112 hectares) since the late 1980s (DELWP, 2019a).

Overall, tree canopy coverage has been declining in Knox. The decline in total tree canopy coverage has been concentrated in the northern suburbs of the municipality, which aligns with long-term land conversion from native trees to urban and built-up areas since the late 1980s (BRS, 2024). With respect to tree canopy in Knox's urban areas, there was an overall loss of 115 hectares between 2014 and 2018, equivalent to a reduction of 6.5%. Within the same period the urban areas of the Eastern Region³² witnessed a loss of 9.2% of its canopy trees (DELWP, 2020).

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning's (DELWP, now the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action DEECA) latest tree canopy data was published in 2021³³. Tree canopy is defined in that dataset as "woody vegetation over approximately two metres in height"³⁴. This dataset showed that about 16% of Knox's housing strategy areas were covered by tree canopy. Map 3 below gives a graphical representation of the distribution of the tree canopy. A trend analysis is not possible, as it was the first publication of the data. Future releases of this data will be monitored, however there is no commitment to publish a subsequent version at this time.³⁵

³² The Eastern Region includes the municipalities of Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges.

³³ This data was captured mainly in early 2020.

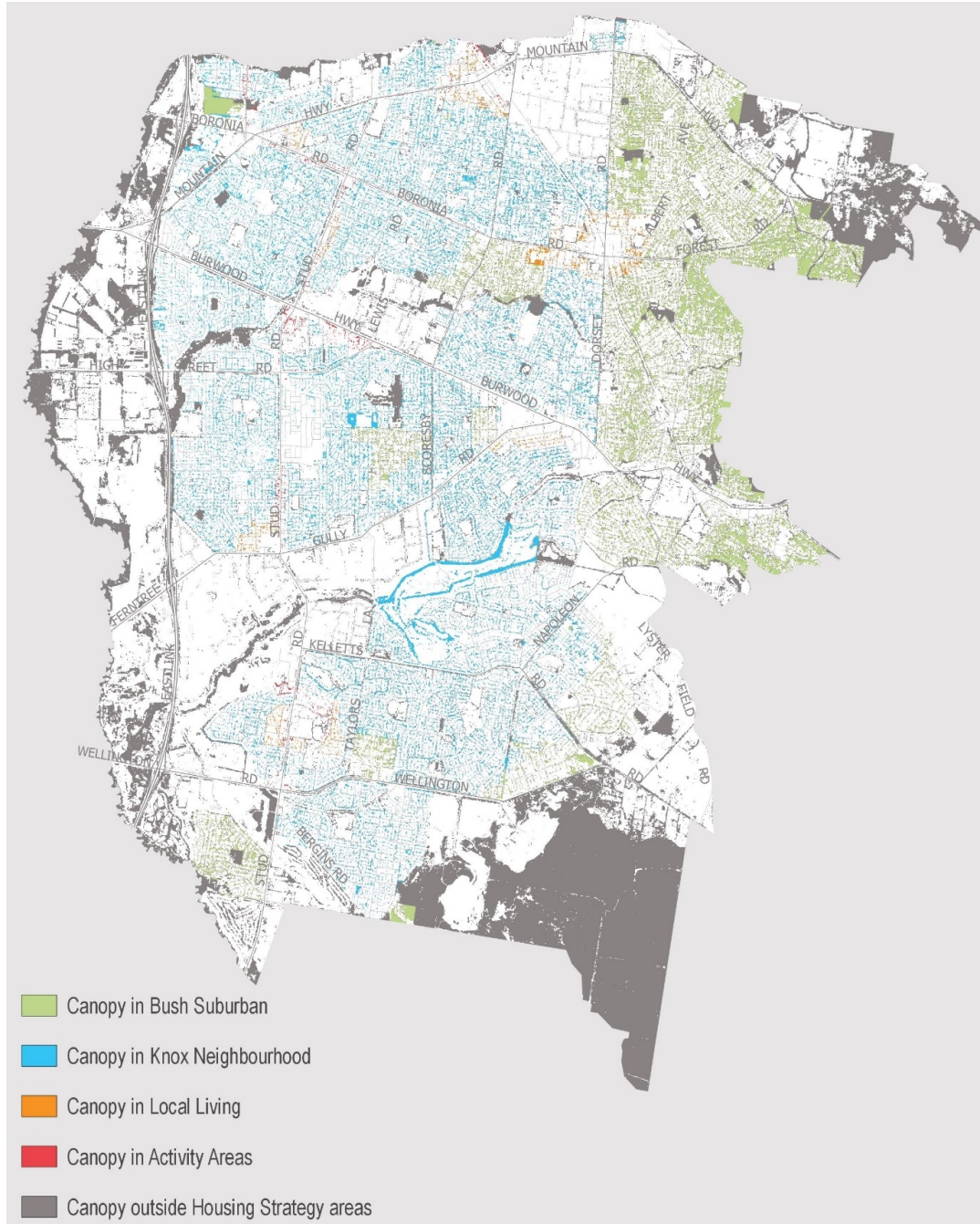
³⁴ It is important to note that this data is not comparable to the tree canopy data that DELWP published in 2019 (DELWP 2019b), which was reported on in previous Housing Monitoring Reports.

This data (2021) was also reported on in a previous Housing Monitoring report.

³⁵ DEECA suggests that a regular update of the data is unlikely as the data published in 2021 was ad hoc.

Map 3. Tree Canopy Cover in Knox

Although Bush Suburban and Knox Neighbourhood areas have a similar amount of tree canopy cover, the canopy in Knox Neighbourhood is dispersed over a greater area. Exceptions to this include sections of Corhanwarrabul and Monbulk creeks.



Source: This tree canopy data is part of the Vicmap Vegetation – Tree Extent dataset produced by the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning in 2021 (<https://www.land.vic.gov.au/maps-and-spatial/spatial-data/vicmap-catalogue/vicmap-vegetation>).

Analysis

The tree canopy data published by DELWP in 2019 points to a decline in native tree cover in Knox by about 6%³⁶. The *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* encourages the planting of native and indigenous vegetation, but this has not reversed the loss of native vegetation. To reverse the declining trend, more effective efforts and strategies would be needed, to ensure that more native and indigenous vegetation was planted. The *Knox Biodiversity Resilience Strategy 2024 - 2034* has made practical recommendations aimed at reversing the continuous decline of native and indigenous plants. Also, Council may require stronger regulations in the planning permit approval regime to achieve a better outcome in this sphere.

The Bush Suburban area which includes the Dandenong Foothills has the lowest number of dwellings per hectare in 2023, and in the previous years. This low scale of change has emanated from the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* which is focused on directing development away from Bush Suburban areas, particularly the Dandenong Foothills, with the view to maintaining a leafy green environment – which has been a well-known character of this housing strategy area. If this is sustained, the Dandenong Foothills will continue to undergo a low scale of change. Thus, the unique bushland feel and aesthetic appeal of Knox will be retained.

Tree canopy data published by DELWP in 2019 puts Knox's overall tree canopy coverage at 18%, and the urban areas at 16.3% (DELWP 2019b). The data published in 2021 also cited (above) in this report was not directly comparable with the data published in 2019, due to the differences in the height of the canopy trees used, and a range of other factors including different data creation methods and geographical aggregations³⁷. Therefore, there is a need to explore and establish a means of mapping canopy regularly with a consistent data capture methodology in order to accurately record canopy changes over time.

Knox City Council has over the years implemented policies and plans to protect the green and leafy character of Knox's neighbourhoods, using various policy tools including the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*, the Knox Planning Scheme (Residential Zone Schedules – Tree Canopy Controls, Vegetation Protection Overlays, the Dandenong Foothills Policy, and others), and the *Biodiversity Resilience Strategy 2024 – 2034*. Council has only had an indirect ability to control canopy loss on private property. Despite this, Council is still focused on exploring measures to increase tree canopy cover. The *Knox Community Plan 2021 – 2031* considers an increase of tree canopy cover as one of the indicators of success, on the natural environment and sustainability key direction.

The *Knox Biodiversity Resilience Strategy 2024 – 2034* notes that the loss of canopy trees on private land remains a key challenge to increasing tree canopy coverage in Knox. As such, it is recommended in the *Biodiversity Resilience Strategy 2024 – 2034* that there should be a review of how vegetation is protected on private land and/or property to reduce the opportunity of canopy cover loss. It also calls for the exploration of community campaigns to support vegetation management within the Knox municipality.

³⁶ This data was captured in 2018.

³⁷ In the data published in 2019, a tree of 3+ metres was captured as a canopy tree by DELWP, but in 2020 data, a tree of 2 metres was categorized/used as a canopy tree. The heights used by DELWP fell short of the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* definition of a Canopy Tree as "a perennial woody plant that reaches more than five (5) metres in height." (KCC, 2015, p.4).

6. Development responds to neighbourhoods in an integrated and balanced manner (Objective 6)

Why is this Objective Important?

To develop liveable, inclusive, and safe cities, that consider the complex urban environment, integrated planning is needed. An integrated approach to planning and delivery of development, infrastructure, services and activities for local areas and neighbourhoods promotes better outcomes. This approach considers not only the physical and economic determinants of neighbourhoods, but also the social, cultural, community, and health and wellbeing attributes that help define a place and contribute to its liveability. To attain an integrated and balanced development, Council, through the Knox Planning Scheme has outlined explicit policies, goals and strategies for the development of the municipality. The Knox Planning Scheme is the official instrument for all decisions regarding planning made by Council, planning officers, and the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). To ensure that planning decisions are effective and deliver quality outcomes to the residents of Knox, it is important to have consistency between Council policy, the Knox Planning Scheme, and Council's decision-making processes.



VCAT decided 12 residential planning applications for Knox in 2023. A reduction from 14 in 2021 & 2022; 26 in 2020; 32 in 2019; and 43 in 2018.

How are we Tracking this Objective?

As noted above, coherence between Council's planning application decisions and VCAT decisions is critically important in gauging the consistency with the Knox Planning Scheme. Planning applications that are decided by Council can be appealed at VCAT, which hears the case and makes a final ruling on whether a permit should be issued or not, based on the Knox Planning Scheme. Appellants could be landowners appealing Council's refusal of a permit, neighbours objecting to Council's approval of a permit, or either party seeking variations to the original permit conditions. In making the ruling VCAT mainly considers the provisions in the Knox Planning Scheme as the key reference document. VCAT states that it also considers supporting documents and other matters in making its ruling on planning permits ([VCAT Website, 2024](#)). It is important to note that the number of cases that go to VCAT and the percentage of decisions that are overturned are an indicator of the degree of consistency between Council policy, the Knox Planning Scheme, and Council's decision-making process. This report highlights trends regarding the consistency between the VCAT decisions and Council decisions on planning matters.

Figure 14 and Figure 15 report VCAT's decisions on residential planning permits that would yield at least one net new dwelling in Knox if enacted. Figure 14 below illustrates that VCAT upheld and overturned the same number (five in each case) of Council's refusals and Council's approvals of planning permits in 2023. This has departed from the usual trend since 2018, where VCAT largely overturned most of Council's refusals. The only exception was in 2021 where VCAT upheld most of Council's refusals.

Figure 15 shows that VCAT upheld none of Council's approvals in 2023 – an outcome that is not consistent with the trend since 2014. VCAT rather overturned one of Council's approvals in 2023. This is depicted in Figure 14. In most years Council's approvals were affirmed (except 2014 and 2018) by VCAT (See Figure 15).

Figure 14. VCAT Decisions on Residential Planning Applications

In 2023 VCAT Overturned more Council Refusals and Approval than it Upheld Council's Refusals

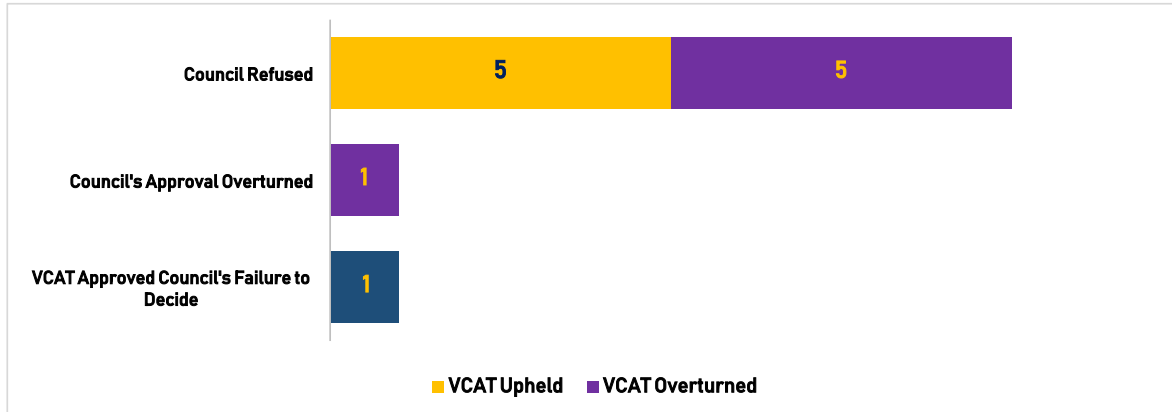
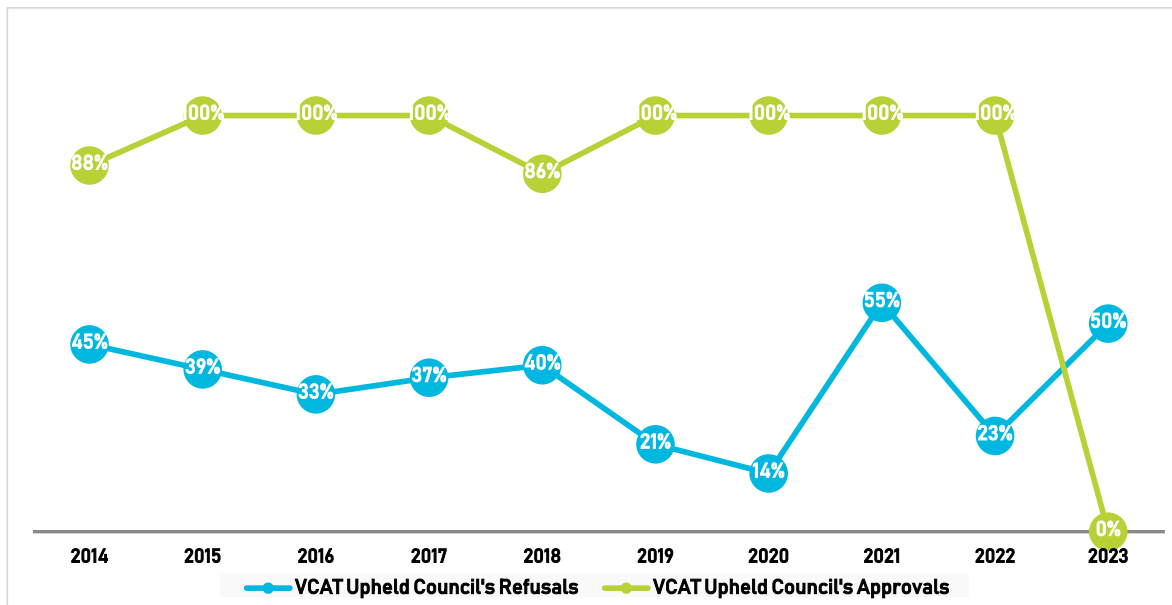


Figure 15. Trend Analysis of VCAT Decisions on Residential Planning Applications

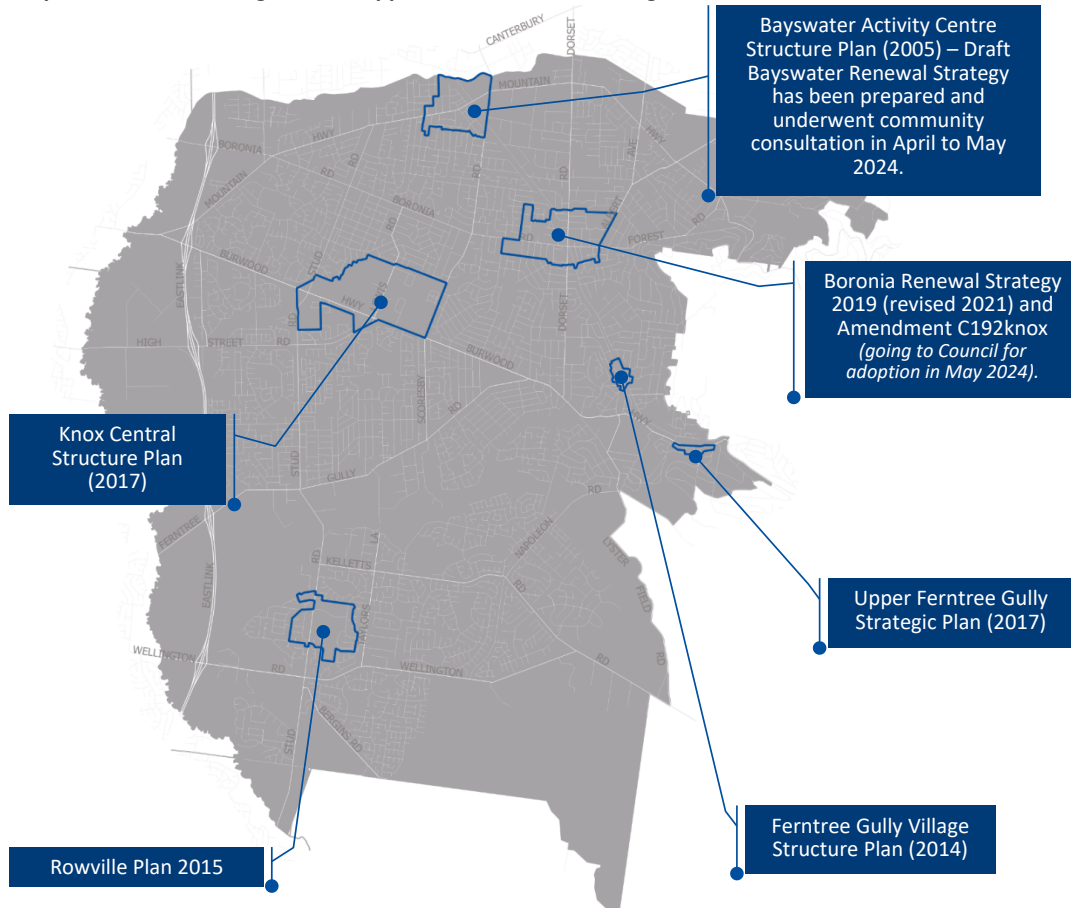
VCAT upheld 50% of Council's Refusals but no Council's approval was upheld in 2023



Place-based planning enables meticulous development of social infrastructure that provides services targeted to a specific community, rather than using a generic or 'one-size-fits-all' approach. This approach is applied to respond to complex, interrelated or challenging issues. Knox City Council undertakes integrated place-based planning initiatives in activity centres and other key places across the municipality. Structure plans and other local strategic plans developed through extensive consultation with the local communities, provide specific directions and guidance for future decisions on planning controls, infrastructure provision and the delivery of community services (See Map 4). The place-based planning approach empowers stakeholders by fostering partnerships between the Council and the community, local businesses, and other key stakeholders. This improves the understanding and ownership of place-specific plans within the community, thereby facilitating outcomes that meet community aspirations. Place-based

planning delivers infrastructure and has multiple and compounding benefits to the Knox community beyond its primary purpose.

Map 4. Plans and Strategies that Support Place-based Planning Controls



Knox City Council’s place-based planning initiatives has led to the creation of six activity centres, giving residents of the municipality easy access to a wide range of major retail, community, government, entertainment, cultural and transport services. The activity centres also offer local employment opportunities and support local economic development. These activity centres support the growth of high-density housing and align with the *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* goal of developing 20-minute neighbourhoods (DELWP, 2017).

Analysis

In total, 12 residential cases were decided by VCAT in 2023. Ten of these cases were initially refused by Council. In the remaining two cases, one of the cases was an approval by Council that VCAT overturned (a situation that is inconsistent with previous VCAT decisions on Council’s approvals). In the other case, Council failed to determine a planning application, so an appeal was lodged at VCAT, and that application was granted. Council refused 10 cases that were later taken to VCAT, where five of Council’s refusals were upheld by VCAT, and five of Council’s refusals were overturned by VCAT (Figure 14). Overruling a Council refusal was consistent with VCAT’s past rulings, but VCAT usually affirmed all Council’s approvals.



Council failed to determine one case, and the applicant lodged an appeal at VCAT and the Tribunal directed that a permit be issued. This application was for a lot subdivision.

One of Council's approvals was set aside by VCAT. The application was approved by Council and a 'Notice of Decision' to Grant a Planning Permit was issued. An objector to the application lodged an appeal at VCAT against the decision to approve the application. VCAT overturned Council's decision to grant a permit on the grounds that the proposed design of the application was not respectful of the neighbourhood and landscape character of the area. The Tribunal also found that the application would result in poor amenity outcomes for residents of some of the proposed dwellings.

The five overturned permits yielded at least nine net new dwellings³⁸. Council was supportive of VCAT's ruling in four of the five cases but remained opposed on one case (although amended plans were submitted by the applicant). In this particular application Council was not persuaded as the amendments did not resolve all the concerns raised by Council.

The remaining five residential planning permits that were refused by Council were affirmed by VCAT. In four³⁹ of the five cases, VCAT upheld Council's decision that the proposed developments did not respect the landscape character of the area. This solidified that residential development must respect the existing character of the site and that this factor is critically important and respected by both Council and VCAT.

Since the adoption and implementation of the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*, the lowest number of residential cases lodged at VCAT from Knox was in 2023. Interestingly, 2021 and 2022 also recorded the second lowest VCAT cases lodged from Knox. If this trend of fewer appeals submitted to VCAT continues, it could be presumed that either planning permit applicants and neighbours are increasingly becoming satisfied with Council's decisions on planning permits or community members have limited capacity to actively engage in the planning appeal processes. The time and effectiveness of this third-party appeals process could also be one of the reasons for the low VCAT cases in 2021 to 2023.

³⁸ Ten developments that were initially refused by Council but overturned by VCAT in 2022 produced 37 net new dwellings.

³⁹ The four proposed developments would have added 20 total/gross new dwellings to Knox if they were approved.

7. Action Areas and Advocacy Opportunities for Council

Based on the key findings in this report – the 2023 Annual Report of the Knox Housing Monitoring Program could promote potential action areas as well as advocacy opportunities, for residential development and matters related to meeting the diverse housing needs of the various segments of the Knox community. As Council has four important interrelated responsibilities in the housing sector, as a planner, provider, partner and as an advocate, it has the leverage to initiate actions and take advantage of available opportunities to engineer transformative changes in the housing sector within Knox.

Action Areas

Action areas that the findings in this report might trigger are as follows:

- The findings in this report may assist Council to take measures to explicitly define the preferred housing typology in each of the 14 Strategic Investigation Sites. Appendix B of the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* only listed the “Likely future housing types” of the Strategic Investigation Sites. It does not have an explicit definition of the typology of dwellings that are preferred. This report notes that 17% of the proposed developments approved in planning permits in 2023 were in the Strategic Investigation Sites⁴⁰. This is currently outside of the housing strategy areas. The *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* does not have an explicit definition of the typology of dwellings that are preferred in these Strategic Investigation Sites. This lacuna will continue to grow as more dwellings are approved in the Strategic Investigation Sites in the future. But more importantly, the Housing Monitoring Program Report is unable to assess the suitability of dwellings sited in Strategic Investigation Sites, since there is no categorisation of the dwellings preferred and as such there is no established benchmark.
- A closely related action that could also emanate from the findings of this report, is that Council could work with landowners within Strategic Investigation Sites, toward the residential development of apartments that usually produce many small dwellings. The 2023 Annual report, like previous Housing Monitoring Program reports, has flagged the limited availability of small dwellings in Knox. By working with landowners, the diversification of the housing stock in the municipality may be able to be increased, particularly the availability of one and two-bedroom dwellings. This will also partly address the housing needs of the 45.7% (which is projected to increase) of lone person or couple only households in Knox.
- As the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* is currently undergoing review, the findings and data within this report could provide relevant data and perspectives, which could inform and enrich the review. In fact, one of the actions that emanated from the [2022 Housing Monitoring Program Report](#) is that the City Strategy and Planning team, who are currently managing and leading the review of the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*, have confirmed that “As part of the project scope, the findings of the most recent Knox Housing Monitoring Program Report will be considered.”
- The findings in this report will also reinforce some of the findings in the *Knox Social and Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2023–2027*. This report and previous reports have highlighted that a critically significant policy concern in Knox, are the rising housing costs, coupled with very low availability of affordable rental options, plus a shortfall of social housing. A potential action in response to this, is for Council to re-look at its policies and their effectiveness in the social and affordable housing domain.

⁴⁰ In specific terms, this is made up of 79 dwellings – 45 apartments and 34 townhouses.

In response to Officer's Recommendation 3 of the [2022 Housing Monitoring Program Report](#) and Action 2.1 of the *Knox Social and Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2027*, four advocacy actions are being undertaken to increase resources for the provision of social and affordable housing in Knox.

The findings in this report might also inform some of the proposals and actions regarding housing in the upcoming *Council Plan 2025 – 2029*. Similarly, the findings in this report might also lead to revisions of some of the actions of the *Knox Community Plan 2021–2031*. Even though the community plan is for a 10-year period, it is monitored to ascertain how the key targets and benchmarks are progressing. In this regard, the data and findings in the *2023 Housing Monitoring Program Report* could be used to track the progress of the objectives under the 'Neighbourhoods, housing and infrastructure' Key Direction of the *Knox Community Plan 2021 – 2031*. This report will also complement the *State of Knox 2024* report. In addition, some of the findings in this report will assist in answering questions likely to be asked at Council's various housing-related community engagements, plus assist in the design of survey instruments that seek to assess how the community's needs are being met.

Advocacy Opportunities

Council's advocacy in the housing sector could lead to practical actions that could ameliorate identified challenges and shortfalls in the housing domain in Knox. In this respect, based on the findings in the *2023 Housing Monitoring Program Report*, some advocacy opportunities have been highlighted for Council to consider. These include:

- This report has identified that Knox is only three places above the Australian national benchmark in relation to the provision of aged care places. Despite this, the recent intercensal growth rate of Knox residents who are 70 years or above is growing (at 2.2%) and as such the share of this segment of the population is rising faster than the growth in residential aged care places. In view of this, Knox could fall below the Australian national provision benchmark for aged care places in less than a decade, if the provision of residential aged care places is not significantly increased. In response to this, Council could use these finding as the basis to effectively advocate for and possibly attract residential aged care facility providers from all sectors (public sector, not-for-profit, private) into the Knox municipality. If this succeeds, Council's advocacy could increase residential aged care places and thus address the emerging housing needs of this most vulnerable cohort.
- This report has established that couple only and lone person households stand at 45.7% in 2021, and that this figure is projected to reach nearly 50% by 2031. However, net growth of small dwellings (two bedrooms or less) in planning permits in 2023 was less than the share of lone person and couple only households. Based on this, Council could undertake advocacy campaigns with the objective of making private developers aware that the demand or market for small dwellings in Knox is high and is likely to grow in the future. An effective and sustainable campaign could encourage some private housing developers to invest in the construction of small dwellings (particularly apartments). This proposed advocacy is not without the acknowledgement of the complexities involved in the provision of small dwellings in a profit-driven property market.
- This report has identified that Council has set a tree canopy target of 30% by 2050. However, sourcing current data to assess how the Knox municipality is progressing with respect to this target, is unavailable. Hence, this report has resorted to outdated tree canopy data published in 2019. That data puts Knox at 18% tree canopy coverage⁴¹. It is important to acknowledge that improving tree canopy coverage is also a key direction of *Plan Melbourne 2017-*

⁴¹ A new tree canopy data published by DELWP in 2021 only covered Knox Housing Strategy areas and not the entire Knox. Also, the 2019 data and 2021 data were not comparable. In the 2019 data, a tree of 3+ metres was defined as a canopy tree by DELWP, but in 2021 data, a tree of two metres was categorized as a canopy tree.

2050 to 'make Melbourne cooler and greener'. However, it may be difficult to achieve this target if Council cannot regularly measure and monitor Knox's tree canopy coverage. The Knox *Biodiversity Resilience Strategy 2024 – 2034*, has recommended that Council take concrete steps to establish a means of mapping canopy regularly in order to track canopy change over time. The *2023 Housing Monitoring Program Report* (and previous reports) have also expressly identified the need for current tree canopy data. The importance of this data highlights an advocacy action for Council. This report therefore recommends that Council⁴² collaborates with the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and related stakeholders to advocate for State Government's support and funding to regularly capture tree canopy data.

- This report has recognised the importance of dwelling location being in close proximity to community facilities and services, as less than half (47%) of the dwellings approved were in "Very Walkable" areas. Since 2016, an average of 37% of approved dwellings in planning permits were in "very walkable" areas of Knox. Thus, more than half of the dwellings approved in Knox over the past seven years were not in "Very Walkable" areas. This signals that critical socio-economic infrastructure and services are not in close proximity to many Knox residents. Therefore, Council could use this finding to advocate for State Government's support in the provision of essential social and economic infrastructure and services such as public transport, local shopping centres, health facilities and services, local schools, etc. If this succeeds, Knox could achieve the *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* goal of creating 20-minute neighbourhoods, where most essential daily needs and services could be accessed within a 20-minute walk, cycle or local public transport trip.

⁴² The Environmental Advisory Committee of Knox could advise Council on how to go about this advocacy opportunity.

8. Summary of Key Findings

This report seeks to measure the progress against the six objectives in the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* by examining data related to planning approvals, housing construction and population demographics. This analysis is framed around a set of indicators that measures different aspects of housing in Knox, particularly new dwellings that have been approved through the planning system in 2023.

The following are the highlights of the key findings in this report:

- **The trend in the number of new dwellings expected to be constructed has increased slightly since COVID.** The planning and subdivision permits approved in 2023 were 134. Taking into account demolitions, if all these residential planning permits were fully developed, this could potentially result in a net increase of 384 additional new dwellings in Knox. These figures are slightly above the 2021 and 2022 figure of 334 and 373 respectively. However, the 2023 figure was still lower than the housing approvals in the seven years before 2021 (2014-2020).
- **New dwellings approved in 2023 were more consistent with the preferred character nominated in the Housing Strategy 2015 than in previous years.** The overall average percentage of new dwellings approved in 2023 whose typology was consistent with their Housing Strategy Area was 88%. This was a significant improvement over the 2022 figure of 69%. In fact, 2023 had the highest average percentage of dwellings being sited in their preferred Housing Strategy Areas since 2016. The second highest was 78% in 2020, and the lowest was 68% in 2016. The significant improvements in 2023 suggested that the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* continued to deliver positive results by encouraging appropriate development across the municipality.
- **There was a significant increase in dwelling density within Local Living, but a marginal increase within Bush Suburban, Knox Neighbourhood and Activity Areas, when compared to 2022.** The analysis of approved planning permits by Housing Strategy Area in 2022, with reference to dwelling density per hectare, showed that the Bush Suburban areas and Knox Neighbourhood areas increased by 1 dwelling per hectare each, while Activity Areas increased by 3 dwellings per hectare. However, the dwelling density per hectare in Local Living increased by 15 dwellings per hectare when compared to 2022. These outcomes were in alignment with the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*, because the strategy encouraged lower density development in Bush Suburban and Knox Neighbourhood areas but supported high density development in the Local Living and Activity Areas.
- **There was a considerable increase in apartment approvals in 2023, compared with previous years, whilst aged care development remained stagnant.** Approved planning permits in 2023 have yielded 59 apartments – a noticeable growth from 2022, where no single apartment was approved (4 apartments were approved in 2021). However, just like 2022, no residential aged-care facility was approved in 2023. This was in sharp contrast with 2021, where 214 beds in residential aged-care facilities were approved.
- **There was a small increase in building permits issued in 2023 when compared to the previous year.** Six hundred and forty-three (643) building permits were issued in 2023 compared with 588 in 2022. But the 2023 figure was still not a marked improvement. In fact, while 2022 had the lowest figure since 2017, approvals in 2023 were the third lowest. As building permits provide more certainty as to what is likely to be built in Knox than planning permits, it is important to track the number of building approvals, as this gives a clearer indication of whether the housing challenge could be addressed within the short term or not.
- **Escalating housing costs, very low availability of affordable rental options, and an identified shortfall in social housing remain critical policy concerns in Knox in 2023.** It was positive to observe that 19 social housing projects were added to the social housing stock in Knox in 2023. This was a noteworthy increase as only four social housing

projects were delivered in Knox during 2022. However, a huge shortfall⁴³ remained between social housing need and social housing supply in Knox. To increase the provision of social housing, Council continues to pursue policies and partnership opportunities to help facilitate solutions that can help address the identified shortfall.

- **VCAT decisions on planning permits was at its lowest in 2023.** With respect to coherence between Council and Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) decisions on residential planning permits, VCAT decided 12 residential planning applications for Knox in 2023. This was down from 14 in 2022 and 2021. Since 2012, the lowest VCAT cases recorded in Knox has been in 2023.
- **Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) targets for Knox in 2022-2023 were achieved (100%) on both potable water consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction.** This implied that all permits for applicable new dwellings in 2022-2023 met both targets. This was equally the case in 2021-2022 financial year.

⁴³ As of 2023, an estimated 584 social and affordable housing are needed in Knox.

9. Next Steps: Future Housing Monitoring Program

The *Knox Housing Strategy 2015* specified that the performance of the strategy will be monitored and reported on annually. In keeping with this, the Housing Monitoring Program Report will continue to be published annually. As new data sources become available, other indicators will be developed and refined, to accurately track and monitor the performance of the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*.

Future disaggregation of building permit data would provide more certainty around what is more likely to be built in the imminent future. Looking at planning approvals only tells us what might be built, as not all planning permits result in new residential development. Building permit numbers have been reported in the *2023 Housing Monitoring Program Report* and in the previous reports. The challenge with the building permit data is that, unlike the planning permit data, the building permit data does not identify the number of bedrooms of approved residential developments. This makes it impossible to ascertain the dwelling size of a residential development from the building permit. It is hoped that future ABS or building permit data may be further disaggregated into bedrooms.

Mapping tree canopy regularly would help to monitor tree canopy coverage change. Council is exploring various means of accessing consistent, comparable, and reliable data sources for tree canopy measurements. In the meantime, some tree canopy data from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) have been presented in this report. However, DEECA has not made any firm commitments regarding the release of subsequent tree canopy coverages in the near future. Therefore, to enable future reports to examine changes in tree canopy cover in Knox over time, Council needs to expedite action and take concrete and timely steps to map and measure changes in tree canopy in Knox.

In a related publication, the *Knox Biodiversity Resilience Strategy 2024 – 2034* has recommended that Council set incremental canopy milestones in the lead up to the 2050 target of 30% canopy cover in Knox. This recommendation is important because it is currently impossible to ascertain how Council is doing with respect to the tree canopy target until we get to the year 2050, to determine whether the 30% canopy target has been met or not⁴⁴. Without incremental targets, even if the tree canopy data becomes available, the *Housing Monitoring Program Report* cannot state with certainty whether Council is on track or not with respect to tree canopy cover until we reach 2050.

Lastly, over the past few years, Council has been considering the possibility of creating an interactive Power BI dashboard to enhance data visualization and real-time reporting on the key targets and indicators as part of the *Knox Housing Strategy 2015*. Dashboard creation has commenced; however, it is important to note that the proposed interactive dashboard will not replace the annual *Housing Monitoring Program Report* but will instead complement the report with housing related data fed from Council's databases.

⁴⁴ For instance, Council can have incremental tree canopy targets for 2020, 2030 and 2040.

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Attachment 1: Definition of Housing Types

Table 3. Housing types as defined in the Knox Housing Strategy

Housing Type Definition	Indicative Lot Layout: Perspective View
<p>Detached dwelling: one dwelling on a lot.</p>	<p>Minimise the dwelling and carport/garage footprint and other hard surface such as driveways, paths and paving.</p> <p>Provide open front gardens with no, low or transparent front fencing.</p> <p>Design buildings to be nestled and tucked into the landscape.</p> <p>Include accessible design features (e.g. a clear path from the street to the front door, wide and level entrance concrete). For more information on how to design accessible features, refer to the Victorian Government's supported Livable Housing Design Guidelines, 2020 (www.livablehousingguidelines.org.au).</p> <p>Include materials required and not restricted and use suitable paint as requirements of Council's Planning Scheme 2204 of Knox.</p> <p>For further information please refer to Knox Planning Scheme 2204 of Knox (www.knox.vic.gov.au/planning-schemes/2204).</p> <p>Significantly set back the first floor level from the ground floor level.</p> <p>For further information please refer to Knox Sustainable Design Guidelines (www.knox.vic.gov.au/Page/asp?Page_id=1748).</p> <p>Include accessible design features (e.g. a clear path from the street to the front door, wide and level entrance concrete). For more information on how to design accessible features, refer to the Victorian Government's supported Livable Housing Design Guidelines, 2020 (www.livablehousingguidelines.org.au).</p> <p>Include Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) features (e.g. rain gardens) as part of the landscaping.</p> <p>For further information please refer to Knox Sustainable Design Guidelines (www.knox.vic.gov.au/Page/asp?Page_id=1748).</p>
<p>Dual occupancy: two dwellings on a lot (can include retention of an existing dwelling).</p>	<p>Minimise the dwelling and carport/garage footprint and other hard surface such as driveways, paths and paving.</p> <p>Provide open front gardens with no, low or transparent front fencing.</p> <p>Provide a single crossover for driveway.</p> <p>Significantly set back the first and second levels from the ground floor level.</p> <p>Include accessible design features (e.g. a clear path from the street to the front door, wide and level entrance concrete). For more information on how to design accessible features, refer to the Victorian Government's supported Livable Housing Design Guidelines, 2020 (www.livablehousingguidelines.org.au).</p> <p>Include materials required and not restricted and use suitable paint as requirements of Council's Planning Scheme 2204 of Knox.</p> <p>For further information please refer to Knox Sustainable Design Guidelines (www.knox.vic.gov.au/Page/asp?Page_id=1748).</p> <p>Include Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) features (e.g. rain gardens) as part of the landscaping.</p> <p>For further information please refer to Knox Sustainable Design Guidelines (www.knox.vic.gov.au/Page/asp?Page_id=1748).</p>
<p>Villa units: three or more dwellings on a lot with no shared walls.</p>	<p>Minimise the dwelling and carport/garage footprint and other hard surface such as driveways, paths and paving.</p> <p>Provide open front gardens with no, low or transparent front fencing.</p> <p>Provide a single crossover for driveway.</p> <p>Significantly set back the first and second levels from the ground floor level.</p> <p>Include accessible design features (e.g. a clear path from the street to the front door, wide and level entrance concrete). For more information on how to design accessible features, refer to the Victorian Government's supported Livable Housing Design Guidelines, 2020 (www.livablehousingguidelines.org.au).</p> <p>Include materials required and not restricted and use suitable paint as requirements of Council's Planning Scheme 2204 of Knox.</p> <p>For further information please refer to Knox Sustainable Design Guidelines (www.knox.vic.gov.au/Page/asp?Page_id=1748).</p> <p>Include Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) features (e.g. rain gardens) as part of the landscaping.</p> <p>For further information please refer to Knox Sustainable Design Guidelines (www.knox.vic.gov.au/Page/asp?Page_id=1748).</p>
<p>Townhouses: three or more dwellings on a lot sharing a wall or roof.</p>	<p>Minimise the dwelling and carport/garage footprint and other hard surface such as driveways, paths and paving.</p> <p>Provide open front gardens with no, low or transparent front fencing.</p> <p>Provide a single crossover for driveway.</p> <p>Significantly set back the first and second levels from the ground floor level.</p> <p>Include accessible design features (e.g. a clear path from the street to the front door, wide and level entrance concrete). For more information on how to design accessible features, refer to the Victorian Government's supported Livable Housing Design Guidelines, 2020 (www.livablehousingguidelines.org.au).</p> <p>Include materials required and not restricted and use suitable paint as requirements of Council's Planning Scheme 2204 of Knox.</p> <p>For further information please refer to Knox Sustainable Design Guidelines (www.knox.vic.gov.au/Page/asp?Page_id=1748).</p> <p>Include Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) features (e.g. rain gardens) as part of the landscaping.</p> <p>For further information please refer to Knox Sustainable Design Guidelines (www.knox.vic.gov.au/Page/asp?Page_id=1748).</p>
<p>Apartments: development of three or more stories in a single mass or multi-unit dwelling, usually with a common entrance.</p>	<p>Minimise the dwelling and carport/garage footprint and other hard surface such as driveways, paths and paving.</p> <p>Provide open front gardens with no, low or transparent front fencing.</p> <p>Provide a single crossover for driveway.</p> <p>Significantly set back the first and second levels from the ground floor level.</p> <p>Include accessible design features (e.g. a clear path from the street to the front door, wide and level entrance concrete). For more information on how to design accessible features, refer to the Victorian Government's supported Livable Housing Design Guidelines, 2020 (www.livablehousingguidelines.org.au).</p> <p>Include materials required and not restricted and use suitable paint as requirements of Council's Planning Scheme 2204 of Knox.</p> <p>For further information please refer to Knox Sustainable Design Guidelines (www.knox.vic.gov.au/Page/asp?Page_id=1748).</p> <p>Include Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) features (e.g. rain gardens) as part of the landscaping.</p> <p>For further information please refer to Knox Sustainable Design Guidelines (www.knox.vic.gov.au/Page/asp?Page_id=1748).</p>

For further details, see the [Knox Residential Design Guidelines 2015 – revised 2019](#) (p.24-28).

Attachment 2: Net growth in dwellings by Typology, 2015 to 2023

Figure 16. Net Growth in Dwellings by Typology

Townhouses remain the predominant dwelling type in terms of net growth since 2016⁴⁵

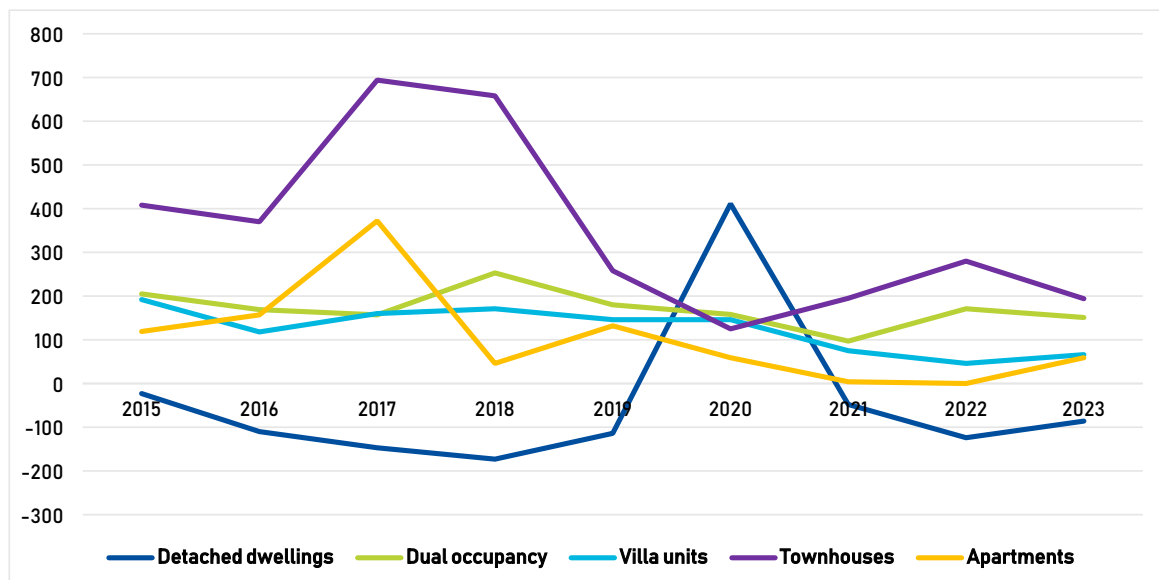
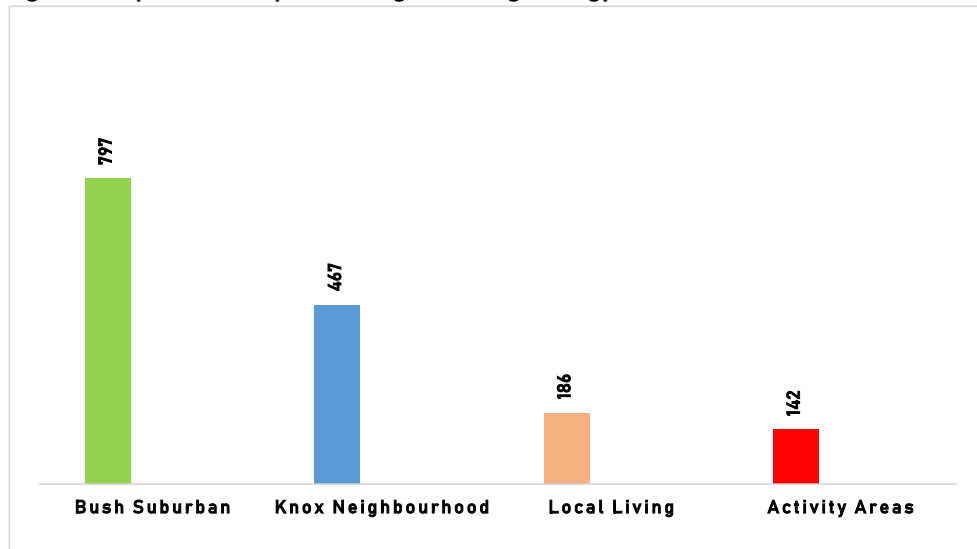


Figure 17. Square Metres per Dwelling in Housing Strategy Areas



The only exception to this trend was in 2020, where detached dwellings was the dominant typology.

⁴⁵ From 2015 to 2018, calculations of net growth by type are based on an assumption that all demolished dwellings were detached dwellings. Analysis of demolitions data from 2019 to 2022 suggests that this was accurate of 96.5% of demolitions.

8.2 Minor Grants Program Monthly Report and Individual Excellence Grants Update (Quarter 4)

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Decision
Author	Community Partnerships Officer, Jade Mainwaring
Manager:	Manager Community Wellbeing. Kerry Jansons
Executive:	Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley

SUMMARY

This report summarises the grant applications recommended for approval in July 2024 for the 2024-2025 Minor Grants Program. All applications have been assessed against the criteria set out in the Minor Grants Program Procedure.

Applications under the Minor Grants Procedure are limited to a maximum of \$3,000.00 within the current financial year.

This report also summarises the Excellence Grants for Individuals awarded in the last quarter of the 2023-2024 financial year. Under the Excellence Grants for Individuals Program, applicants who are selected to represent either Victoria or Australia in a competitive endeavour or an elite performance may receive funding assistance of \$150.00 for events within Victoria, \$250.00 for interstate events and \$400.00 for international events. The report also recommends rescission of the redundant Excellence Grants for Individuals Policy.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to:

1. Approve seven applications for a total of \$14,554.42 (excluding GST) as detailed below:

Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested (inc. GST)	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
Eastern Emergency Relief Network	Emergency Bedding & Manchester	\$2,000.00	\$1,818.18
Mr. Perfect Incorporated	Ferntree Gully Community BBQ's	\$2,500.00	\$818.18
Wantirna South Cricket Club	Club Maintenance Equipment	\$778.00	\$778.00
We Are One Club	Karaoke Activity	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
Upper Ferntree Gully CFA	Storm Salvage & Rescue Equipment	\$3,000.00	\$2,727.27
Liberty Avenue Three-Year-Old Kindergarten Inc	Teaching and Learning with Technology	\$2825.00	\$2,568.18
Fairpark Junior Football Club Inc	Fridge Replacement	\$2844.60	\$2,844.60
Total		\$16,947.60	\$14,554.42

2. Defer two applications requesting a total of \$3,807.00, as detailed below:

Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended (excl. GST)
Friends of Koolunga Native Reserve Inc	30 Years and Beyond	\$807.00	
Girl Guides Assoc of Vic – Knox District	Replacement and removal of defective ducted heater	\$3,000.00	
Total		\$3,807.00	

3. Refuse two applications requesting a total of \$6,000 as detailed below:

Applicant Name	Project Title	Amount Requested	Reason for ineligibility
Lighthouse Foundation	Safe outdoor recreational spaces for vulnerable youth in Knox	\$3,000.00	This project is ineligible per the Minor Grants Program Procedure point 6.18 – for items normally part of a reasonable operating budget for the applicant organisation (e.g., salaries, rental, maintenance, utilities, cleaning, insurance etc.)
Geetanjali Australia Inc	Geetanjali	\$3,000.00	This project is ineligible per the Minor Grants Program Procedure point 6.6 - Must hold adequate public liability insurance appropriate to the activity outlined in the application.
Total		\$6,000.00	

4. Note that should the recommended grants be approved by Council, the remaining Minor Grants Program budget for 2024-2025 will be \$140,590.59 after GST adjustments.
5. Note the Excellence Grants for Individuals awarded in Quarter 4 of the 2023-2024 financial year as set out in Attachment 2, with a total value of \$750.00.
6. Note the Excellence Grants for Individuals Procedure has been developed and implemented in accordance with the Council-wide Grant Framework Policy, and consequently rescind the Excellence Grants for Individuals Policy (Attachment 4).

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 Minor Grants Program Procedure (approved in April 2024), to determine the eligibility of the applicant organisation and the eligibility of the grant application.

The Procedure 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 Procedure, 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 Procedure.

1.2 Applications Recommended for Approval

Eleven applications have been assessed this month, requesting grants totaling \$26,754.60. Of the eleven applications, seven are recommended for approval. A summary of the projects recommended is as follows:

- Eastern Emergency Relief Network are requesting a grant to contribute to the purchase of bedding and Manchester for Knox residents referred to EERN who are impacted by homelessness or other issues.
- Mr Perfect Inc. Are seeking a grant to contribute to their monthly BBQ in Ferntree Gully providing an opportunity for men in Knox to meet and connect. It is recommended partial contribution towards the BBQ's as per the Minor Grants Program Procedure where:
 - 6.13 restricts catering to 20% of the total grant requested.
 - 6.29 applications won't be supported for printed merchandise or other branded materials where the main purpose is to promote an organisation.
- Wantirna South Cricket Club require a grant to contribute to the purchase of a Whipper Snipper and Blower to assist in the maintenance of their grounds.
- We Are One Club are a newly established club offering diverse activities to create inclusion and social wellbeing for CALD seniors in Knox. They require a grant to assist with the purchase of a karaoke machine for their weekly Karaoke parties in Knox.

- Upper Ferntree Gully CFA require a grant to contribute to the purchase of electric powered pole saws to assist in the removal of vegetation to reduce fire risks and provide access during emergencies and storm events.
- Liberty Avenue 3-Year-Old Kindergarten Inc are seeking a grant to contribute to the purchase of three new iPads and Apple Pens to support the needs of their growing Kindergarten, assist with sign in and sign out of children and facilitators self-development opportunities.
- Fairpark Junior Football Club are seeking grant funds to contribute to the replacement of their canteen fridge.

Application details are provided in Attachment 1.

1.3 Applications Recommended for Deferral

Two application/s are recommended for deferral to the August Meeting of Council as we await further information regarding their applications including:

- Friends of Koolunga Native Reserve, and
- Girl Guides Assoc of Vic Knox District.

Groups with deferred applications will be encouraged to provide the requested additional information prior to the deadline for the August Meeting of Council.

1.4 Applications Recommended for Refusal

Two applications are recommended for refusal:

- Lighthouse Foundation who was seeking grant funds to assist with garden maintenance and tree removal. This is excluded under the Minor Grants Program Procedure point 6.18 where items normally part of a reasonable operating budget such as salaries, rental and maintenance/cleaning are ineligible.
- Geetanjali Australia Inc were seeking funds for Geetanjali celebrations however as per Minor Grants Program Procedures point 6.6, the applicant must hold adequate liability insurance to be eligible for a Minor Grant.

1.5 Excellence Grants for Individuals

This report also presents to Council for noting, expenditure under the Excellence Grants for Individuals Program for Quarter 4 of 2023-2024.

For Quarter 4 2023-2024, there have been three successful applications for a total value of \$750. Excellence grants were awarded for three interstate events. A summary of the grants is included at Attachment 2.

1.6 Excellence Grants for Individuals Policy

Council adopted an overarching Council-wide Grant Framework Policy in July 2022. In accordance with the Grants Framework Policy, all of Council's grant policies have been progressively converted to procedures.

The Excellence Grants for Individuals Procedure has been developed and approved by the CEO (Attachment 3). This Procedure supersedes the Excellence Grants for Individuals Policy

(Attachment 4). As the Procedure is now in place, it is recommended that the Excellence Grants for Individuals Policy be rescinded.

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 Minor Grants Program Procedure specifies assessment can occur by the Chief Executive Officer, or delegate, and make recommendation for Council’s determination.

Similarly, engagement will occur with Excellence Grant applicants if necessary, to clarify details regarding their applications prior to the delegate’s decision.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Minor Grants Program allows Council to respond promptly to requests from Knox- based community groups for small amounts of funding to assist a variety of community-based programs, projects or activities. Council’s Minor Grants are a simple and streamlined source of funding that can make a significant difference for local community organisations in need of short-term, specific purpose assistance.

The Excellence Grants for Individuals Program provides financial support intended to support individuals to participate in elite competition or performance and can assist inclusion and representation of under-represented individuals. The Program assists in developing skills and fostering pride for the great achievements of individuals in the Knox community.

4. CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS

Implementation of the recommendation is considered to have no direct implications or has no direct impacts upon Council’s Net Zero 2030 target, the Community Net Zero 2040, exposure to climate risks or climate change adaptation.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no environmental considerations associated with this report.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The approval of Minor Grants is managed within Council’s adopted budget. The 2024-2025 budget provides \$155,145.00 for the Minor Grants Program.

Funding commitments to date are summarised below:

Yearly Summary 2024-25	Amount Recommended at Council Meeting (Excluding GST)	Total Amount Approved (Excluding GST)
July	\$14,554.41	\$
August	\$	
September	\$	

Yearly Summary 2024-25	Amount Recommended at Council Meeting (Excluding GST)	Total Amount Approved (Excluding GST)
October	\$	
November	R	
December	\$	\$
January	\$	\$
February	\$	\$
March	\$	\$
April	\$	\$
May	\$	\$
Totals (Year to Date)	\$14,554.41	\$

Recommended applications for the July 2024 period total \$14,554.41 (excluding GST).

If approved as recommended, the remaining Minor Grants budget for 2024-2025 will total \$140,590.59, after GST adjustments.

The Excellence Grants are managed within Council's adopted budget which provides \$10,000.00 for grants annually. The annual budget was fully expended as at 30 June 2024.

7. RISKS

Any risks associated with administering the Minor Grant Program and Excellence Grants for Individuals Program are managed through the implementation of Council's Grant Framework Policy and the Minor Grants Program and Excellence Grants for Individuals Procedures. All Minor Grants and Excellence Grants must be acquitted, and evidence of expenditure must be provided by the organisation.

The Procedures 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 Procedures, applications for funding have been assessed by the Chief Executive Officer, or their delegate, for Council or delegate approval as appropriate.

8. KNOX COMMUNITY AND COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025

Opportunity & Innovation

Strategy 1.2 - Encourage and support opportunities for skills development and lifelong learning for all people in Knox.

Strategy 1.3 – Support organisations in Knox to navigate recovery and new ways of thinking.

Neighbourhoods, Housing & Infrastructure

Strategy 2.2 – Create, enhance and maintain places and spaces for people to live, work, play and connect.

Resilience & Wellbeing

Strategy 4.1 – Support our community to improve their physical, mental and social health and wellbeing.

Strategy 4.2 – Foster inclusivity, equality, belonging and safety within the community.

Strategy 4.4 - Support the community to identify and lead community strengthening initiatives.

Civic Engagement & Integrity

Strategy 5.3 – Ensure our processes are transparent and decisions are accountable.

9. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Officers contributing to and responsible for this report have no conflicts of interest requiring disclosure under Chapter 5 of the Governance Rules of Knox City Council.

10. STATEMENT OF COMPATIBILITY

There are no legislative obligations under the Human Rights Charter, Child Safe Standards or the Gender Equity Act that are incompatible with the recommendation in this report.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

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

Attachments

1. Attachment 1 - Minor Grants Program - Application Details July 2024 [**8.2.1** - 11 pages]
2. Attachment 2 - Individual Excellence Grants 2023-24 Q4 [**8.2.2** - 1 page]
3. Attachment 3 - Excellence Grants for Individuals Procedure [**8.2.3** - 5 pages]
4. Attachment 4 - Excellence Grants for Individuals Policy V4 [**8.2.4** - 5 pages]

Minor Grant Program Applications
July 2024

2425-MGP003

Eastern Emergency Relief Network Inc

Application ID	2425-MGP003
Organisation Name	Eastern Emergency Relief Network Inc
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	Emergency bedding and Manchester
Project Start Date	01/08/2024
Project End Date	30/11/2024

Request Details	New bedding/Manchester items are needed to give to clients when they collect emergency household items which often includes mattresses/bedframes. Bedding includes pillows, sheet sets, doonas, covers and blankets. Other Manchester items include towels and bathmats. As EERN assists both individuals and families, a variety of sizes in bedding are needed. Those clients referred to EERN cannot afford to purchase such items or to do so would cause greater financial hardship. Often the bedding that is donated is not fit for purpose and cannot be used. For health and hygiene reasons, EERN does not collect or distribute used pillows. Recent increases in cost-of-living expenses, means basic bedding and Manchester is getting beyond the reach of those living below the poverty line or those impacted by homelessness and other issues.		
Community Benefit	The community need is very high, and the benefit from the project is substantial. Statistical data kept by EERN shows the demand for our services has increased by 20% in 2 years. Using data compiled over the past few years, EERN annually on average distributes 1000 donated beds/mattresses. These are supplemented with an annual average of 400 pillows, 250 doonas and 340 sheet/doona sets. The level of need has been constant and is projected to increase due to an increase in rates of homelessness because of cost-of-living increases. This can only impact those already in a precarious situation. Supplying quality Manchester means wellbeing is increased and health outcomes are better. Recipients can channel their funds into other necessities like food and medication.		
Total Beneficiaries	4500	Total Project Cost	\$ 13000.00
Knox Beneficiaries	950	Total Amount Requested	\$ 2000.00

Income Description	Income Amount	Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
council grant - Knox	\$ 2000.00	manchester - pillows	\$ 2000.00
council grant - Whitehorse - application submitted	\$ 6000.00	manchester - doonas	\$ 6000.00
Rotary Club Nunawading	\$ 1000.00	manchester - sheet sets	\$ 1000.00
EERN contribution	\$ 2000.00	manchester - pillows	\$ 2000.00
Community Raffle	\$ 2000.00	manchester - towels	\$ 2000.00

*Note: All details above are taken directly from the information provided by the applicant in the application form.

2425-MGP004

Mr. Perfect

Application ID	2425-MGP004
Organisation Name	Mr. Perfect
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	Ferntree Gully Community BBQs
Project Start Date	28/07/2024
Project End Date	27/07/2025

Request Details	Mr Perfect holds free community BBQ's once a month from 10.30am – 12.30pm on a Sunday morning. Men are encouraged to come along, have a free sausage sandwich, get out in the sunshine, and have a chat and make a connection with other men from the local community. We require funding to cover the costs of these BBQ meetups.		
Community Benefit	We offer a unique, non-clinical opportunity for men to meet and connect. Benefits include an increased sense of community felt by men and their families and increased mood which will lead to better mental health outcomes. Simply offering an opportunity for men to meet and chat (zero tolerance alcohol policy, get in the sunshine, have a free bite to eat) meet our amazing volunteers (Hosts) and other local men. Research has shown suicides rate of men are up to 3 times higher than women. Of the over 3,000 lives lost to suicide each year, approximately 75% are men. Men are also reluctant to seek help, especially when it comes to Mental Health. Socially connection is associated with improved mental health, our BBQs aim to act as early intervention before Mental Health challenges escalate to a clinical level. As a result there is a need for a service such as this that targets the Male population. The mental health workforce is already under strain, we aim to help ease this strain due to early intervention.		
Total Beneficiaries	180	Total Project Cost	\$ 2500.00
Knox Beneficiaries	180	Total Amount Requested	\$ 2500.00

Income Description	Income Amount	Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
BBQ CONSUMABLES	\$ 1200.00	sausages, bread etc	\$ 1200.00
BBQ EQUIPMENT	\$ 400.00	esky, tongs, aprons etc	\$ 400.00
PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL	\$ 300.00	Banners, t shirts	\$ 300.00
marketing material	\$ 300.00	flyers, business cards	\$ 300.00
facebook paid ads	\$ 300.00	Targeted ads via Facebook	\$ 300.00

*Note: All details above are taken directly from the information provided by the applicant in the application form.

Minor Grant Program Applications
July 2024

2425-MGP007

Wantirna South Cricket Club

Application ID	2425-MGP007
Organisation Name	Wantirna South Cricket Club
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	CLUB MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT
Project Start Date	03/09/2024
Project End Date	28/09/2024

Request Details	Purchase of essential maintenance equipment for ground and clubroom use		
Community Benefit	Ongoing cleaning and maintenance of centre wicket and training centre areas to clean surface debris and clear weeds from selected areas around the cricket wicket areas, clubrooms & training centre.		
Total Beneficiaries	200	Total Project Cost	\$ 778.00
Knox Beneficiaries	165	Total Amount Requested	\$ 778.00

Income Description	Income Amount	Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
Council	\$ 778.00	Equipment	\$ 778.00

*Note: All details above are taken directly from the information provided by the applicant in the application form.

Minor Grant Program Applications
July 2024

2425-MGP011

We Are One Club

Application ID	2425-MGP011
Organisation Name	We Are One Club
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	Karaoke Activity
Project Start Date	01/09/2024
Project End Date	30/08/2025

Request Details	<p>The project's primary aim is to enhance the well-being and happiness of our members through active social participation and cultural interaction. This objective is delivered through diverse, engaging workshops and enjoyable activities.</p> <p>Karaoke is the cornerstone of our club's activities. Our weekly Karaoke Party is a fun activity for members to learn and sing songs in different languages. Through our karaoke activity, our members can get in touch with friends and do the things they enjoy. Thus, fostering high-quality social connections and engaging in meaningful activities is essential for promoting our club members' mental and physical health and well-being.</p> <p>Therefore, we require a karaoke set to run this program successfully for our members.</p>		
Community Benefit	<p>The club members will benefit from participating in diverse activities, such as karaoke activities, which create a fun and engaging environment for participants to enjoy singing, learn about other cultures, and build community bonds. The expected outcomes are:</p> <p>Short-term: Participants will experience increased physical activity, social interaction, mindfulness, exposure to different cultures, improved flexibility, socializing with other members, and confidence building through acting and performance.</p> <p>Medium-term: Members will see improvements in memory and cognitive skills as they learn folk songs and gain enhanced cultural awareness. They'll also develop social connections and engage in cultural exchange through music.</p> <p>Long-term: Engaging in these activities can enhance health and well-being, ultimately contributing to a higher quality of life. Furthermore, members may find purpose and fulfillment in participating, enriching their life experiences.</p>		
Total Beneficiaries	50-100	Total Project Cost	\$ 3000.00
Knox Beneficiaries	40-80	Total Amount Requested	\$ 3000.00

Income Description	Income Amount	Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
Council grant	\$ 3000.00	equipment	\$ 3000.00

*Note: All details above are taken directly from the information provided by the applicant in the application form.

Minor Grant Program Applications
July 2024

*Note: All details above are taken directly from the information provided by the applicant in the application form.

Minor Grant Program Applications
July 2024

2425-MGP012

Lighthouse Foundation

Application ID	2425-MGP012
Organisation Name	Lighthouse Foundation
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	Safe outdoor recreational spaces for vulnerable youth in Knox
Project Start Date	01/08/2024
Project End Date	30/09/2024

Request Details	Lighthouse provides safe homes and therapeutic care for children and youth who have experienced family trauma, abuse and neglect. Our residential home in Boronia urgently requires specialist garden maintenance to reduce hazards caused by trees and overgrown vegetation that are impacting the outdoor recreational spaces for our young people, their carers and the community volunteers who support the home. This small grant funding from the City of Knox will enable Lighthouse to hire a tree arborist to appropriately remove these hazards, providing safer and more enjoyable outdoor spaces. Maintenance includes removal of a Cottonaster weed species that is compromising the integrity of the front fence and powerlines; heavy weight reduction of a large Acacia that is overhanging the outdoor pool and patio space (this tree drops leaves year round detracting from the usability of the space and necessitating continuous pool and patio maintenance); and trimming of vegetation overhanging the boundary, around the home, shed and pathways. The service quoted includes sustainable chipping of the trimmings that can be used for garden mulching and a general tidy-up.		
Community Benefit	The Lighthouse home in Boronia provides out-of-home care to four highly vulnerable young people who are at risk of homelessness. Our therapeutic case workers help each young person to overcome challenges associated with mental and physical health, relationships, social and emotional development, education and vocational pathways, cultural belonging and life skills, ensuring that our young people can sustainably transition to independent living in the community. Encouraging peer friendships and a network of safe community connections is important to improving the mental health and wellbeing of the young people in our care. This project will enhance the garden and outdoor pool and recreation areas providing safe, family-like spaces for current and future residents to relax and enjoy time together. Our Boronia Community Committee volunteers will also benefit from an enhanced outdoor area where they can work together to host working bees, fundraising events and celebrations (such as BBQ's and birthdays) for the young people.		
Total Beneficiaries	12	Total Project Cost	\$ 3960.00
Knox Beneficiaries	12	Total Amount Requested	\$ 3000.00

Income Description	Income Amount	Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
City of Knox Grant	\$ 3000.00	Garden hazard reduction and maintenance	\$ 3000.00

*Note: All details above are taken directly from the information provided by the applicant in the application form.

Minor Grant Program Applications
July 2024

Community fundraising	\$ 960.00	Vegetation trimming and general clean up	\$ 960.00
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*Note: All details above are taken directly from the information provided by the applicant in the application form.

Minor Grant Program Applications
July 2024

2425-MGP014

Upper Ferntree Gully Fire Brigade

Application ID	2425-MGP014
Organisation Name	Upper Ferntree Gully Fire Brigade
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	Storm Salvage & Rescue Equipment
Project Start Date	01/08/2024
Project End Date	01/09/2024

Request Details	The Upper Ferntree Gully Fire Brigade requires 2 Milwaukee electric powered pole saws to efficiently manage and clear vegetation and tree limbs that pose fire hazards or obstruct access during firefighting and storm rescue operations. These tools are essential for maintaining clear and safe pathways, ensuring quick response times, and enhancing overall operational effectiveness in tackling emergencies.		
Community Benefit	The community benefit of the Upper Ferntree Gully Fire Brigade purchasing 2 Milwaukee electric powered pole saws includes improved fire safety through more effective vegetation management, quicker and safer access during emergencies including storm events, and enhanced overall response capabilities. This leads to reduced fire risks, better protection of property and lives, and increased community resilience against fires and other emergencies.		
Total Beneficiaries	5000	Total Project Cost	\$ 3332.40
Knox Beneficiaries	4000	Total Amount Requested	\$ 3000.00

Income Description	Income Amount	Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
Council Grant	\$ 3000.00	Pole Saws x2 & Battery Charger & Batteries	\$ 3000.00
Brigade Contribution	\$ 332.40	Grant Shortfall	\$ 332.40

*Note: All details above are taken directly from the information provided by the applicant in the application form.

Minor Grant Program Applications
July 2024

2425-MGP021

Liberty Avenue 3YO Kinder

Application ID	2425-MGP021
Organisation Name	Liberty Avenue 3YO Kinder
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	Teaching and Learning with Technology
Project Start Date	01/09/2024
Project End Date	31/10/2024

Request Details	<p>As a growing independent, Community owned, not for profit kindergarten operating in a Knox facility, we wish to have resources available to help us keep up to date with technology used in our field.</p> <p>As our staffing body continues to grow, we are in need of more iPads amongst the staff and to incorporate ITC into the children's learning program.</p> <p>We would like to purchase 3 new iPads and 2 Apple Pencils to support this growing need</p>		
Community Benefit	<p>Much of our educational program is now created and shared with families electronically via a planning App (OWNA) that allows families to see what their children have been doing at kindergarten, to keep up to date with the children's goals and progress and to provide feedback about the program and service. With additional iPads, we could also utilise electronic signing in an out using the App.</p> <p>We use our iPads to research children's ideas, questions and interests with them and we access music using the Apple Music App within sessions with the children.</p> <p>We take photos on the iPad throughout the day to utilise for program reflection and for the children to reflect upon their own learning journeys and the things they have enjoyed doing and learning about.</p> <p>Educators use the iPads to pursue online learning opportunities, to monitor incoming emails from families, to create newsletters, flyers and documents to help share information about our service with our local community.</p>		
Total Beneficiaries	170	Total Project Cost	\$ 2825.00
Knox Beneficiaries	164	Total Amount Requested	\$ 2825.00

Income Description	Income Amount	Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
Knox City Council Minor Grant	\$ 2547.00	3 X Ipad 9th generation	\$ 2547.00
Knox City Council Minor Grant	\$ 278.00	2 X apple pencils	\$ 278.00

*Note: All details above are taken directly from the information provided by the applicant in the application form.

Minor Grant Program Applications
July 2024

2425-MGP023

GEETANJALI AUSTRALIA INC.

Application ID	2425-MGP023
Organisation Name	GEETANJALI AUSTRALIA INC.
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	GEETANJALI
Project Start Date	10/08/2024
Project End Date	10/08/2024

Request Details	<p>Geetanjali is a not-for-profit organisation arranging Cultural musical program promoting multicultural events among Knox community which brings peace, harmony and understanding of cultural values among communities.</p> <p>Indian traditional music is rich in culture, and this will provide an opportunity to showcase that culture among Australian communities. This will also promote cultural values to our young generation and to southeast Asian community as a whole in particular and to other multicultural community in general.</p>		
Community Benefit	<p>This project will demonstrate how rich and wide is the cultural diversity of Victoria. This will show that we all live in a multicultural society and will enhance the appreciation of each other's cultures and values. This will also enrich the cultural harmony prevailing in Victoria.</p> <p>To bring different communities together which will promote harmony, peace and understanding among multi-cultural communities of Knox.</p>		
Total Beneficiaries	220	Total Project Cost	\$ 6568.00
Knox Beneficiaries	200	Total Amount Requested	\$ 3000.00

Income Description	Income Amount	Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
GRANT	\$ 3000.00	VENUE HIRE	\$ 1387.00
TICKET SALES	\$ 2568.00	ARTISTS	\$ 3575.00
CONTRIBUTION	\$ 1000.00	INSURANCE	\$ 431.00
		HIRE OF WORKERS	\$ 500.00
		PROMOTION	\$ 300.00
		MISC EXPENSES	\$ 375.00

*Note: All details above are taken directly from the information provided by the applicant in the application form.

Minor Grant Program Applications
July 2024

2425-MGP026

Fairpark Junior Football Club Inc.

Application ID	2425-MGP026
Organisation Name	Fairpark Junior Football Club Inc.
Grant Program	Minor Grants Program

Project Title	Fridge Replacement
Project Start Date	25/07/2024
Project End Date	30/09/2024

Request Details	We are looking to replace the storage refrigerator currently located in the storage room at Lewis Road. On Sunday 16 June there was electricity work by SP Ausnet that saw the property loose power for approximately 4 hours, when the power was restored there were issues with the fridge - that required repair. Since this repair a further repair is now required - which has required the stock inside the fridge be thrown away twice.		
Community Benefit	This piece of equipment is essential for the effective running of the canteen for both the Junior Football Club, Cricket Club and for school groups using the ovals for school sports.		
Total Beneficiaries	500	Total Project Cost	\$ 2844.60
Knox Beneficiaries	390	Total Amount Requested	\$ 2844.60

Income Description	Income Amount	Expenditure Description	Expenditure Amount
Council Grant	\$ 2844.60	Purchase	\$ 2844.60

*Note: All details above are taken directly from the information provided by the applicant in the application form.

Attachment 2

Excellence Grants for Individuals – Quarter 4 2023-24

Application Date	Applicant	Request details	Grant
2024-04-11	Knoxfield resident	Son to participate in 2024 Australian Little League Championship as part of the Rangers Little League Development Team at Blacktown International Sportspark, Sydney in June 2024	\$250
2024-04-21	Ferntree Gully resident	Son to participate in Baseball Australia's 2024 Little League Division II Championship being held at Blacktown International Sportspark, NSW in June 2024	\$250
2024-04-30	Bayswater resident	Son to represent Victoria in the NRL U15s ASSRL Schoolboys Championships 2024 to be held in Port Macquarie, NSW in June 2024	\$250
		Total	\$750



Excellence Grants for Individuals

Approval by:	Chief Executive Officer	Directorate:	Customer and Performance
Approval Date:	21 December 2023	Responsible Officer:	Manager Governance and Risk
Review Date:	21 December 2026	Version Number:	1

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to provide funding assistance to Knox residents, who are selected to represent either Victoria or Australia in a competitive endeavor or an elite performance.

2. Context

Knox City Council is committed to building a stronger and better community by increasing opportunities for local residents so they can achieve their goals and reach their full potential.

In order to reach the elite level of competition the individual and their family often have to make many social and economic sacrifices. The Excellence Grant for Individuals specifically aims to support these individuals in their pursuit of the highest levels of performance and development by providing funding to assist with the cost of:

- Travel;
- Accommodation; and/ or
- Uniform and equipment purchase or hire.

3. Scope

This procedure applies to individuals who live in the City of Knox and are competing or performing at a state, national or international level in the following areas:

- Sports and recreation;
- Education;
- Arts and culture; and
- Environmental and/ or humanitarian initiatives.

This procedure applies to all applications received and grants allocated through the Excellence Grants for Individuals Program. The Excellence Grants for Individuals program is not designed to supplement, subsidise or replace existing Council budget allocations.



Excellence Grants for Individuals Procedure

4. References

4.1 Knox City Council Plans

Knox Council Plan 2021-2025

Knox Community Plan 2021–2031

4.2 Relevant Legislation

- Local Government Act 2020

4.3 Charter of Human Rights

This procedure has been assessed against and complies with the Charter of Human Rights.

4.4 Related Council Policies

- Council Grant Framework Policy
- Complaint Handling Policy and Procedure
- Knox City Council Governance Rule (Chapter 5 Conflicts of Interest)
- Fraud and Corruption Control Framework

4.5 Related Council Procedures

- Community Development Fund Procedure
- Minor Grants Program Procedure
- Knox City Council Fraud and Corruption Control Procedure

5. Definitions

In this procedure:

Acquittal	means information provided by the grant recipient that proves that funds have been spent responsibly and in line with the conditions of the grant program
Chief Executive Officer	means the Chief Executive Officer of Knox City Council.
Competition	means an organised contest of State, National or International importance in which people take part with the intention of winning.
Council	means Knox City Council, whether constituted before or after the commencement of this Procedure.
Delegate(s)	means a Council officer selected by the Chief Executive Officer to administer the Excellence Grants for Individuals program.
Event	means an event, conference, performance or exhibition of State, National or International importance that further develops the skill of the individual and their capacity to succeed in their chosen discipline.
Funding agreement	means an agreement between the grant recipient and Council that documents the agreed objectives of the grant and the accountability requirements of the grant.
Grant	means a sum of money given to an individual with an expectation that the money will be used for an agreed and specific purpose.
Individual	means a resident of the Knox Municipality.



Excellence Grants for Individuals Procedure

6. Council Procedure

The objectives for the Excellence Grants for Individuals Program are to:

- Increase individual participation in their community;
- Increase inclusion and representation of underrepresented individuals;
- Assist individuals to develop skills and build capacity; and
- Foster pride for the great achievements of individuals in the Knox community.

Individuals can apply for a grant up to the following maximum grant limits:

- If the competition or event is held within Victoria - \$150
- If the competition or event is held outside Victoria but within Australia - \$250
- If the competition or event is held internationally - \$400

6.1 Annual Budget Allocation

A budget allocation will be made in each financial year to respond to requests for funding from individuals to assist with costs associated with representing Victoria or Australia in an eligible competition or event. The allocated funds will be distributed equally across the 12 months of the financial year. Unallocated funds in any month will be carried forward to the following month.

Once the funding allocation has been fully expended, no further grants may be made under this program within the financial year unless further funds are allocated by Council.

6.2 Applications that may be supported - eligibility criteria

To apply for an Excellence Grant for Individuals, the following criteria must be met:

- The applicant is a resident of Knox;
- The applicant has been selected or personally invited to participate in a competition or event by a national or state peak body or governing organisation of the specialised area;
- The applicant has not received an Excellence Grant for Individuals in the current or previous financial year.

6.1 Applications that won't be supported

An individual is not eligible to receive grant funding under this procedure if:

- The competition or event has already taken place;
- Council has awarded a grant under another procedure which benefits the individual applicant for the same competition or event;
- They have outstanding acquittal documentation from a previous Council grant;
- More than two (2) individuals from the same club/organisation have already received funding for the same competition or event;
- The applicant is being remunerated for their participation (excluding prize money);
- The funds are proposed to be used to contribute to membership expenses; and
- The competition or event exposes Council to adverse criticism due to controversial issues (e.g. political or cultural sensitivities).



Excellence Grants for Individuals Procedure

6.3 Application Process

- Grant opportunities will be widely promoted using a variety of promotional avenues to enable everyone who is eligible to apply for a grant is given the same opportunity to do so.
- All requests for funding must be completed through the Smarty Grants Online Portal.
- Applications must include:
 - A letter or other official documentation from the peak body or governing organisation of the specialised area that confirms that the:
 - Competition or event is of state, national or international standard; and
 - Individual has been selected or personally invited to participate in the competition or event.
 - Applicants must also provide a letter detailing proof of costs to be incurred, e.g. airfare, accommodation or entrance fees.
- The Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) will consider, allocate and administer all grants received in accordance with this procedure.
- Personal information about individuals collected during the grant process will be treated in accordance with Council's Privacy Procedure and this procedure.
- Applications will be assessed in the order in which they are submitted.
- Where the applicant is under 18 years of age, the application must be supported by the individual's parent/guardian with all relevant grant funding being paid directly to the parent/guardian.

6.4 Timeframes

There is no closing date for the Excellence Grants for Individuals Program however, it is preferable that applications be received at least two (2) months before the start of the planned competition or event to enable assessment and payment of grant funds.

Applicants will be advised in writing of the funding decision as soon as practicable and within one (1) month of Council receiving the application.

From the date of notification of the funding decision, successful applicants should allow approximately 30 days for a grant payment to be received.

6.5 Funding Conditions

Successful applicants are expected to appropriately acknowledge Council's contribution in media, social media or other public relations opportunities.

Successful applicants may also be asked to assist Council in its future promotional and fundraising activities by attending functions or meetings to discuss, advise, display, perform or demonstrate individual ability and expertise.

6.6 Acquittal Requirements

Successful applicants must provide proof of purchase/expenditure within 3 months of the expenditure or within 12 months from receipt of the grant, whichever is the earlier.

Upon request, the individual must also provide Council with a short statement about their experience at the competition or event and one (1) image. Council reserves the right to use this statement and image when promoting the Excellence Grant for Individuals Grant program.

The acquittal needs to be submitted online via the Smarty Grants online portal.

Failure to acquit a grant appropriately may result in the individual being asked to repay Council in full for grant money received and exclusion of the individual from future grant rounds.



Excellence Grants for Individuals Procedure

In the case that the applicant has to withdraw from the competition or event for any reason, or the competition or event for which funding has been awarded is cancelled, the applicant will be required to reimburse Knox City Council the full grant amount awarded.

6.7 Reporting to Council

A public report shall be presented to Council on a quarterly basis outlining grant expenditure for the period.

Information regarding applicants received throughout the application process may be included in the report to Council.

7. Administrative Updates

From time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this procedure. Where an update does not materially alter this procedure, such a change may be made administratively and approved by the Director Customer and Performance. Examples of minor administrative changes include changes to names of Council departments or positions, changes to names of Federal or State Government departments or a minor amendment to legislation that does not have material impact. Where any change or update may materially change the intent of this procedure, it must be considered by the Chief Executive Officer.



Excellence Grants for Individuals

Policy Number:	2004/08	Directorate:	City Development – Finance and Governance
Approval by:	Council	Responsible Officer:	Manager Governance
Approval Date:	25 May 2020	Version Number:	4
Review Date:	25 May 2023		

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide funding assistance to Knox residents, who are selected to represent either Victoria or Australia in a competitive endeavor or an elite performance.

2. Context

Knox City Council is committed to building a stronger and better community by increasing opportunities for local residents so they can achieve their goals and reach their full potential.

In order to reach the elite level of competition the individual and their family often have to make many social and economic sacrifices. The Excellence Grant for Individuals specifically aims to support these individuals in their pursuit of the highest levels of performance and development by providing funding to assist with the cost of:

- travel;
- accommodation; and/ or
- uniform and equipment purchase or hire

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Community Development Fund Policy and the Minor Grants Policy.

3. Scope

This policy applies to individuals who live in the City of Knox and are competing or performing at a state, national or international level in the following areas:

- sports and recreation;
- education;
- arts and culture; and
- environmental and/ or humanitarian initiatives

The Excellence Grants for Individuals program is not designed to supplement, subsidise or replace existing Council budget allocations.

4. References

4.1 Community & Council Plan 2017-2021

- Goal 8 – We have confidence in decision making



4.2 Relevant Legislation

- Local Government Act 1989

4.3 Charter of Human Rights

- This policy has been assessed against and complies with the charter of Human Rights.

4.4 Related Council Policies

- Community Development Fund Policy
- Minor Grants Program Policy

4.5 Related Council Procedures

- Nil

5. Definitions

Detail any definitions within the policy.

Acquittal	means information provided by the grant recipient that proves that funds have been spent responsibly and in line with the conditions of the grant program.
Competition	means an organized contest of State, National or International importance in which people take part with the intention of winning.
Council	means Knox City Council, whether constituted before or after the commencement of this Policy.
Event	means an event, conference, performance or exhibition of State, National or International importance that further develops the skill of the individual and their capacity to succeed in their chosen discipline.
Grant	means a sum of money given to an individual with an expectation that the money will be used for an agreed and specific purpose.
Individual	means a resident of the Knox Municipality.
Nominated Officer	means a Council officer selected by the Chief Executive Officer to administer the Excellence Grants for Individuals program.

6. Council Policy

6.1. Objectives

The objectives for the Excellence Grants for Individuals are to:

- increase individual participation in their community;
- increase inclusion and representation of underrepresented individuals;
- assist individuals to develop skills and build capacity; and
- foster pride for the great achievements of individuals in the Knox community.

6.2. Annual Budget Allocation

A budget allocation will be made in each financial year to respond to requests for funding from individuals to assist with costs associated with representing Victoria or Australia in an eligible competition or event. The allocated funds will be distributed equally across the 12 months of the financial year. Unallocated funds in any month will be carried forward to the following month.



The following maximum grant limits apply:

- If the competition or event is held within Victoria - \$150
- If the competition or event is held outside Victoria but within Australia - \$250
- If the competition or event is held internationally - \$400

Once the funding allocation has been fully expended no further grants may be made under this program within the financial year unless further funds are allocated by Council.

At the conclusion of each financial year, any unallocated funds from the Excellence Grants for Individuals will be carried forward and allocated to the next year's budget.

6.3. Timeframes

There is no closing date for the Excellence Grants for Individuals however, it is preferable that applications be received at least two (2) months before the start of the planned competition or event to enable assessment and payment of grant funds.

Applicants will be advised in writing of the funding decision as soon as practicable and within one (1) month of Council receiving the application.

From the date of notification of the funding decision, successful applicants should allow approximately 30 days for a grant payment to be received.

6.4. Eligibility Criteria

To apply for an Excellence Grant for Individuals, the following criteria must be met:

- the applicant is a resident of Knox;
- the applicant has been selected or personally invited to participate in a competition or event by a national or state peak body or governing organization of the specialized area;
- the applicant has not received an Excellence Grant for Individuals in the current or previous financial year.

6.5. Exclusion Criteria

An individual is not eligible to receive grant funding under this policy if:

- the competition or event has already taken place;
- Council has awarded a grant under another policy which benefits the individual applicant for the same competition or event;
- they have a delinquent account with Knox City Council (an amount owed to Council that was not paid by the due date);
- they have outstanding acquittal documentation from a previous Council grant;
- more than two (2) individuals from the same club/organisation have already received funding for the same competition or event;
- the applicant is being remunerated for their participation (excluding prize money);
- the funds are proposed to be used to contribute to membership expenses; and



- the competition or event exposes Council to adverse criticism due to controversial issues (e.g. political or cultural sensitivities).

6.6. Application Process

Grant opportunities will be widely promoted using a variety of promotional avenues to enable everyone who is eligible to apply for a grant is given the same opportunity to do so.

All requests for funding must be completed through the Smarty Grants Online Portal.

The application must include a letter or other official documentation from the peak body or governing organisation of the specialised area that confirms that the:

- Competition or event is of state, national or international standard; and
- individual has been selected or personally invited to participate in the competition or event.

Applicants must also provide a letter detailing proof of costs to be incurred, e.g. airfare, accommodation or entrance fees.

The Chief Executive Officer (or nominated officer) will consider, allocate and administer all grants received in accordance with this policy.

Personal information about individuals collected during the grant process will be treated in accordance with Council's Privacy Policy and clauses 6.8, 6.9 and 6.10 of this policy.

6.7. Assessment Process

For the protection of grant applicants and those involved in the assessment process, all Councillors and Council officers involved in the grant assessment process are required to declare any conflict of interest prior to assessing any grant applications. This process ensures that any potential, actual or perceived conflict of interest is promptly identified and addressed.

The Chief Executive Officer or any nominated officer responsible for administering the grant application shall complete a declaration form for each funding application. The completed declaration form must be attached to the funding application prior to processing.

In the event of a conflict of interest, the person must decline to participate in any discussion about the application and the application must be forwarded to the Manager Governance for assessment. The conflict of interest declaration is to be noted in the quarterly report to Council.

Applications will be assessed by officers in the order in which they are submitted.

Where the applicant is under 18 years of age, the application must be supported by the individual's parent/guardian with all relevant grant funding being paid directly to the parent/guardian.

6.8. Reciprocal Obligations

Successful applicants are expected to appropriately acknowledge Council's contribution in media, social media or other public relations opportunities.

Successful applicants may also be asked to assist Council in its future promotional and fundraising activities by attending functions or meetings to discuss, advise, display, perform or demonstrate individual ability and expertise.



6.9. Acquittal Requirements

Successful applicants must provide proof of purchase/expenditure within 3 months of the expenditure or within 12 months from receipt of the grant, whichever is the earlier.

Upon request, the individual must also provide Council with a short statement about their experience at the competition or event and one (1) image. Council reserves the right to use this statement and image when promoting the Excellence Grant for Individuals Grant program.

The acquittal needs to be submitted online via the Smarty Grants online portal.

Failure to acquit a grant appropriately may result in the individual being asked to repay Council in full for grant money received and exclusion of the individual from future grant rounds.

In the case that the applicant has to withdraw from the competition or event for any reason, or the competition or event for which funding has been awarded is cancelled, the applicant will be required to reimburse City of Knox the full amount awarded.

6.10. Reporting

A public report shall be presented to Council on a quarterly basis outlining grant expenditure for the period.

Information regarding applicants received throughout the application process may be included in the report to Council.

7. Administrative Updates

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

8.3 Review of Decision Making Framework and Use of Synthetic Surfaces on Council's Active Reserves Policy

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Decision
Author:	Strategic Planning Coordinator Active and Creative Communities, Paul Reading
Manager:	Manager Active and Creative Communities, Nicole Columbine
Executive:	Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley

SUMMARY

In September 2021, Council received a report exploring the benefits and constraints related to the use of synthetic surfaces for field sports. Council was also provided with a decision-making framework regarding the development and use of these types of fields to assist with case-by-case decisions.

The resolution resulting from that report was as follows:

That the Council:

1. Note the officer's report regarding synthetic surfaces when compared to conventional turf sporting fields;
2. Note that proposals to develop synthetic playing surfaces will be assessed on a case-by-case basis;
3. For the purpose of community consultation on the officer's recommendation that the south-west soccer pitch at RD Egan Lee Reserve be converted to a synthetic soccer pitch and the hockey proposal currently underway, endorse the Decision-Making Framework set out in section 2.4 and Attachment 1 of this report, given the time sensitivity of these proposals; and
4. Receive a further report reviewing the Decision-Making Framework following additional consultation with Councillors, and before any further assessments are determined.

This report responds to the last resolution (4), to receive a further report reviewing the decision making framework that has been developed to respond to proposals for large scale synthetic sports fields such as a hockey or soccer pitch.

The report also builds in a review of the Use of Synthetic Turf on Council's Active Reserves Policy, which was last reviewed in 2019 and refers to the use of limited smaller synthetic surface improvements including:

- Cricket pitch surrounds;
- Cricket pitch winter wicket covers;
- Boundary areas/run off areas; and
- Football/Soccer Goal Squares (hybrid synthetic).

The updated Policy also references the decision making framework and how it is to be utilised regarding large-scale developments for the future.

RECOMENDATION

That Council adopts the updated Use of Synthetic Turf on Council's Active Reserves Policy, (refer to Attachment 2) including the corresponding Synthetic Surface Development - Decision Making Framework (Refer to Attachment 1)

1. DISCUSSION

Following internal consultation and reviewing external documentation and research papers by other LGAs, officers have revised and updated the decision-making framework (as presented in Attachment 1). The framework response to future proposals for large-scale synthetic sports fields.

It is important that there is an agreed framework for future consideration as the demand for sporting facilities continue to increase, whilst there currently is not any requests for large scale synthetic surfaces, the development of future synthetic fields may be a required option to meet this demand.

The Framework (Large Scale Proposals)

Since the decision to develop a synthetic surface at Egan Lee Reserve, the original framework has been reviewed. The revised framework now provides Council officers with a tool that has clear guidance for undertaking future assessments for proposed large scale synthetic surface projects and renewal of existing large scale synthetic surfaces.

In undertaking the review, several options were considered, such as percentage criteria and weighting specific areas or having hurdle criteria that needed to be overcome prior to proceeding. Following several test cases across numerous reserves it was decided to discontinue this approach as it did not provide enough clarity as each location/reserve and sport have very distinct and often different characteristics. As such the proposed framework was considered the most appropriate tool to ensure that all the key considerations will be addressed in a holistic manner when officers and Council are considering any future large-scale proposal/s.

The framework was updated considering feedback from Councillors, and Council officers to include a cost comparison and further emphasis on environmental, sustainability and financial outcomes.

A desktop review of other Council policies regarding the provision of large-scale synthetic projects indicates that each proposal is considered on a case-by-case basis, although some have a decision-making framework. The most recent of these being Merri-bek City Council Draft Sportsgrounds Surface Policy which has a similar multi-factor decision making tool to the one proposed in this report, see below:

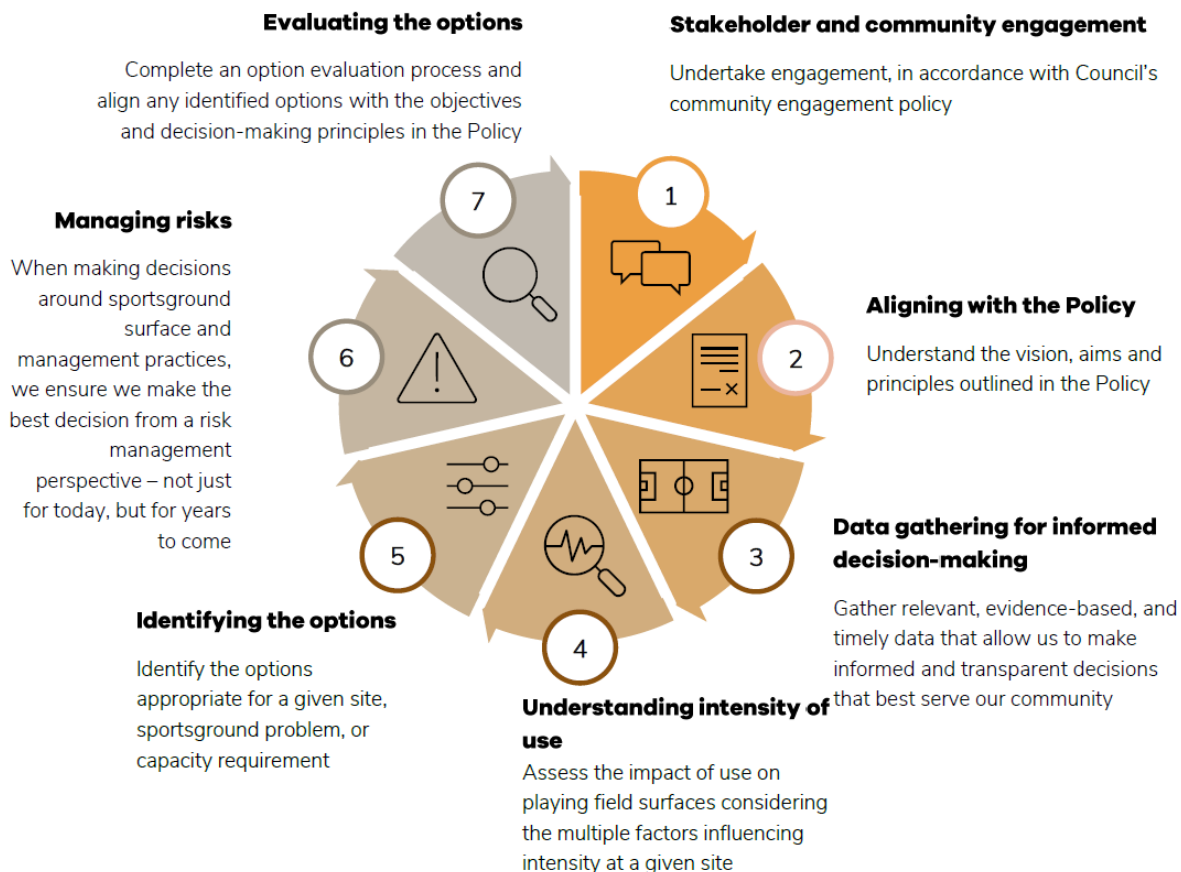


Diagram 1 – Merri-bek Decision Making Tool

In reviewing the framework learnings, previous information, and details from other projects (both within Knox and at other LGAs), along with information provided in the earlier Council reports have been considered.

The original framework had eight key considerations, the reviewed framework has clarified and refined these and added a new consideration regarding cost. The new framework identifies seven key considerations and how they should be addressed. These considerations are:

1. Environmental Sustainability - Impact on biodiversity, soils, drainage, and surface material sustainability.
2. Impact on the Local Community – impact on parkland, passive use, loss of green space and heat island impact.
3. Type of Sport and Demographics – type of surface required, unmet needs.
4. Tenant Sport or Club – culture and growth.
5. Multi-Sport and Shared Use - can it be used by others.
6. Alignment with Council’s strategic plans and policies – does the project align with Policy.
7. Cost Comparison – financial viability.

The framework is considered as a tool to help assess any future large-scale synthetic proposal/s with an emphasis on environmental sustainability and impact on local communities.

The considerations are also seen to be provided as a prompt for further analysis or investigation dependent on the proposal and specific site.

The Policy (Small Scale)

Council's Use of Synthetic Surfaces on Council's Active Reserves Policy (formerly Use of Synthetic Turf on Council's Active Reserves Policy) was last reviewed in 2019 and refers to the use of limited smaller synthetic surface improvements. The Policy principally exists to assist and guide the installation of small-scale synthetic surfaces on Council's active reserves. These improvements generally aid site usability, functionality, and safety.

The Policy is somewhat procedural in nature and as noted above, relates to the installation of small-scale synthetic surfaces on the following areas of Council's active reserves:

- Cricket pitch surrounds;
- Cricket pitch winter wicket covers;
- Boundary areas / run off areas; and
- Football/Soccer Goal Squares (Hybrid synthetic).

Previously the Policy stated that large scale new synthetic surface developments or proposals for the redevelopment of existing ovals and pitches should be considered on a case-by-case basis, this is retained, however, it now also refers to the decision-making framework and the requirement for a report to Council.

Council's Use of Synthetic Surfaces on Council's Active Reserves Policy (formerly Use of Synthetic Turf on Council's Active Reserves Policy) exists to ensure the appropriate use of synthetic surfaces and to manage the installation of synthetic surfaces on Council's active reserves as well as providing a consistent and transparent approach to these installations. Following a recent review of the policy document, a series of updates have been proposed to provide further clarity, to reduce risk to participants, and to improve operational effectiveness for Council officers administering and developing proposals for projects.

The existing Policy has also been updated to ensure that our existing natural turf facilities can incorporate limited but required synthetic surfaces, particularly in high wear areas, to ensure their long-term sustainability.

The update of the Policy now includes:

- A more defined approach for considering large-scale synthetic surface projects beyond those prescribed in the policy through reference to an updated decision-making framework. This approach would be utilised for proposals such as new or redeveloped hockey, soccer, or football facilities.
- Surfaces that have traditionally been turf based, such as tennis and outdoor netball are acknowledged in the policy. Guidelines for these surfaces is also governed by Australian Standards and facility standards from the State Sporting Associations.

To ensure the Policy remains current, the review process has identified several key changes that are now proposed within the updated Use of Synthetic Turf on Council's Active Reserves Policy (refer Attachment 2). A clean copy is also provided at Attachment 3. The key changes, and the justification for each, include:

Title	Change of title to “Use of Synthetic Surfaces on Council’s Active Reserves Policy”, replacing the word Turf with Surface to better reflect the products used.
Purpose	<p>Simplified the purpose:</p> <p><i>The purpose of this Policy is to ensure the appropriate use of synthetic surfaces and to manage the installation of synthetic surfaces on Council’s active reserves as well as providing a consistent and transparent approach to these installations.</i></p> <p>And added a reference to large scale surfaces outside of the prescribed surfaces:</p> <p><i>The Policy also addresses the process for consideration of large-scale synthetic surfaces beyond the prescribed areas.</i></p>
Context	<p>Additional text to include areas of wear and tear and, also to reference complete playing fields:</p> <p><i>In some instances, sports request complete playing fields to be constructed with synthetic surfaces to meet usage and community demands. As these surfaces have significant environmental, social, and financial implications they require addressing on a case-by-case basis as per Section 6.3.</i></p>
Scope	<p>Updated to address goal squares, define a process for larger synthetic surface developments and clarify the position regarding non-turf-based facilities as per the text below:</p> <p><i>The Policy covers the use of synthetic surfaces on Council’s active reserves, with a focus on the area surrounding a cricket pitch, goal squares and around the boundary area. It also defines a process for case-by-case consideration of larger synthetic surface developments, such as soccer, and football playing fields.</i></p> <p><i>Surfaces that traditionally are no longer predominantly turf based, such as cricket practice nets, tennis, hockey, athletics and outdoor netball are acknowledged in the Policy.</i></p>
References and Relevant Publications	<p>Updated to reflect the Knox Community and Council Plan 2021-2025.</p> <p>Removed Relevant Publications as they are outdated and change frequently. Policy requires referral to relevant governing bodies in Section 6.2.</p>
Definitions	Minor edits only.

<p>Council Policy</p>	<p>Addition of Football/Soccer Goal Squares (Hybrid synthetic) to allow installations and:</p> <p><i>Synthetic surfaces must not be installed on any other area of an active reserve without prior approval from the Manager Active and Creative Communities.</i></p> <p>Addition of “most up to date” to specifications, due to changes in technology and requirements.</p> <p>Addition of the following text for full synthetic pitches:</p> <p><i>Applications or proposals for full synthetic surface installations will be considered on a case-by-case basis requiring development of a report to Council for endorsement, that is based on addressing the Synthetic Surfaces Decision Making Framework (Attachment 1) and integrated into Council’s annual capital works planning process.</i></p> <p><i>Sites that are no longer predominantly turf based such as cricket practice nets, tennis, hockey, athletics, and outdoor netball will continue to be considered for synthetic or other surfaces due to industry and governing body standards, as well responding to high wear and tear, utilisation requirements and maintenance.</i></p> <p><i>These surfaces should also be assessed for their environmental impact and end of life recycling options.</i></p>
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The Procedure

The Procedure for the Use of Synthetic Turf on Council’s Active Reserves is also attached for information and has had minor updates to reflect the changes to the Policy. The Procedure is included in Attachment 4 (clean version) These changes are documented below:

<p>Procedure</p>	<p>The changes to the procedure document include the removal of the Administrative Updates Section and the addition of the following text:</p> <p>Approach: Full Synthetic Pitches Approval for the development of full synthetic pitches is not addressed in this procedure and these developments are subject to a separate report to Council for endorsement, that is based on addressing the Synthetic Surfaces Decision Making Framework and integrating into Council’s annual capital works planning process.</p> <p><i>Hybrid Goal Squares</i> <i>Council may, when upgrading or repairing grounds, introduce hybrid turf options for high wear areas including goal squares. Any installation of synthetic surfaces on goal squares is to be undertaken by Council rather than clubs themselves. These surfaces should also be assessed for their environmental impact and end of life recycling options.</i></p>
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	6.5 Synthetic surfaces can remain in an operable condition for up to ten years (updated from eight, in line with improved surface options)
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2. ENGAGEMENT

As the proposed update of the Policy has limited changes or impact on the community or sports clubs, and significant consultation was undertaken in 2019; no community or club engagement has been undertaken for this Policy review. It should also be noted that the current policy is working well in practice.

Internal consultation has been completed with representatives of Active and Creative Communities, City Futures (Sustainable Futures) and Green Spaces and Environment (Sports fields and Reserve, and Biodiversity).

Should a large-scale development be proposed, engagement would occur as per Council's Engagement Framework.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

By providing high quality active reserves, which are enhanced by the considered installation of synthetic surfaces, Council is encouraging higher levels of participation, improved amenity and safety and protecting high wear areas of grounds to allow full season usage.

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.

Should a larger project such as a full synthetic field be proposed, it may have climate change implications; these would need to be addressed using the framework via the separate Council report as per section 6 of the Policy.

With careful planning and design, developing a synthetic field can reduce the use of water, herbicides, pesticides, and fossil fuel consumption required to manage a turf field. The product choice, construction methodology and ongoing maintenance are all critical decisions which will need to be factored into any potential future project.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Within the Policy, there is limited environmental impact with the implementation of the prescribed options available for consideration mainly due to the installations being limited and small scale. However sustainable production and appropriate recycling should be sought wherever possible.

Small Scale prescribed options include:

- Cricket pitch surrounds;
- Cricket pitch winter wicket covers;
- Boundary areas/run off areas; and
- Football/Soccer Goal Squares (hybrid synthetic).

The benefits and limitations of synthetic surfaces have previously been detailed in Council reports, Synthetic Surfaces, 13 September 2021 and a further report on 27 June 2022, Egan Lee Reserve Synthetic Surface Consultation.

Larger scale, field size, implementation can have an environmental impact and as such any large-scale project is subject to the development of a Council report that addresses the considerations identified in the Synthetic Surfaces Decision Making Framework.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The updated policy has no direct financial implications for Council given the installation of synthetic surfaces is typically funded by, and the responsibility of, community sporting clubs. The only exceptions to this are when projects are undertaken as part of wider capital works projects (i.e., oval upgrade, cricket training facility, etc.) which are planned, budgeted, and funded through Council's Leisure Minor Capital Works Grants Scheme or Council's Capital Works Program.

The installation of synthetic surfaces in high traffic areas (i.e., center square, reserve entrances, goal squares) reduces the level of scheduled and reactive maintenance required, resulting in less expenditure and financial savings to Council.

The updated framework has a consideration (cost comparison) which addresses whole of life costs for large-scale projects, the details of which would be expanded in a Council report for any future proposal.

7. RISKS

The proposed change to the policy reduces injury risk to participants particularly regarding cricket pitch surrounds, reserve entrances and goal squares, reducing the likelihood of legal action being brought against Council and community clubs.

The updated decision-making framework also ensures that Council undertakes due diligence prior to any large-scale synthetic surface developments to ensure the identification of a clear purpose and to address any environmental, community or financial risks.

8. KNOX COMMUNITY AND COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025

Neighbourhoods, Housing & Infrastructure

Strategy 2.2 - Create, enhance, and maintain places and spaces for people to live, work, play and connect.

Natural Environment & Sustainability

Strategy 3.1 - Preserve our biodiversity and waterways and enhance our urban landscape.

Connection, Resilience & Wellbeing

Strategy 4.1 - Support our community to improve their physical, mental, and social health and wellbeing.

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 - Synthetic Surface Development - Decision Making Framework [**8.3.1** - 5 pages]
2. Attachment 2 - Use of Synthetic Surfaces on Council's Active Reserves Policy (tracked new template) [**8.3.2** - 6 pages]
3. Attachment 3 - Policy - Use of Synthetic Surfaces on Council's Active Reserves (clean version) [**8.3.3** - 5 pages]
4. Attachment 4 - Procedure - Use of Synthetic Surfaces on Council's Active Reserves [**8.3.4** - 9 pages]

Attachment 1

Synthetic Surface Development - Decision Making Framework - July 2024

The following framework has been developed to ensure that the key considerations for any proposed large scale development or renewal of a synthetic playing field are fully interrogated and addressed prior to Council deliberation.

These considerations are:

1. Environmental Sustainability - Impact on Biodiversity, soils, drainage, and surface material sustainability
2. Impact on the local Community – Impact on parkland, passive use, loss of green space and heat island impact.
3. Type of Sport and Demographics – Type of surface required, unmet needs
4. Tenant Sport or Club – Culture and growth/participation
5. Multi-Sport and Shared Use - Can it be used by others?
6. Alignment with Council's strategic plans and policies – Does the project align with policy.
7. Cost Comparison – Financial viability.

The framework should be utilised as a guide to addressing, at a minimum, the key considerations in a Council report for any large-scale synthetic proposal.

The proposal should address all the key considerations below and based on the overall outcome a recommendation/s should be developed for Council to make an informed decision. It should be noted that the issues identified within each Key Consideration are not exhaustive and should be utilised as a guide.

Synthetic Surface Development Decision Making Framework - Key Considerations

1. Environmental/ Sustainability	
<p>Does the proximity of the development potentially impact sensitive environmental areas, habitat connectivity/habitat corridor? and/or Does the site abut/contain or adjoin a Site of Biological Significance?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If no, explain, why. • If yes, address impacts and determine and demonstrate how or if they can be effectively diminished or removed. • If the above is not possible, it is considered that the proposal does not proceed.
<p>Has the whole of life impact of the proposed products been considered?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and document contemporary whole of life impacts of the proposed surface and materials such as: Carbon footprint, recycling options, infill options, replacement lifespan, leachate. • The project should not proceed if this process is not clearly articulated.
<p>Do the soil types preclude the ability of developing sustainable high use turf fields?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the soil types on the proposed site and determine the opportunity to develop a high use turf field.
<p>Is the drainage and storm water infrastructure appropriate for the development of a synthetic field?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine and incorporate cost and impact of meeting requirements of retrofitted to meet the requirements of the site.

Attachment 1

2. Impact on the local community.	
Does the development have an adverse impact on the surrounding parkland character?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If so, how does it do this, and can the impact be addressed through design, landscaping or other means such as fencing? • If the above is not possible, it is considered that the proposal does not proceed or consider an alternative site
Does the development improve a community asset?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the issue with the current facility and how does the provision of a synthetic surface address this issue, are there other options?
Does the design encourage and allow for passive local community use (when not in active sports use)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the proposal and design reflect this outcome and if not document the reasoning for not allowing public use.
Is there enough natural green space to offset the heat island impact of a synthetic ground at the site or nearby?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the natural green space within and near the reserve to determine viability of a large-scale synthetic surface. • Consider mitigation of heat island effect by investigating and incorporating the following options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cooling Systems: Install cooling systems like evaporative cooling or misting systems to reduce surface temperature. ▪ Light-Coloured Infills: Use light-coloured infills or coatings to reflect solar radiation and reduce heat absorption. ▪ Shading: Provide shading structures like canopies, umbrellas, or trees to reduce direct sunlight on the surface. ▪ Ventilation: Ensure proper ventilation under the synthetic surface to allow heat to escape. ▪ Watering: Regularly water the synthetic surface to keep it cool, especially during hot weather. ▪ Surface Treatment: Apply surface treatments like coatings or paints that are designed to reflect solar radiation and reduce heat. ▪ Green Roofs: Consider integrating green roofs or walls around the sports ground to provide natural cooling.

Attachment 1

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Smart Materials: Use advanced materials that are designed to absorb and release heat slowly, reducing the heat island effect. ▪ Orienting the field to minimize sun exposure during peak hours. ▪ Maintenance: Regularly maintain the synthetic surface to ensure its temperature-reducing features remain effective. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If limited space is available, consider whether the proposal proceeds or consider an alternative site.
3. The type of sport played and demographics.	
Does the sport require a synthetic surface?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes why and at what competition level, if not, why is a synthetic being proposed and what are the benefits to the sport?
Is it a growing area, are their unmet needs for junior and female sport etc. that cannot be addressed without the development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the available facilities meeting demand and are their opportunities at other sites to address the need? How does a synthetic surface address this need?
4. Tenant Sport or Club.	
Is the Club actively supporting a social inclusion agenda? (Diversity, junior and female development?) Is the culture of the club reflective of community expectations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document and substantiate the club or sports social inclusion agenda and if not reflecting current community expectations consider recommending working with Club to address these issues and reconsider in future years based on evidence of change.
Does the club have a growth agenda, is there evidence of growth?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there other opportunities to address the needs – more ground allocations etc. If there is no evidence of growth does the Club have a strategic plan and does Council’s data support the targets in the strategic plan?

Attachment 1

5. Multi-Sport and Shared Use	
Is the facility to be shared by other clubs across the municipality and utilised for multiple sports and activities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If yes document how and who might benefit from the development, if not explain why and explore what options there may be for multi-use.
6. Alignment with Council's strategic plans and policies	
Does development align with relevant plans and policies?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If no, document how they may differ and how that could be addressed.
7. Cost Comparison	
Is the development and maintenance cost effective?	<p>A cost comparison is also required to fully understand and determine the viability of developing a synthetic playing field. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital Cost – compare initial capital cost of developing a new synthetic playing field against a traditional natural turf facility. The outcomes will vary depending on the site conditions, is it a renewal or a green fields site etc. Life Cycle Cost/10 Years - Determine lifecycle cost of each option per 10 years including cost of synthetic surface maintenance annually, carpet replacement, irrigation costs, mowing costs, use of fertilisers and herbicides, over sowing. Return on Investment - determine return on investment based on expected level of usage of the facility. Based on hours of available use and numbers of participants.

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Policy

Use of Synthetic Turf Surfaces on Council's Active Reserves Policy

Policy Number: 2014/05	Directorate: Connected Communities Community Services
Approval by: Council	Responsible Officer: Manager Active and Creative Communities Co- Managers Youth Leisure & Cultural Services
Approval Date: 25 February 2019 TBC	Version Number: 23
Review Date: 25 February 2023 TBC	

1. Purpose

Council recognises the increasing technological advances in the production of synthetic turf surfaces and its increasing use functionality on community sports fields. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the appropriate use of synthetic surfaces and to manage the installation of synthetic surfaces on Council's active reserves as well as providing a consistent and transparent approach to these installations. ~~administer the installation of synthetic turf on Council's active reserves as well as providing a consistent and transparent approach to these installations.~~ The Policy is consistent with industry practice and standards published by relevant sporting governing bodies.

The policy also addresses the process for consideration of large scale synthetic surfaces beyond the prescribed areas outlined in this Policy.

2. Context

Community usage of Council's active reserves continues to increase at significant rates, largely being influenced by the growth of female and junior sport. Due to this increasing demand by user groups, Council's active reserves often develop areas of wear and tear due to high traffic loads, with these areas typically including entry points, cricket run ups and goal squares.



To ~~addressecombat~~ this issue and remove safety risks for participants, synthetic ~~turf~~surfaces can be used as an alternative to natural ~~turf~~surfaces.

~~In some instances, sports requestire complete playing fields to be constructed with synthetic surfaces to meet usage and State Sporting Association Standards or community demands. As these surfaces have significant environmental, social and financial implications they require addressing on a case-by-cas~~case-by-case basis as per Section 6.3.

This Policy and accompanying ~~Procedure Appendix-Procedure~~ ensures installation of synthetic ~~turf~~surfaces is done ~~so~~ in a correct manner and in a way which will not compromise the safety of user groups and community members whilst ensuring the amenity of an active reserve remains.

3. Scope

The Policy applies ~~internally and~~ to all user groups of Council's active reserves which engage contractors to undertake the installation of synthetic ~~turf~~surfaces, whether replacing existing synthetic ~~turf~~surfaces or installing new synthetic ~~turf~~surfaces. The Policy covers the use of synthetic ~~turf~~surfaces on Council's active reserves, with a focus on the area surrounding a cricket pitch, ~~goal squares~~ and around the boundary area. ~~It also defines a process for case-by-cas~~case-by-case consideration of large scale synthetic surface developments, such as soccer, ~~hockey~~ and football playing fields.

~~Surfaces that traditionally are no longer predominantly turf based, such as cricket net wickets, tennis, hockey, athletics and outdoor netball are acknowledged in this policy (refer section 6.3). New or replacement surfaces at all facilities should consider the Synthetic Surfaces Decision Making Framework.~~

Council remains in favor of natural ~~turf~~surface options and will consider natural ~~turf~~surface options and procedures (ie. oversowing) prior to considering the installation of synthetic ~~turf~~surfaces.

4. References

4.1 ~~Community & Council Plan 2017-2021~~[Knox Community & Council Plan 2021-2025](#)

• ~~Goal 1: We value our natural and Built Environment~~

~~Strategy 1.1 – Protect and enhance our natural environment~~

~~Strategy 1.3 – Ensure the Knox local character is protected and enhanced through the design and location of urban development and infrastructure~~

• ~~Goal 4 – We are safe and secure~~



~~Strategy 4.1 – Encourage and support the community to take responsibility for their own safety, and the safety of others~~

~~Strategy 4.3 – Maintain and manage the safety of the natural and built environment~~

~~● **Goal 6 – We are healthy, happy and well**~~

~~Strategy 6.1 – Mitigate lifestyle risks such as smoking, risky alcohol consumption and drug use, obesity, lack of physical activity and poor nutrition~~

~~Strategy 6.2 – Support the community to enable positive physical and mental health~~

~~● **Goal 8 – We have confidence in decision making**~~

~~Strategy 8.1 – Build, strengthen and promote good governance practices across government and community organisations~~

~~Neighbourhoods, Housing & Infrastructure~~

~~Strategy 2.2 - Create, enhance and maintain places and spaces for people to live, work, play and connect.~~

~~Natural Environment & Sustainability~~

~~Strategy 3.1 - Preserve our biodiversity and waterways, and enhance our urban landscape.~~

~~Connection, Resilience & Wellbeing~~

~~Strategy 4.1 - Support our community to improve their physical, mental and social health and wellbeing.~~

4.2 Relevant Legislation

- Local Government Act ~~1989-2020~~ – Conflict and Interest Provisions

4.3 Charter of Human Rights

- This policy has been assessed against and complies with the charter of Human Rights.

4.4 Related Council Policies ~~and Procedures~~

- Council's Occupational Health and Safety Policies and Procedures;
- Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme Policy;
- Seasonal Tenancy Agreement;
- Sporting Club Financial Contributions Towards Reserve Developments Policy;
- Sporting Reserve and Facility Development Guidelines Policy;
- Sporting Reserve Facility Usage Policy; ~~and~~
- Untied Funding Policy; ~~and~~
- ~~Use of Synthetic Turf Surfaces on Council's Active Reserves Procedure.~~

4.5 Related Council Procedures

- Nil.

~~4.6 Relevant Publications~~



- ~~Artificial Grass for Sport Guide (undated);~~
- ~~Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development Artificial Grass For Sports (2011);~~
- ~~Development of Standards for the Use of Artificial [TurfSurfaces](#) for Australian Football and Cricket (2011);~~
- ~~FIFA Quality Concept for Football [TurfSurfaces](#) (undated);~~
- ~~Guide to Installing Hockey Pitches and Associated Facilities (2007);~~
- ~~Handbook of Performance, Durability and Construction Requirements for Synthetic [TurfSurfaces](#) Hockey Pitches (2013); and~~
- ~~Artificial Rugby [TurfSurfaces](#) Performance Specification – Technical Document (2012).~~

5. Definitions

Active Reserve	Reserves where activities of a sporting nature primarily take place.
Boundary Area / Run Off Area	The area between the boundary line and fence line, or 3m from the boundary line on an active reserve.
Coaches Box	The structure whereby coaches and players stand/sit when not in the field of play.
Council	Knox City Council, whether constituted before or after the commencement of this Policy.
Council Officer	Any staff member of Knox City Council.
Cricket Pitch Surrounds	The area directly surrounding a cricket pitch on an active reserve
Full Synthetic Pitch	Synthetic turf surface to an entire playing surface of an active reserve.
Interchange Gate	The area where players enter an exit the field of play.
Large Scale	Areas larger than those prescribed in this Policy.
Pile Height	The height of the blades in synthetic turf surface .
Reserve Access Gate	The gate which is used to gain access by foot to an active reserve.
Shock Pad	A shock absorbing layer which is placed over the base, directly under the synthetic carpet to reduce peak forces for head impacts.



Sport's Governing Body The peak body for a sporting code.

Synthetic Winter Wicket Cover A synthetic [turf surface](#) cover used over the winter season to cover the cricket pitch, protecting it from damage and removing risk for users.

User Group A legal entity that provides services, support or activities to the Knox community. This includes both winter and summer tenants.

6. Council Policy

This Policy relates to the installation of synthetic [turfsurfaces](#) on the following areas of Council's active reserves:

- Cricket pitch surrounds;
- Cricket pitch winter wicket covers; ~~and~~
- Boundary areas / run off areas; and
- Football/Soccer Goal Squares (Hybrid synthetic).

Synthetic [turfsurfaces](#) must not be installed on any other area of an active reserve without prior approval from the Manager Active and Creative Communities such as football goal squares.

6.1 Authority for Approval

Approval must be received from the Manager Active and Creative Communities Youth, Leisure and Cultural Services (or delegate) prior to any new or increased installation of synthetic [turfsurfaces](#) on Council's active reserves. Under no circumstances are works permitted to commence prior to receiving this written approval. Maintenance and replacement of like for like does not require written approval.

6.2 Specifications

It is acknowledged that respective sport's governing bodies may adopt varying standards for synthetic [turfsurfaces](#) to meet that sport's specific needs. Standards may differ in the requirement for the pile height, the use of shock pads, infill material and level/amount of infill. It is also noted that sports governing bodies may change specifications from time to time to reflect technological advances in synthetic [turfsurfaces](#).

The installing user group must ensure that the most up to date specifications set out by their sports' governing body for the installation of synthetic [turfsurfaces](#) are followed at all times.



Should multiple sports be played on the one active reserve, the standards adopted by the respective sports' governing bodies may conflict with one another. If this is the case, approval will not be given by Council for the installation unless prior written approval is received from all respective sports' governing bodies (representing those sports currently tenanted at the active reserve on an annual basis) stating that the proposed synthetic ~~turf~~surfaces is safe and meets their specifications. It is the user group's responsibility to ensure this approval is obtained from the relevant sports' governing bodies.

Sprinkler heads and valve boxes located on an active reserve must not be obstructed by the installation of synthetic ~~turf~~surfaces.

All additional requirements are outlined in [the Council's Use of Synthetic Turf Surfaces on Council's Active Reserves Procedure](#).

6.3 Full Synthetic Pitches

~~This Policy does not apply to the installation of synthetic turf to an entire playing surface of an active reserve. Applications or proposals for full surface~~surfaces synthetic surface installations will be considered on a case by case basis requiring development of a report to Council for endorsement, that is based on addressing the Synthetic Surfaces Report Development - Decision Making Framework and integrating into ~~be considered by Council on a case by case basis as part of~~ Council's annual capital works planning process.

~~Surfaces that traditionally are no longer predominantly turf based, such as cricket practice nets, tennis, hockey, athletics and outdoor netball Sites that are no longer turf based such as tennis, hockey, athletics and outdoor netball will continue to be considered for synthetic or other surfaces due to industry and governing body standards, and as well as responding to high wear and tear, utilisation requirements and maintenance.~~

~~These surfaces should also be assessed for their environmental impact and end of life recycling options.~~

7. Administrative Updates

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

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Policy

Use of Synthetic Surfaces on Council's Active Reserves Policy

Policy Number: 2014/05	Directorate: Connected Communities
Approval by: Council	Responsible Officer: Manager Active and Creative Communities
Approval Date: TBC	Version Number: 3
Review Date: TBC	

1. Purpose

Council recognises the increasing technological advances in the production of synthetic surfaces and its increasing functionality on community sports fields. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the appropriate use of synthetic surfaces and to manage the installation of synthetic surfaces on Council's active reserves as well as providing a consistent and transparent approach to these installations. The Policy is consistent with industry practice and standards published by relevant sporting governing bodies.

The policy also addresses the process for consideration of large scale synthetic surfaces beyond the prescribed areas outlined in this Policy.

2. Context

Community usage of Council's active reserves continues to increase at significant rates, largely being influenced by the growth of female and junior sport. Due to this increasing demand by user groups, Council's active reserves often develop areas of wear and tear due to high traffic loads, with these areas typically including entry points, cricket run ups and goal squares.

To address this issue and remove safety risks for participants, synthetic surfaces can be used as an alternative to natural surfaces.

In some instances, sports request complete playing fields to be constructed with synthetic



surfaces to meet usage and community demands. As these surfaces have significant environmental, social and financial implications they require addressing on a case-by-case basis as per Section 6.3.

This Policy and accompanying Procedure ensures installation of synthetic surfaces is done in a correct manner and in a way which will not compromise the safety of user groups and community members whilst ensuring the amenity of an active reserve remains.

3. Scope

The Policy applies internally and to all user groups of Council's active reserves which engage contractors to undertake the installation of synthetic surfaces, whether replacing existing synthetic surfaces or installing new synthetic surfaces. The Policy covers the use of synthetic surfaces on Council's active reserves, with a focus on the area surrounding a cricket pitch, goal squares and around the boundary area. It also defines a process for case-by-case consideration of large scale synthetic surface developments, such as soccer and football playing fields.

Surfaces that traditionally are no longer predominantly turf based, such as cricket net wickets, tennis, hockey, athletics and outdoor netball are acknowledged in this policy (refer section 6.3).

Council remains in favor of natural surface options and will consider natural surface options and procedures (ie. oversowing) prior to considering the installation of synthetic surfaces.

4. References

- 4.1 Knox Community & Council Plan 2021-2025
Neighbourhoods, Housing & Infrastructure
Strategy 2.2 - Create, enhance and maintain places and spaces for people to live, work, play and connect.
Natural Environment & Sustainability
Strategy 3.1 - Preserve our biodiversity and waterways, and enhance our urban landscape.
Connection, Resilience & Wellbeing
Strategy 4.1 - Support our community to improve their physical, mental and social health and wellbeing.
- 4.2 Relevant Legislation
 - Local Government Act 2020 – Conflict and Interest Provisions
- 4.3 Charter of Human Rights
 - This policy has been assessed against and complies with the charter of Human Rights.
- 4.4 Related Council Policies and Procedures



- Council's Occupational Health and Safety Policies and Procedures;
- Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme Policy;
- Seasonal Tenancy Agreement;
- Sporting Club Financial Contributions Towards Reserve Developments Policy;
- Sporting Reserve and Facility Development Guidelines Policy;
- Sporting Reserve Facility Usage Policy; and
- Untied Funding Policy.

4.5 Related Council Procedures

- Nil

5. Definitions

Active Reserve	Reserves where activities of a sporting nature primarily take place.
Boundary Area / Run Off Area	The area between the boundary line and fence line, or 3m from the boundary line on an active reserve.
Coaches Box	The structure whereby coaches and players stand/sit when not in the field of play.
Council	Knox City Council, whether constituted before or after the commencement of this Policy.
Council Officer	Any staff member of Knox City Council.
Cricket Pitch Surrounds	The area directly surrounding a cricket pitch on an active reserve
Full Synthetic Pitch	Synthetic surface to an entire playing surface of an active reserve.
Interchange Gate	The area where players enter an exit the field of play.
Large Scale	Areas larger than those prescribed in this Policy.
Pile Height	The height of the blades in synthetic surface.
Reserve Access Gate	The gate which is used to gain access by foot to an active reserve.
Shock Pad	A shock absorbing layer which is placed over the base, directly under the synthetic carpet to reduce peak forces for head impacts.



Sport's Governing Body	The peak body for a sporting code.
Synthetic Winter Wicket Cover	A synthetic surface cover used over the winter season to cover the cricket pitch, protecting it from damage and removing risk for users.
User Group	A legal entity that provides services, support or activities to the Knox community. This includes both winter and summer tenants.

6. Council Policy

This Policy relates to the installation of synthetic surfaces on the following areas of Council's active reserves:

- Cricket pitch surrounds;
- Cricket pitch winter wicket covers;
- Boundary areas / run off areas; and
- Football/Soccer Goal Squares (Hybrid synthetic).

Synthetic surfaces must not be installed on any other area of an active reserve without prior approval from the Manager Active and Creative Communities.

6.1 Authority for Approval

Approval must be received from the Manager Active and Creative Communities (or delegate) prior to any new or increased installation of synthetic surfaces on Council's active reserves. Under no circumstances are works permitted to commence prior to receiving this written approval. Maintenance and replacement of like for like does not require written approval.

6.2 Specifications

It is acknowledged that respective sport's governing bodies may adopt varying standards for synthetic surfaces to meet that sport's specific needs. Standards may differ in the requirement for the pile height, the use of shock pads, infill material and level/amount of infill. It is also noted that sports governing bodies may change specifications from time to time to reflect technological advances in synthetic surfaces.

The installing user group must ensure that the most up to date specifications set out by their sports' governing body for the installation of synthetic surfaces are followed at all times.



Should multiple sports be played on the one active reserve, the standards adopted by the respective sports' governing bodies may conflict with one another. If this is the case, approval will not be given by Council for the installation unless prior written approval is received from all respective sports' governing bodies (representing those sports currently tenanted at the active reserve on an annual basis) stating that the proposed synthetic surfaces is safe and meets their specifications. It is the user group's responsibility to ensure this approval is obtained from the relevant sports' governing bodies.

Sprinkler heads and valve boxes located on an active reserve must not be obstructed by the installation of synthetic surfaces.

All additional requirements are outlined in the Procedure.

6.3 Full Synthetic Pitches

Applications or proposals for full synthetic surface installations will be considered on a case by case basis requiring development of a report to Council for endorsement, that is based on addressing the Synthetic Surface Development - Decision Making Framework and integrating into Council's annual capital works planning process.

Surfaces that traditionally are no longer predominantly turf based, such as cricket practice nets, tennis, hockey, athletics and outdoor netball will continue to be considered for synthetic or other surfaces due to industry and governing body standards, and responding to high wear and tear, utilisation requirements and maintenance.

These surfaces should also be assessed for their environmental impact and end of life recycling options.

7. Administrative Updates

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

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Procedure

Use of Synthetic Surfaces on Council's Active Reserves Procedure

Policy Number: 2014/06	Directorate: Connected Communities
Approval by: Council	Responsible Officer: Manager Active & Creative Communities
Approval Date: TBC	Version Number: 3
Review Date: TBC	

1. Purpose

This Procedure has been developed to provide Council and the community with guidance on the implementation of the Use of Synthetic Surfaces of Council's Active Reserves Policy.

2. Context

Community usage of Council's active reserves continues to increase at significant rates, largely being influenced by the growth of female and junior sport. As a result of this increasing demand by user groups. Council's active reserves often develop areas of wear and tear due to high traffic loads, with these areas typically including entry points, cricket run ups etc. To combat this issue and remove safety risks for participant and to reduce maintenance, synthetic surfaces can be used as an alternative to natural turf.

This Procedure and accompanying Policy ensures installation of synthetic surfaces are done so in a correct manner and in a way which will not compromise the safety of user groups and community members whilst ensuring the amenity of an active reserve remains.

3. Scope

This Procedure applies to all tenant user groups of Council's active reserves which seeks to undertake the installation of synthetic surfaces, whether it be replacing existing synthetic surface or installing new synthetic surfaces. Further, it outlines the process in place for user groups to obtain approval for works to commence, as well as the final sign-off process following completion of works.

Approval or maintenance for the development of full synthetic pitches is not addressed in this procedure and these developments are subject to a separate report to Council for endorsement,



that is based on addressing the Synthetic Surface Development - Decision Making Framework and integrating into Council's annual capital works planning process.

4. References

4.1 Knox Community & Council Plan 2021-2025

Neighbourhoods, Housing & Infrastructure

Strategy 2.2 - Create, enhance and maintain places and spaces for people to live, work, play and connect.

Natural Environment & Sustainability

Strategy 3.1 - Preserve our biodiversity and waterways and enhance our urban landscape.

Connection, Resilience & Wellbeing

Strategy 4.1 - Support our community to improve their physical, mental and social health and wellbeing.

4.2 Relevant Legislation

- Local Government Act 2020 – Conflict and Interest Provisions

4.3 Charter of Human Rights

- This policy has been assessed against and complies with the charter of Human Rights.

4.4 Related Council Policies

- Council's Occupational Health and Safety Policies and Procedures;
- Recreation Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme Policy;
- Seasonal Tenancy Agreement;
- Sporting Club Financial Contributions Towards Reserve Developments Policy;
- Sporting Reserve and Facility Development Guidelines Policy;
- Sporting Reserve Facility Usage Policy;
- Untied Funding Policy; and
- Use of Synthetic Surfaces on Council's Active Reserves Policy.

4.5 Related Council Procedures

- Nil

5. Definitions

Active Reserve Reserves where activities of a sporting nature primarily take place.

Boundary Area / Run Off Area The area between the boundary line and fence line, or 3m from the boundary line on an active reserve.

Coaches Box The structure whereby coaches and players stand/sit when not in the field of play.

Council Knox City Council, whether constituted before or after the



commencement of this Policy.

Council Officer	Any staff member of Knox City Council.
Cricket Pitch Surrounds	The area directly surrounding a cricket pitch on an active reserve
Full Synthetic Pitch	Synthetic surface to an entire playing surface of an active reserve.
Interchange Gate	The area where players enter an exit the field of play.
Pile Height	The height of the blades in synthetic surface.
Reserve Access Gate	The gate which is used to gain access by foot to an active reserve.
Shock Pad	A shock absorbing layer which is placed over the base, directly under the synthetic carpet to reduce peak forces for head impacts.
Sport's Governing Body	The peak body for a sporting code.
User Group	A legal entity that provides services, support or activities to the Knox community. This includes both Winter and Summer tenants.

6. Procedure

This Procedure should be read in conjunction with Council's Use of Synthetic Surface of Council's Active Reserves Policy.

6.1 Council Standards

User groups must ensure that any synthetic surface installed in the areas listed below is compliant with the specifications listed within the Use of Synthetic Surface on Council's Active Reserves Policy.

6.1.1 Cricket Pitch Surrounds

- Synthetic surfaces around cricket pitches must strictly comply with the specifications set out in the Policy.

Synthetic surfaces placed around a cricket pitch must not:

- Exceed 10m in length at either end of the existing cricket pitch; and
- Exceed 1.2m in width on either side of the existing cricket pitch.



6.1.2 Boundary Areas

Synthetic surfaces may be considered for installation of the following areas around the boundary (run off) of an active reserve:

- In front of coaches boxes;
- In front of interchange gates;
- In front of reserve access gates; and
- Soccer field side lines.

Installation of synthetic surfaces in the aforementioned areas must not:

- Exceed 1.2m in width on either side of the coaches box, interchange gate or reserve access gate; and
- Encroach on the playing area of an active reserve as defined by the boundary line or exceed 3m in from the boundary fence, whichever is lesser.

Council will consider the installation of synthetic surfaces on other areas outside those listed in section 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 on a case-by-case basis.

6.1.3 Synthetic Winter Wicket Covers

All facilities where cricket pitches are required to be covered for winter season use must have a winter wicket cover installed. A combination of plastic and soil/sand is not to be used to cover a cricket pitch.

Responsibility for the installation and removal of synthetic winter covers is that of the user group.

All handling of synthetic winter wicket covers must be undertaken by a qualified contractor in accordance with Council's Occupational Health and Safety Policies and Procedures.

The synthetic winter wicket cover must meet the standards adopted by the respective sports' governing bodies (ie. Cricket Victoria/Australia, AFL Victoria, Football Federation Victoria, etc).

At no time is soil to be spread on the entire surface area of the synthetic winter wicket cover, however soil can be spread around the edges of the synthetic winter wicket cover. User groups must contact Council to arrange for soil to be delivered to the active reserve and are not permitted to supply their own soil without approval from Council.

Storage of synthetic winter wicket covers is the responsibility of the user group and must be stored in designated storage areas within a reserve as determined by Council, or off site if required.

Should a user group have uncovered a cricket pitch and surplus soil remains, user groups must contact Council to arrange for removal of the soil.

6.1.4 Hybrid Goal Squares

Council may, when upgrading or repairing grounds, introduce hybrid turf options for high wear



areas including goal squares. Any installation of synthetic surfaces on goal squares is to be undertaken by Council rather than Clubs themselves.

These surfaces should also be assessed for their environmental impact and end of life recycling options.

6.2 Approval Process

6.2.1 Governing Body's Standards

The installing user group must ensure that the specifications set out by their sports' governing body for the installation of synthetic surfaces are followed at all times. Should multiple sports be played on the one active reserve, the standards adopted by the respective sports' governing bodies may conflict with one another. If this is the case, approval will not be given by Council for the installation unless prior written approval is received from all respective sports' governing bodies (representing those sports currently tenanted at the active reserve on an annual basis) stating that the proposed synthetic surface is safe and meets their specifications. It is the user group's responsibility to ensure this approval is obtained from the relevant sports' governing bodies.

6.2.2 Additional Documentation

It is a requirement that the user group installing the synthetic surface provides Council with the following documentation:

- Detailed information on the synthetic surface being installed including but not limited to the pile height, rubber shock pads, measurements and whether chemicals will be used during the installation;
- A letter of support from all other user groups at the reserve including acceptance of maintenance responsibilities during their respective tenancy periods;
- Details of the contractor installing the synthetic surface including all relevant licenses, public liability insurance with a minimum value of \$20m as well as a Safe Work Method Statement; and
- Any other documentation as required by Council.

6.2.3 Approval

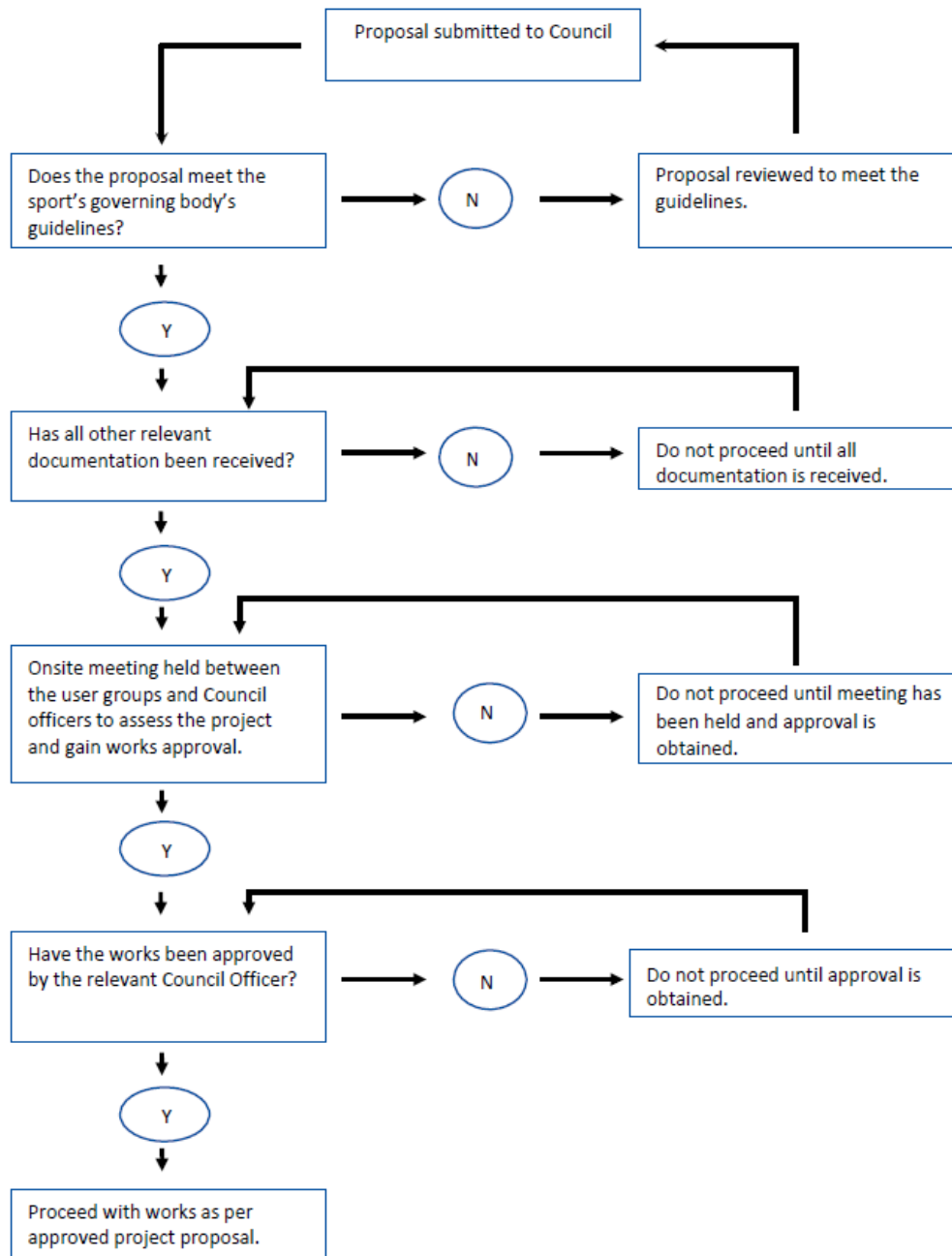
Council at its sole discretion reserves the right to approve or refuse any proposal made by a user group for the installation of synthetic surfaces.

Prior to the commencement of new works by user groups, approval must be received from Council. Works are not to commence until the user group has obtained written approval from Council.

Flowchart 1 on the following page further outlines the process for obtaining the required approval.



Flowchart 1 – Approval Process





6.3 Inspection

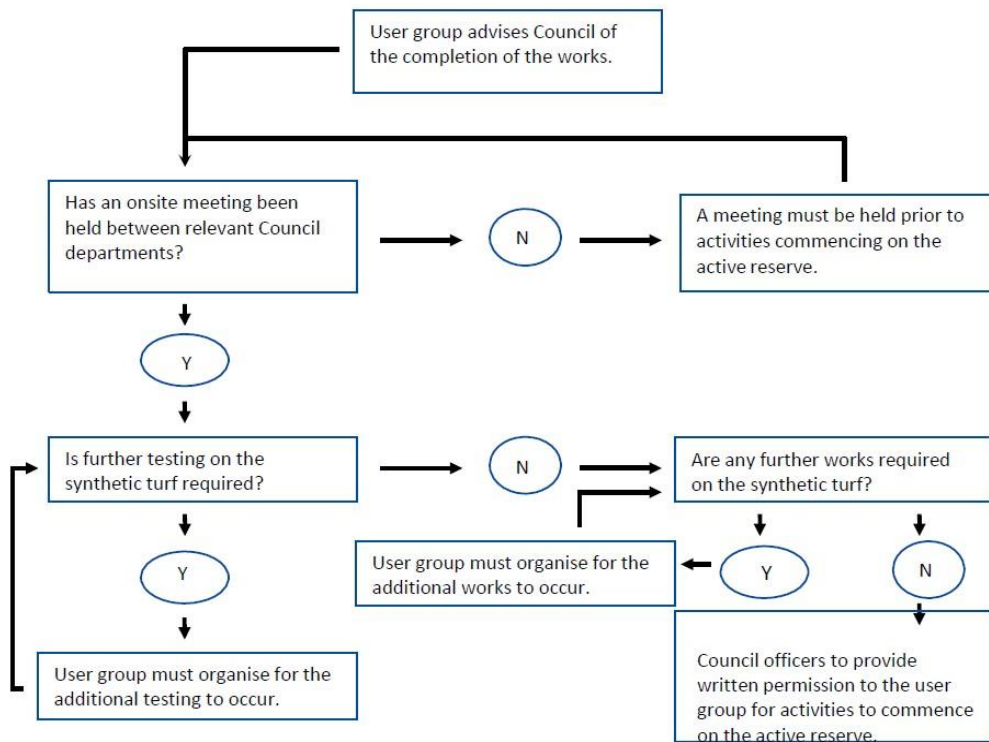
At the completion of the installation, the user group must advise Council and a follow up practical completion inspection is to be conducted by Council officers from both the Leisure Services and Sportsfields and Reserves units. Any outcomes (ie. rectifications) from this inspection must be acted upon by the user group as instructed by Council officers and all associated costs are to be met by the user group.

Furthermore, should the respective sport’s governing bodies require any testing to ensure the safety of the synthetic surface, this must be conducted at the user group’s expense with the results being made available to Council officers.

Activities on newly installed synthetic surfaces must not commence until written approval is obtained from Council officers.

Flowchart 2, below, further outlines the necessary steps for Council officers to undertake when inspecting the works.

Flowchart 2 – Inspecting works





6.4 Maintenance

Unless otherwise advised by Council, responsibility for proactive and reactive maintenance of synthetic surface, including responding to vandalism, misuse or wear and tear, will be that of the current tenant user group.

Maintenance records must be retained by the user group outlining the type of maintenance that has been conducted. The user group will be required to provide Council with maintenance records at the completion of their respective tenancy period or as otherwise advised by Council.

It is essential that the correct maintenance of the synthetic surface is undertaken to ensure:

- The synthetic surface is kept clean;
- The synthetic surface remains level, of consistent texture and with the correct amount of infill;
- The effective drainage of surface water is maintained throughout the life of the pitch;
- The synthetic surface does not become slippery due to the growth of algae and moss, or harder through the compaction of infill; and
- The optimum surface life is achieved.

The aforementioned points can be achieved by:

- Regular inspections;
- Sweeping leaves and other accumulated materials from the surface;
- Grooming the surface through brushing and/or drag matting;
- Pressure washing to remove algae growth; and
- Any joint or seam failure is repaired and reinstated promptly before loss of any synthetic surface pile or risk to user.

It is noted that diverse maintenance works may be required on various forms of synthetic surface. Sport's governing bodies and synthetic surface providers may also develop a minimum requirement for maintenance of synthetic surface for their respective sport/product. It is the full responsibility of the user group to ensure that any additional or varied maintenance requirements developed by a sport's governing body or synthetic surface installer are adhered to and reported through the maintenance record.

Council, at its sole discretion, may request the current tenant user group to undertake maintenance to enhance the surface to a quality approved by Council. Council has the right to refuse play on any active reserve where the synthetic surface is deemed unsafe and renders the active reserve unplayable.

6.5 Replacement

Synthetic surfaces can remain in an operable condition for up to ten years, however replacement may be required prior to this date if the surface has experienced excessive levels of usage. Should synthetic surfaces show signs of vandalism, misuse or wear and tear (including but not limited to unevenness, a worn surface or holes in the surface), Council, at its sole discretion, may require the user group which installed the synthetic surface to undertake a replacement of the product with all



associated costs to be met by the user group unless otherwise advised in writing by Council.

During the replacement of synthetic surface, should the shock pads be found to be unsuitable or doubt exists over their quality, they must be removed and replaced with suitable shock pads.

Any change to the scale of the Synthetic surface must not be undertaken without prior approval from the Manager Active and Creative Communities

Should the user group wish to reinstate the synthetic surface area to natural turf, Council will undertake the works or employ a suitable contractor to undertake the works, with all associated costs being met by the user group unless otherwise advised in writing by Council.

6.6 Chemical Use

At no stage are user groups permitted to use chemicals to clean synthetic surfaces. Any chemicals used during the installation of synthetic surfaces must be approved in writing by Council prior to the commencement of the installation.

7. Administrative Updates

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

8.4 Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme 2024-2025

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Decision
Author:	Leisure Contract and Project Officer, Rhonda Snijders
Manager:	Manager Active and Creative Communities, Nicole Columbine
Executive:	Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley

SUMMARY

This report presents the recommendations of the Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme (LMCWGS) Panel for Council's 2024-2025 program allocation for funding. The annual LMCWGS supports community sporting and leisure organisations to undertake facility improvements on land owned or managed by Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Approves a funding allocation of \$75,778.64 (including GST) from the 2024-25 Leisure Minor Capital Works Grants Scheme Program to the applicant clubs nominated in Attachment 1.
2. Specifies that additional grant conditions are required for the sporting organisations listed in Attachment 2.
3. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person as the Chief Executive Officer selects) to inform applicant clubs of Council's decision.

1. DISCUSSION

The Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme (the Scheme) is an annually funded program that enables Council to financially assist community sporting and leisure organisations to undertake facility improvement projects on Council's recreation reserves, which they tenant.

The Scheme falls under the overarching Knox Grants Framework Policy which was implemented in June 2022. As a result, this is the second year under the new Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme Procedure and Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme Terms of Reference which were endorsed at the April 2023 Council Meeting. The Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme Procedure (the Procedure) directs the type and level of financial contribution that Council will provide to community sporting and leisure organisations for improvements on Council land.

The Procedure enables organisations to apply for a contribution from Council for the project cost. The maximum grant that Council will award under the Policy is \$10,000 excluding GST for any one project. The funding ratio is 50:50 - Council: organisation contribution.

Applications submitted to the Scheme are assessed by the Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme Assessment Panel (the Panel). The Panel for 2024-2025 comprised of three community representatives elected from the Recreation and Leisure Committee; Clinton Kennon, Craig Douglas and Karen Little, Council's Manager Active and Creative Communities; Nicole Columbine and Council's Manager Strategic Infrastructure; Matt Hanrahan. Officers from Council's Leisure team participated in an administrative support capacity.

Following the assessment by the Panel, projects recommended to receive a grant are presented to Council for consideration and approval.

1.1 Applications

Requests for applications from the community for the 2024-2025 Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme opened on 1 February 2024, with applications closing on 15 March 2024.

An extensive campaign to advertise the Scheme was conducted reaching groups in all Council Wards within the Knox municipality. All applicants were required to speak to Council’s Leisure team regarding their application and then use the Smarty Grants online grant management system to submit their applications.

1.2 Assessment

Thirteen applications were received, of which eleven were assessed by the Panel. Two applications were ineligible prior to the Panel convening as they did not meet the eligibility criteria outlined in the application form. One of the projects, whilst technically ineligible (as contact was not made with a Council officer) was delivered through Council’s Renewals Program. The second ineligible project may be submitted again for funding in 2025-2026.

The total value of the eligible projects is \$75,778.64 including GST.

The assessment criteria applied to the applications and as described in the Procedure comprises of the following:

Table 1 – Assessment Criteria Breakdown

The application clearly demonstrates the need for the project and the level of benefit to the community.	30%
The application demonstrates alignment with Council’s strategic priorities.	30%
The project addresses a risk or safety issue.	10%
The degree to which the applicant can demonstrate clear financial need.	10%
The degree to which the applicant has provided the required project documentation and can demonstrate the ability to deliver the project.	20%

Following the assessment process, the Panel recommends funding eleven of the applications from the Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme budget.

All eleven projects recommended meet the current Sporting Reserve and Facility Development Guidelines (SRFDG) in line with the requirements of the Procedure.

The projects recommended by the Panel to receive a Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant in 2024-2025 are detailed in Attachment 1.

1.3 Conditions

Additional Grant conditions have been developed for all eleven (11) of the recommended applications to clarify project requirements that are additional and beyond the conditions of funding outlined within the LMCWGS Procedure, including appropriate building and planning permits and environmental health considerations, where applicable. These conditions are noted in Attachment 2.

1.4 Application by Sport/Activity

A range of activities were represented in the applications for the 2024-2025 Scheme. A breakdown of activities represented in the submitted applications is in Table 2 below.

Table 2 – Application by Sport/Activity

Sport	Number of Applications
AFL	4
Cricket	2
Tennis	3
Leisure	2
Total	11

2. ENGAGEMENT

All sporting and leisure clubs and organisations within Knox were advised of the 2024-2025 Scheme through an awareness campaign over the period of October 2023 to March 2024, with the grant opening on the 1 February 2024 and closing on 15 March 2024. The campaign comprised inclusion in the fortnightly Leisure e-Newsletter, information on Council's website, social media communication with paid advertising across all digital platforms to target audiences, inclusion in the Knox Community Grants campaigns, consultation with the Recreation and Leisure Committee, internal consultation with the Leisure, Communications, Grants, Facilities and Parks teams to cross-promote the scheme.

Initial internal feedback and consultation of the project applications was undertaken by Council officers from Parks, Building, Facilities, Open Space, Biodiversity and Community Wellbeing.

Consultation with the clubs regarding the uptake of the scheme revealed that the projects require additional administration and resources from club volunteers to deliver. Some clubs therefore note that they prefer to seek funding for larger projects and the maximum funding amount.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Scheme assists the local community to develop and improve facilities to enable participation in leisure and sporting pursuits. These facilities contribute to the development of the social environment and the health and wellbeing within Knox by developing community connections and facilitating and promoting active lifestyles.

This Scheme also often complements the works undertaken by Council as part of its annual capital works program.

4. CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS

The provision of the Leisure Minor Capital Works Grants Scheme allows local leisure and sporting clubs as tenants of Council's sporting reserves and leisure facilities to apply for a grant(s) to improve and/or address climate change issues at Council's facilities. Projects that have considered the effects of climate change have included renewable options, solar energy, energy efficiency and low emissions from appliances.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The provision of the Leisure Minor Capital Works Grants Scheme allows local leisure and sporting clubs as tenants of Council's sporting reserves and leisure facilities to apply for a grant(s) to improve and/or address amenity issues at Council's facilities. Projects that have considered environmental implications include outdoor furniture, BBQ facilities, shade, heating and cooling and flooring.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The cost of \$75,778.64 (including GST) for the recommended allocations to local sporting and leisure organisations is provided within Council's LMCWGS 2024-2025 budget of \$100,000 (excluding GST).

The contingency will be \$31,110.83 (excluding GST). The contingency may be utilised as outlined in the Procedure for eligible projects during 2024-25 Financial Year.

7. RISKS

An assessment of the risks associated with the Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme has been undertaken and will be managed as per Council's Risk Management Framework, Council's Grant Framework Policy and the Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme Guidelines. The risks taken into consideration include the ability of the club to pay the 50% contribution, the clubs' capacity to deliver the project and quality of work delivered, conflicts of interest. These risks are managed through the application process, evaluation process, submission of project documentation (plans, public liability insurance, safe work methods statement, building permits, schedule of works), signed funding agreement with Council which clearly defines accountability of the funded organisation for the achievement of agreed outcomes and specific terms and conditions of the grant. Grant monies are only paid upon signing the formal funding agreement and approval of project documentation. The projects are monitored and upon completion all receipts for expenditure, photographs of works, certificates of completion are to be submitted within one month of completion. Any unspent grant money must be returned to Council.

Council recognises that there are specific fraud and corruption risks related to the administration of public funds through grant making. Council maintains a Fraud and Corruption Control Framework and Risk Register which provides guidance to all parties around fraud or corruption risk in the grant making process.

8. KNOX COMMUNITY AND COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025

Opportunity & Innovation

Strategy 1.1 - Maximise the local economy by supporting existing businesses and attracting new investment.

Strategy 1.3 - Support organisations in Knox to navigate recovery and new ways of working.

Neighbourhoods, Housing & Infrastructure

Strategy 2.2 - Create, enhance and maintain places and spaces for people to live, work, play and connect.

Natural Environment & Sustainability

Strategy 3.1 - Preserve our biodiversity and waterways, and enhance our urban landscape.

Strategy 3.2 - Prepare for, mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

Connection, Resilience & Wellbeing

Strategy 4.1 - Support our community to improve their physical, mental and social health and wellbeing.

Strategy 4.2 - Foster inclusivity, equality, belonging and safety within the community.

Strategy 4.4 - Support the community to identify and lead community strengthening initiatives.

Civic Engagement & Integrity

Strategy 5.1 - Provide opportunities for all people in Knox to have their say.

Strategy 5.2 - Manage our resources effectively to ensure financial sustainability and improved customer experience.

Strategy 5.3 - Ensure our processes are transparent and decisions are accountable.

9. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officers contributing to and responsible for this report have no conflicts of interest requiring disclosure under Chapter 5 of the Governance Rules of Knox City Council.

10. STATEMENT OF COMPATIBILITY

There are no legislative obligations under the Human Rights Charter, Child Safe Standards or the Gender Equity Act that are incompatible with the recommendation in this report.

Clubs are requested to include in their application their Gender Equity Self-Assessment and Action Plan. Clubs are required to address how the project would help the club to achieve the aims in the Action Plan.

Child Safety considerations are included in the application form for the club to respond to ensuring that the project provides a safe and supportive environment for children, young people and families with no barriers to access the facility.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

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

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment 1 - Recommended Projects LMCWGS 2024-25 [8.4.1 - 1 page]
2. Attachment 2 - Projects with Conditions - LMCWGS 2024-25 [8.4.2 - 1 page]

Attachment 1

Organisation	Project	Facility/Reserve Name	Total Project Cost Inc GST	Total Amount Requested. Inc GST	Funding Project Outcome	Total Grant Amount Allocated. Inc GST	Total Grant Amount Allocated ex GST
Knoxfield Tennis Club	Knoxfield Tennis Club Book A Court program	Knoxfield Tennis Club	\$26,400.00	\$10,000.00	Recommended	\$10,000.00	
Knox Football Club	Addition of terracing and stairs to Hill Area for better game experience and safety of members.	Knox Gardens Reserve	\$29,549.52	\$10,000.00	Recommended	\$10,000.00	
Bayswater Junior Football Club	Netting for creek end of goals	Bayswater Park Oval - Marie Wallace	\$41,730.00	\$10,000.00	Recommended	\$10,000.00	
The Basin Football Netball Club	Upgrade of secondary Kitchenette	Batterham Reserve	\$12,243.00	\$6,121.50	Recommended	\$6,121.50	
Knox Dog Obedience Club	Installation of split system environmental control system	Knox Park	\$10,359.00	\$5,000.00	Recommended	\$5,000.00	
Scoresby Tennis Centre	Courts 4-5 rebuilding extras	Scoresby Tennis	\$10,959.00	\$5,479.00	Recommended	\$5,479.00	
Rowville Knights Community Football	Behind Goal Nets at Liberty ave	Liberty Avenue Reserve	\$33,000.00	\$10,000.00	Recommended	\$10,000.00	
Eildon Park Tennis Club	Solar Battery	Eildon Park Tennis	\$18,082.00	\$10,000.00	Recommended	\$9,041.00	
Knox Community Gardens Society Inc	Outdoor Cooking Area Refurbishment	Dinsdale Reserve	\$3,474.28	\$1,737.14	Recommended	\$1,737.14	
Wantirna Cricket Club	Schultz Reserve Winter Pitch Cover	Schultz Reserve	\$4,800.00	\$2,400.00	Recommended	\$2,400.00	
Boronia Netball Club	Permanent goal posts	Chandler Park	\$6,616.39	\$3,316.39	Ineligible	0	
Bayswater Football Club	Bayswater Oval Clubrooms renovation	Marie Wallace Bayswater Oval	\$11,500.00	\$5,750.00	Ineligible	0	
St Johns Tecoma Cricket Club Inc	Shade at talaskia	Talaskia Reserve	\$12,568.00	\$6,000.00	Recommended	\$6,000.00	
Total			\$221,281.19	\$85,804.03		\$ 75,778.64	\$ 68,889.67
Budget 2024-25							\$100,000.00
Contingency							\$31,110.33

Organisation	Project	Funding Conditions
Knoxfield Tennis Club	Knoxfield Tennis Club Book A Court program	Revenue received from other funding source is not to be paid back by the club. Council to be provided access to the facilities via a GAP1 Padlock, so the system must not "lock Council out".
Knox Football Club	Addition of terracing and stairs to Hill Area for better game experience and safety of members.	Appropriate permits, requirements for this type of infrastructure including drainage required. Dial Before you Dig required to locate drainage services.
Bayswater Junior Football Club	Netting for creek end of goals	Geotech reports and service locations required. A Building Permit and Consent from Council Building team is required Conditional on successful funding from other sources
The Basin Football Netball Club	Upgrade of secondary Kitchenette	Not to be a bar area, need to consider relevant permits and Food Act compliance.
Knox Dog Obedience Club	Installation of split system environmental control system	Require installation by a registered electrician and copy of Certificate of Electrical Compliance and final inspection upon completion
Scoresby Tennis Centre Inc	Courts 4-5 rebuilding extras	Furniture not to impede on path of travel/egress. Position of furniture to be advised before installation.
Rowville Knights Community Football Club	Behind Goal Nets at Liberty ave	To provide an additional local quote with project submission detail.
Eildon Park Tennis Club	Solar Battery	Funding to be 50:50. Approved \$9041.00
Knox Community Gardens Society Inc	Outdoor Cooking Area Refurbishment	Installation to be by a qualified contractor and registered gas fitter.
Wantirna Cricket Club	Schultz Reserve Winter Pitch Cover	To fund the replacement only.
St Johns Tecoma cricket Club Inc	shade at talaskia	Building Permit will be required and any other associated permits to be considered. Structure is not to block access to the light pole or affect sportsfield lighting. Club to also consider applying for Cricket Victoria shade grant.

8.5 Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians Policy Review

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Decision
Author:	First Nations Lead, Adrian Greenwood and Coordinator Healthy and Safe Communities, Lisette Pine
Manager:	Manager Community Wellbeing, Kerryn Jansons
Executive:	Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley

SUMMARY

The Acknowledgment of Traditional Custodians Policy No 2005/17 (the Policy) was due for review in June 2021 and deferred to align with the development of Council's Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-2025. A review of the Policy commenced in October 2023, including a focus on understanding Traditional Owner land boundaries and aligning the Acknowledgment with contemporary contexts. The review also incorporated the development of draft Acknowledgement Guidelines, a new addition to the Policy. The purpose of the Guidelines is to further expand, educate and contextualise how Council can respectfully acknowledge Traditional Owners and Country at events, meetings, in statements and significant occasions.

A copy of the draft Policy with tracked changes is included as Attachment 1 and a draft clean copy with Acknowledgement Guidelines as Attachment 2.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to adopt the draft Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians Policy and Guidelines consistent with Attachment 2 of this report.

1. DISCUSSION

Council has supported reconciliation initiatives in partnership with First Nations communities for many years. This work includes visual and symbolic acknowledgment of Traditional Custodians that promotes awareness within the community and for Council staff, such as permanently flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, the Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians Policy, installation of acknowledgement plaques on Council buildings and reserves and Cultural Interpretive Signage at significant sites.

In August 2023, Council's first Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-2025 (the RAP) was approved and is an important step in our reconciliation journey. The Plan includes actions to progress Council's commitment to observe cultural protocols through the acknowledgement of traditional custodians including Welcome to Country and smoking ceremonies. By honoring these cultural traditions, we acknowledge the resilience and cultural richness of First Nations people and continue to take meaningful steps towards building a more inclusive and equitable community for all.

The review of the Policy supports the RAP's vision of 'walking and listening together'. The proposed changes also support Council and Council staff to understand respectful and culturally appropriate practices for a Welcome to Country, Smoking Ceremony and Acknowledgment.

1.1 Policy Review and Proposed Changes

In 2023, Council’s First Nations Lead held conversations with Wurundjeri Woi- wurrung and Bunurong Elders to explain the purpose of the Policy review and to seek their input on appropriate language and culturally sensitivity that reflects contemporary perspectives. Conversations were broad as the Elders also provided advice on the RAP and related topics such as Country, Acknowledgment and truth telling, healing, and promoting reconciliation.

Council staff also provided feedback with the desire for the Policy to provide additional guidance to tailor Acknowledgments to specific issues, locations and audiences, to ensure they are culturally sensitive and supported by First Nations communities.

Based on this feedback, proposed changes were made to the draft Policy and draft Acknowledgment Guidelines were developed for Welcome to Country, Smoking Ceremonies and Acknowledgement of Country.

The following information provides an overview of the proposed key changes:

<p>Section 2: Context</p>	<p>Revised: To provide guidance to Council and Council staff in relation to respectful practice when acknowledging Traditional Owners and the range of circumstances when it is appropriate.</p> <p>Addition: Reference to the Acknowledgement Guidelines, to provide guidance for Council and Council Staff on Acknowledgements and cultural ceremonies that reflects respective situations and circumstances.</p>
<p>Section 4: References</p>	<p>Updates: 4.1 - To reflect current Council and Community Plan 2021-2025 goals. 4.2 - Include relevant legislation. 4.3 - Update to The Charter of Human Rights.</p>
<p>Section 5: Definitions</p>	<p>Updates: Minor changes to Corporate Council Documents to reflect changes to Tier 1 and Tier 2.</p>
<p>Section 6: Council Policy</p>	<p>Revised: 6.1 - Includes guidance for tailoring the use of a verbal acknowledgement at Council meetings and events. 6.2 - Includes guidance for tailoring the use of an Acknowledgment in Council documents.</p> <p>Addition: 6.3 - Provides guidance on including an Acknowledgment on plaques displayed at Council facilities.</p>
<p>Section 8: Administrative Updates</p>	<p>Addition: Includes guidance on updating the Acknowledgement Guidelines based on consultation with Traditional Custodians and First Nations community. The Guidelines further expand on, educate and contextualise how Council can respectfully acknowledge Traditional Owners and Country at events, meetings, in statements and significant occasions.</p>

A communication plan that outlines how the Policy will be communicated to Council staff and the wider community will be developed, and key information incorporated into cultural awareness training and capacity-building initiatives.

2. ENGAGEMENT

Conversations held with Elders and Council staff captured the key issues to inform and strengthen the Policy update and provide direction for the development of the draft Guidelines. The Elders shared valuable insights into contemporary traditional practices, cultural protocols that are central to Indigenous identity.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

For First Nations communities in Knox, it is important for Council to continue to acknowledge the enduring connections to their land, honor customs and demonstrate respect for traditional custodianship. The draft Policy and Guidelines promote cultural respect, greater community awareness and directs action to continue to progress reconciliation and recognition in a practical and symbolic way.

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 specific environmental implications arising from this report.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

This work is supported within existing resources of the Community Wellbeing Department.

7. RISKS

A risk to Council through not acknowledging Traditional Custodians could be perceived as disrespectful and culturally insensitive. This lack of recognition undermines efforts to foster positive relationships with First Nations communities and may lead to mistrust and tension. It is important for Council to prioritise these practices as part of its commitment to reconciliation, truth telling, cultural safety and respect, and social responsibility.

8. KNOX COMMUNITY AND COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025

Connection, Resilience & Wellbeing

Strategy 4.3 - Honour and integrate First Nations Culture into actions and environments.

9. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Officers contributing to and responsible for this report have no conflicts of interest requiring disclosure under Chapter 5 of the Governance Rules of Knox City Council.

10. STATEMENT OF COMPATIBILITY

There are no legislative obligations under the Human Rights Charter, Child Safe Standards or the Gender Equity Act that are incompatible with the recommendation in this report.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

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

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment 1 - Draft Policy - Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians - tracked changes - 2024-06 [**8.5.1** - 7 pages]
2. Attachment 2 - IB - Draft Policy - Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians - Clean Copy - 2024-06 [**8.5.2** - 7 pages]



Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians Policy

Attachment 1

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Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians Policy

Policy Number:	2005/17	Directorate:	Connected Communities
Approval by:	Council	Responsible Officer:	Manager, Community Wellbeing
Approval Date:	TBC	Version Number:	5
Review Date:	3 years from meeting date		

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to provide direction to Councillors and Council staff for the acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians at Council meetings, Council Committees, Council and Civic Events, Corporate Council documents and establishment of plaques on Council facilities. [This Policy also includes Acknowledgement Guidelines to further expand, educate and contextualise how Council can respectfully acknowledge Traditional Owners and Country at events, meetings, in statements and significant occasions.](#)

[Council adopted the Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians Policy in 2004 as part of its journey towards establishing a Reconciliation Action Plan. Acknowledgement of Country is included on our gateway signage and documents.](#)

2. Context

[Wherever Councillors or Council staff meet, work, hold events or provide facilities in Knox, they are on the land of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong people. The Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians is a way for Council to promote greater community awareness about the history of First Nations peoples, and to demonstrate leadership and respect for their continuing connection to the land.](#)

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[There are a range of ways in which Council and/or Council staff may provide this Acknowledgement. This Policy aims to define the circumstances in which it is appropriate for Council to provide an Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians, and to outline the minimum expectations in how this is delivered.](#)

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[Acknowledgment Guidelines \(see Section 7 of this Policy\) have been developed in partnership with the First Nations communities to provide additional support and guidance to Councillors and Council staff for a range of cultural ceremonies that properly reflects each situation or circumstance. This approach allows for the Acknowledgement of Country to be tailored and meaningful to a specific location or audience, in a way that is cultural-sensitive and supported by Elders.](#)

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[While Knox includes two Traditional Custodian groups, all locations within Knox will either be the land of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people or the land of the Bunurong people. Respectful practice in speeches, openings or](#)

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[plaques and other signage is to acknowledge the particular land one is speaking on by confirming the boundaries on the Registered Aboriginal Parties map \(Victoria\).](#)

3. Scope

This Policy applies to staff and Councillors involved in Council meetings, Council Committees, Council and Civic Events and in the development of Corporate Council documents and plaques for new and upgraded Council facilities as described in Section 5 (Definitions) of this Policy.

Deleted: by formally acknowledging this history at Council meetings, Council Committees, Council and Civic Events, in Corporate Council documents, and on plaques for new and upgraded Council facilities in the spirit of reconciliation.

Council staff and Councillors are encouraged [to](#) use at their own discretion an Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians at meetings and events that fall outside of this Policy.

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4. References

4.1 Community & Council Plan [2021-25](#)

- [Connection, resilience and wellbeing](#)
- [Civic engagement and integrity](#)

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4.2 Relevant Legislation

- [Local Government Act 1989 – Conflict and Interest Provisions](#)
- [Aboriginal Heritage Amendment Act 2016](#)

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Goal 6. We are healthy, happy and well¶
Goal 7. We are inclusive, feel a sense of belonging and value our identity¶
Goal 8. We have confidence in decision making¶

4.3 Charter of Human Rights

- This Policy has been assessed against and complies with the [Charter of Human Rights which protects the cultural rights of First Nations people, including the right to enjoy and express language, culture, customs, and heritage without discrimination.](#)

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4.4 Related Council Policies

- [Council Committees Policy](#)
- [Council Meeting Structure and Cycle Policy](#)
- [Memorials Policy](#)

Deleted: <#>Civic and Mayoral Receptions Policy¶

Deleted: Plaque Inscription Policy

4.5 Related Council Procedures

- Nil

5. Definitions

Council [Knox City Council, whether constituted before or after the commencement of this Policy.](#)

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Council staff [Staff that are employed by Knox City Council.](#)

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Council Meeting [Meetings of Council.](#)

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Council Committees As defined in the Council Committees Policy and includes:

- Advisory Committees
- Special Committees – as formally appointed under section 86 of the Local Government Act. Council currently has one Special Committee, the Strategic Planning Committee
- Specific Purpose Committees
- Working Groups



Council and Civic Events Major events, festivals and openings hosted by Council, as follows:

- Major Festivals and events including -
 - Knox Community Awards;
 - Citizenship Ceremonies;
 - Knox Festival;
 - Carols by Candlelight;
 - Sorry Day Flag Raising Ceremony;
 - Pets in the Park;
 - And official Opening ceremonies.

Deleted: Local Australia Day

Deleted: <#>Stringybark Festival;¶

Deleted: Events Covered in the Civic and Mayoral Receptions Policy/Official

Corporate Council documents Important council documents and digital assets, which includes:

Tier 1:

- Municipal Strategic Statement;
- Community and Council Plan 2021-25;
- Council’s Annual Report;
- State of Knox;
- Structure Plans; and
- Other Council implementation plans, action plans or strategies.

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Tier 2:

- Knox City Council Digital Assets – Website home page and social media where appropriate;
- Knox News;
- Major Festivals and Events Programs; and
- Council E-newsletter templates.

Deleted: Social

Deleted: Media

Deleted: <#>Council Implementation Plans¶

Plaques Plaques developed for new and upgraded Council facilities.

6. Council Policy

6.1 Council and Council Staff will provide a verbal Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians at the commencement of Meetings of Council, Council Committee meetings and Council and Civic Events. At a minimum this could include:

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“We acknowledge that Knox City Council is on the traditional land of the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation and pay our respects to elders both past and present.”

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Further advice is provided under Section 7, Acknowledgement Guidelines including recommendations on tailoring the Acknowledgment to the place upon which the meeting or event is held. This could take the form of an additional sentence as follows:

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“Today we meet on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung people”, or
“Today we meet on the traditional lands of the Bunurong people.”

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6.2 Council will include a Statement of Acknowledgement in corporate Council documents as defined in Section 5 of this Policy (Definitions). This will be included as a stand-alone Statement, and at a minimum could include:

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"Knox City Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the City of Knox, the Wurundjeri [Woi-Wurrung](#) and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation."

[Council Staff are encouraged to refer to the Acknowledgment Guidelines, for further consideration on adapting this Statement to match the document's purpose and role. Consideration may also be given to how the Acknowledgement is supported through the use of visual symbols as well as words.](#)

Deleted: Statement of Acknowledgement Guidelines

- 6.3 Council will include a [Statement of Acknowledgement on plaques displayed at Council facilities, when they are established or redeveloped. This plaque should be customised to the location of the facility and specify the Traditional Custodians of that land. At a minimum the plaque will read either:](#)

["Knox City Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of this place, the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation.", or](#)

["Knox City Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of this place, the Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation."](#)

7. Acknowledgement Guidelines

Who are the Traditional Owners in Knox?

[Knox is located on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong country at the foot of the Dandenong Ranges.](#)

[We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation as Traditional Custodians of the land in Knox.](#)

[Council acknowledges the Knox Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities come from a variety of different Nations within Australia including the Torres Strait, the Traditional Custodians. We also acknowledge people and families who are part of the Stolen Generation.](#)

[We pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past and present, who have lived in the area and been an integral part of the region's history.](#)

Acknowledgement of Country

- **[What is an Acknowledgement of Country?](#)**

[An Acknowledgement of Country is a way to show respect for Traditional Owners and the continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country.](#)

- **[Who can give an Acknowledgement to Country?](#)**

[An Acknowledgement of Country can be offered by anyone to show awareness and respect for the Aboriginal Traditional Owners of the land on which a meeting or event is being held.](#)

- **[When is an Acknowledgement of Country given?](#)**

[An Acknowledgement of Country is given at the beginning of a meeting event, speech, gathering taking place on land in Knox. It is important to mention the specific land you are meeting on, which is usually the Kulin Nation. Staff should view the RAP boundary map to find out what Country the meeting or event is taking place on. This ensures the right Traditional Owners are acknowledged and uses the full name of the Country in the Acknowledgement.](#)



- **Acknowledgement of Country example wording:**

The following is an example of an Acknowledgement of Country. Officers do not have to follow this script, however it is important to acknowledge the right Traditional Owners:

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

Depending on the location:

“Today we meet on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people”, or “Today we meet on the traditional lands of the Bunurong people.”

“The Knox Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities come from a variety of different Nations within Australia and Torres Strait, including the Traditional Custodians. This also includes members of the Stolen Generation and their families.

As such, we pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past and present, who have lived in the area and have been an integral part of the region’s history.”

- **Past examples of wording used by Knox City Council include:**

Knox City Council - Annual Report 2024:

“Knox City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation as Traditional Custodians of the land in Knox. The Knox Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities come from a variety of different nations within Australia including the Torres Strait, the Traditional Custodians and Stolen Generation. As such, we pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past and present, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the region’s histories.

Located at the foot of the Dandenong Ranges, Knox has many places of historic significance to the Kulin Nation. Important cultural and historical sites within Knox hold both the traditional knowledge of First Nations peoples and the traumatic stories of colonisation. The journey ahead for Knox involves the land, the Traditional Custodians, the local First Nations communities, the wider community and the Council itself. We will walk together and listen together to create a culturally safe and culturally rich community for all.

In 2021, Knox City Council announced an intention to promote a “whole of business” mindset, moving forward in its acknowledgement and respect of First Nations peoples, ensuring cross-functional collaboration as opportunities present themselves. In 2023, Knox Council adopted its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) identifying six focus areas: health and wellbeing, recognition and respect, employment and economic development, civic participation, cultural heritage and voice and governance.”

Yana djerring ba ngarrnga djerring* – Walking together and listening together.”

(*Woi-wurrung language used with permission of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation)

Welcome to Country

- **What is a Welcome to Country?**

A Welcome to Country is a traditional ceremony performed for thousands of years by Aboriginal Traditional Owners for people visiting their Country.



It is a speech to welcome you onto the land, asks you to show respect to the land, offers you the use of resources while on the land, and offers to keep you safe while on the land. Traditional dance and smoking ceremonies can also follow a Welcome to Country ceremony.

- **Who can give a Welcome to Country?**

The Welcome to Country is usually conducted by a community Elder or representative of the Traditional Owner group. Anyone who is not a Traditional Owner of the land on which the event is taking place cannot give a Welcome to Country.

- **When is a Welcome to Country is held?**

Elders are invited to give a Welcome to Country before significant public events, forums and functions.

- **How to organise a Welcome to Country:**

An Elder can be invited to attend significant events to deliver a Welcome to Country. This can be organised through external organisations Wurundjeri or Bunurong who provide cultural and educational services.

Smoking Ceremonies

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung description of Smoking Ceremonies:

“For thousands of years we have employed Smoking Ceremonies to cleanse places and people of bad spirits to promote the wellbeing of our people as well as guests on Country. Contemporary smoking ceremonies may involve a Wurundjeri Elder and/ or a younger Wurundjeri community member carrying a portable tarnuk (wooden dish) containing coals and wet leaves around assembled guests. Alternatively, guests may gather around a dedicated smoking site.

For full participation, those present will typically be invited to walk through the smoke for an individual cleansing. If requested, smoking ceremonies can form part of a larger Welcome ceremony.”

- **When is it appropriate for a Welcome to Country to include a Smoking Ceremony?**

A Smoking Ceremony is undertaken in Aboriginal communities in order to cleanse a space in which the ceremony takes place, so as to allow peace and recognise the importance of the occasion. The Smoking Ceremony is a purification ritual and is always undertaken by an Aboriginal Elder or an Aboriginal person with specialised spiritual and cultural knowledge. When conducted by the Traditional Custodian, the Smoking Ceremony is included as an addition of significance in a Welcome to Country.

It is not just the smoke that is important in the ceremony but also how the fire is lit and what is used to make it. Some Groups might only use a certain type of leaves or bark while others may interchange them depending on what the ceremony is for.

Given the significant nature of the ceremony, a Smoking Ceremony is usually only performed on special occasions or at major events, places of spiritual significance and at events regarded as appropriate by the Aboriginal community.

A Smoking Ceremony is not always appropriate for an event. Requests may need to be discussed with the Traditional Custodians or First Nations Community before confirmation is given.

The following events are where a Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony may be considered (but is not limited to):



- o Significant events involving State or Federal Government representatives;
- o Significant civic functions and launches;
- o Openings of new buildings and parks/spaces;
- o Major festivals and events where the City of Knox has provided significant sponsorship or grant funding; and
- o Other events, functions, ceremonies and meetings as deemed appropriate.

Aboriginal people may request a Smoking Ceremony in a workplace where a death or other traumatic event has occurred. This request is of tremendous significance to them and should be respected: failure to do so may cause significant distress.

It should be noted that a Smoking Ceremony is more appropriate for outdoor occasions due to ventilation requirements and smoke detector isolation for building that may be affected is advisable.

8. Administrative Updates

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

Deleted: The associated Statement of Acknowledgement Guidelines Acknowledgement will be updated based on consultation with the traditional custodian groups and local First Nations community. These will demonstrate respectful options and approaches to customising a meaningful Acknowledgement to Country.¶



Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians Policy

Policy Number:	2005/17	Directorate:	Connected Communities
Approval by:	Council	Responsible Officer:	Manager, Community Wellbeing
Approval Date:	TBC	Version Number:	5
Review Date:	3 years from meeting date		

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to provide direction to Councillors and Council staff for the acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians at Council meetings, Council Committees, Council and Civic Events, Corporate Council documents and establishment of plaques on Council facilities. This Policy also includes Acknowledgement Guidelines to further expand, educate and contextualise how Council can respectfully acknowledge Traditional Owners and Country at events, meetings, in statements and significant occasions.

Council adopted the Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians Policy in 2004 as part of its journey towards establishing a Reconciliation Action Plan. Acknowledgement of Country is included on our gateway signage and documents.

2. Context

Wherever Councillors or Council staff meet, work, hold events or provide facilities in Knox, they are on the land of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong people. The Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians is a way for Council to promote greater community awareness about the history of First Nations peoples, and to demonstrate leadership and respect for their continuing connection to the land.

There are a range of ways in which Council and/or Council staff may provide this Acknowledgement. This Policy aims to define the circumstances in which it is appropriate for Council to provide an Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians, and to outline the minimum expectations in how this is delivered.

Acknowledgment Guidelines (see Section 7 of this Policy) have been developed in partnership with the First Nations communities to provide additional support and guidance to Councillors and Council staff for a range of cultural ceremonies that properly reflects each situation or circumstance. This approach allows for the Acknowledgement of Country to be tailored and meaningful to a specific location or audience, in a way that is cultural-sensitive and supported by Elders.

While Knox includes two Traditional Custodian groups, all locations within Knox will either be the land of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people or the land of the Bunurong people. Respectful practice in speeches, openings or



plaques and other signage is to acknowledge the particular land one is speaking on by confirming the boundaries on the Registered Aboriginal Parties map (Victoria).

3. Scope

This Policy applies to staff and Councillors involved in Council meetings, Council Committees, Council and Civic Events and in the development of Corporate Council documents and plaques for new and upgraded Council facilities as described in Section 5 (Definitions) of this Policy.

Council staff and Councillors are encouraged to use at their own discretion an Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians at meetings and events that fall outside of this Policy.

4. References

- 4.1 Community & Council Plan 2021-25
 - Connection, resilience and wellbeing
 - Civic engagement and integrity
- 4.2 Relevant Legislation
 - Local Government Act 2020 – Conflict and Interest Provisions
 - Aboriginal Heritage Amendment Act 2016
- 4.3 Charter of Human Rights
 - This Policy has been assessed against and complies with the Charter of Human Rights which protects the cultural rights of First Nations people, including the right to enjoy and express language, culture, customs, and heritage without discrimination.
- 4.4 Related Council Policies
 - Council Committees Policy
 - Council Meeting Structure and Cycle Policy
 - Memorials Policy
- 4.5 Related Council Procedures
 - Nil

5. Definitions

Council	Knox City Council, whether constituted before or after the commencement of this Policy.
Council staff	Staff that are employed by Knox City Council.
Council Meeting	Meetings of Council.
Council Committees	As defined in the Council Committees Policy and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory Committees • Special Committees – as formally appointed under section 86 of the Local Government Act. Council currently has one Special Committee, the Strategic Planning Committee • Specific Purpose Committees • Working Groups



Council and Civic Events	<p>Major events, festivals and openings hosted by Council, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major Festivals and events including - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knox Community Awards; - Citizenship Ceremonies; - Knox Festival; - Carols by Candlelight; - Sorry Day Flag Raising Ceremony; - Pets in the Park; - And official Opening ceremonies.
Corporate Council documents	<p>Important council documents and digital assets, which includes:</p> <p>Tier 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Strategic Statement; • Community and Council Plan 2021-25; • Council's Annual Report; • State of Knox; • Structure Plans; and • Other Council implementation plans, action plans or strategies. <p>Tier 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knox City Council Digital Assets – Website home page and social media where appropriate; • Knox News; • Major Festivals and Events Programs; and • Council E-newsletter templates.
Plaques	Plaques developed for new and upgraded Council facilities.

6. Council Policy

- 6.1 Council and Council Staff will provide a verbal Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians at the commencement of Meetings of Council, Council Committee meetings and Council and Civic Events. At a minimum this could include:

“We acknowledge that Knox City Council is on the traditional land of the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation and pay our respects to elders both past and present.”

Further advice is provided under Section 7, Acknowledgement Guidelines including recommendations on tailoring the Acknowledgment to the place upon which the meeting or event is held. This could take the form of an additional sentence as follows:

“Today we meet on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung people”, or
 “Today we meet on the traditional lands of the Bunurong people.”

- 6.2 Council will include a Statement of Acknowledgement in corporate Council documents as defined in Section 5 of this Policy (Definitions). This will be included as a stand-alone Statement, and at a minimum could include:



“Knox City Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the City of Knox, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation.”

Council Staff are encouraged to refer to the Acknowledgment Guidelines, for further consideration on adapting this Statement to match the document’s purpose and role. Consideration may also be given to how the Acknowledgement is supported through the use of visual symbols as well as words.

- 6.3 Council will include a Statement of Acknowledgement on plaques displayed at Council facilities, when they are established or redeveloped. This plaque should be customised to the location of the facility and specify the Traditional Custodians of that land. At a minimum the plaque will read either:

“Knox City Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of this place, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation.”, or

“Knox City Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of this place, the Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation.”

7. Acknowledgement Guidelines

Who are the Traditional Owners in Knox?

Knox is located on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong country at the foot of the Dandenong Ranges.

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation as Traditional Custodians of the land in Knox.

Council acknowledges the Knox Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities come from a variety of different Nations within Australia including the Torres Strait, the Traditional Custodians. We also acknowledge people and families who are part of the Stolen Generation.

We pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past and present, who have lived in the area and been an integral part of the region’s history.

Acknowledgement of Country

- **What is an Acknowledgement of Country?**

An Acknowledgement of Country is a way to show respect for Traditional Owners and the continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country.

- **Who can give an Acknowledgement to Country?**

An Acknowledgement of Country can be offered by anyone to show awareness and respect for the Aboriginal Traditional Owners of the land on which a meeting or event is being held.

- **When is an Acknowledgement of Country given?**

An Acknowledgement of Country is given at the beginning of a meeting event, speech, gathering taking place on land in Knox. It is important to mention the specific land you are meeting on, which is usually the Kulin Nation. Staff should view the [RAP boundary map](#) to find out what Country the meeting or event is taking place on. This ensures the right Traditional Owners are acknowledged and uses the full name of the Country in the Acknowledgement.



- **Acknowledgement of Country example wording:**

The following is an example of an Acknowledgement of Country. Officers do not have to follow this script, however it is important to acknowledge the right Traditional Owners:

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

Depending on the location:

“Today we meet on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people”, or “Today we meet on the traditional lands of the Bunurong people.”

“The Knox Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities come from a variety of different Nations within Australia and Torres Strait, including the Traditional Custodians. This also includes members of the Stolen Generation and their families.

As such, we pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past and present, who have lived in the area and have been an integral part of the region’s history.”

- **Past examples of wording used by Knox City Council include:**

Knox City Council - Annual Report 2024:

“Knox City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation as Traditional Custodians of the land in Knox. The Knox Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities come from a variety of different nations within Australia including the Torres Strait, the Traditional Custodians and Stolen Generation. As such, we pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past and present, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the region’s histories.

Located at the foot of the Dandenong Ranges, Knox has many places of historic significance to the Kulin Nation. Important cultural and historical sites within Knox hold both the traditional knowledge of First Nations peoples and the traumatic stories of colonisation. The journey ahead for Knox involves the land, the Traditional Custodians, the local First Nations communities, the wider community and the Council itself. We will walk together and listen together to create a culturally safe and culturally rich community for all.

In 2021, Knox City Council announced an intention to promote a “whole of business” mindset, moving forward in its acknowledgement and respect of First Nations peoples, ensuring cross-functional collaboration as opportunities present themselves. In 2023, Knox Council adopted its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) identifying six focus areas: health and wellbeing, recognition and respect, employment and economic development, civic participation, cultural heritage and voice and governance.”

Yana djerring ba ngarrnga djerring* – Walking together and listening together.”

(*Woi-wurrung language used with permission of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation)

Welcome to Country

- **What is a Welcome to Country?**

A Welcome to Country is a traditional ceremony performed for thousands of years by Aboriginal Traditional Owners for people visiting their Country.



It is a speech to welcome you onto the land, asks you to show respect to the land, offers you the use of resources while on the land, and offers to keep you safe while on the land. Traditional dance and smoking ceremonies can also follow a Welcome to Country ceremony.

- **Who can give a Welcome to Country?**
The Welcome to Country is usually conducted by a community Elder or representative of the Traditional Owner group. Anyone who is not a Traditional Owner of the land on which the event is taking place cannot give a Welcome to Country.
- **When is a Welcome to Country is held?**
Elders are invited to give a Welcome to Country before significant public events, forums and functions.
- **How to organise a Welcome to Country:**
An Elder can be invited to attend significant events to deliver a Welcome to Country. This can be organised through external organisations Wurundjeri or Bunurong who provide cultural and educational services.

Smoking Ceremonies

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung description of Smoking Ceremonies:

“For thousands of years we have employed Smoking Ceremonies to cleanse places and people of bad spirits to promote the wellbeing of our people as well as guests on Country. Contemporary smoking ceremonies may involve a Wurundjeri Elder and/ or a younger Wurundjeri community member carrying a portable tarnuk (wooden dish) containing coals and wet leaves around assembled guests. Alternatively, guests may gather around a dedicated smoking site.

For full participation, those present will typically be invited to walk through the smoke for an individual cleansing. If requested, smoking ceremonies can form part of a larger Welcome ceremony.”

- **When is it appropriate for a Welcome to Country to include a Smoking Ceremony?**
A Smoking Ceremony is undertaken in Aboriginal communities in order to cleanse a space in which the ceremony takes place, so as to allow peace and recognise the importance of the occasion. The Smoking Ceremony is a purification ritual and is always undertaken by an Aboriginal Elder or an Aboriginal person with specialised spiritual and cultural knowledge. When conducted by the Traditional Custodian, the Smoking Ceremony is included as an addition of significance in a Welcome to Country.

It is not just the smoke that is important in the ceremony but also how the fire is lit and what is used to make it. Some Groups might only use a certain type of leaves or bark while others may interchange them depending on what the ceremony is for.

Given the significant nature of the ceremony, a Smoking Ceremony is usually only performed on special occasions or at major events, places of spiritual significance and at events regarded as appropriate by the Aboriginal community.

A Smoking Ceremony is not always appropriate for an event. Requests may need to be discussed with the Traditional Custodians or First Nations Community before confirmation is given.

The following events are where a Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony may be considered (but is not limited to):



- Significant events involving State or Federal Government representatives;
- Significant civic functions and launches;
- Openings of new buildings and parks/spaces;
- Major festivals and events where the City of Knox has provided significant sponsorship or grant funding; and
- Other events, functions, ceremonies and meetings as deemed appropriate.

Aboriginal people may request a Smoking Ceremony in a workplace where a death or other traumatic event has occurred. This request is of tremendous significance to them and should be respected: failure to do so may cause significant distress.

It should be noted that a Smoking Ceremony is more appropriate for outdoor occasions due to ventilation requirements and smoke detector isolation for building that may be affected is advisable.

8. Administrative Updates

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

8.6 Contract 3299: Kindergartens in Knox

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Decision
Author	Robyn Renkema, Early Years Strategic Projects Lead
Manager:	Sarah Kleine, Manager Family and Children’s Services
Executive:	Judy Chalkley, Director Connected Communities

SUMMARY

Council resolved in August 2023 to cease being an Early Years Manager (EYM) and an approved provider of sessional kindergarten (outside its two Hubs) by December 2024. Council values and supports the ongoing provision of sessional kindergarten in the Knox municipality, and to this end further resolved to make available 26 existing standalone kindergarten facilities to non-Council kindergarten service providers to provide sessional kindergarten as of 1 January 2025. This new arrangement brings Council in line with the sessional kindergarten operational model of most comparable local government areas in Victoria.

Primarily the Victorian Government is responsible for leading the delivery of education and development of services to children, through funding inclusive of “Free Kinder”, policy setting, and regulating the provision of kindergarten, in both sessional and long day care settings. In Council’s capacity as an infrastructure owner, it will lease existing stand-alone sessional kindergarten infrastructure to non-Council providers in response to our community expectations. This will ensure access to a mixed market of kindergarten to support free, quality early learning stand-alone sessional kindergarten to Knox families.

Council officers have undertaken an extensive procurement process, shadowed by the Victorian Government Department of Education to secure suitable non-Council sessional kindergarten providers to provide high quality kindergarten to the children of Knox. Given the scale and scope of the procurement, an independent Probity Advisor, Hunt & Hunt Lawyers was engaged to ensure that good governance protocols were utilised throughout the process.

A two-stage procurement (tender) process, in-line with Council’s Procurement Policy, commenced with a Stage 1 Expression of Interest publicly advertised in October 2023. Nine conforming applications were received from sessional kindergarten providers who were then invited to submit their application to the Stage 2 Request for Proposal. Stage 2 commenced February 2024 and eight conforming applications were received, one sessional kindergarten provider subsequently withdrawing at this time.

The Stage 2 Request for Proposal process (including an information session, site visits, clarification and negotiation meetings, reference and financial checks) was conducted through March to June 2024. The Evaluation Panel has recommended five service providers, a mix of EYM’s and independent sessional kindergarten providers for the provision of high-quality sessional kindergarten from Council sessional kindergarten facilities (per Confidential Attachment 1). The Victorian Government Department of Education will grant service approvals (licenses) for these providers to operate stand –alone sessional kindergarten from leased kindergarten buildings commencing 1 January 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolves to:

1. Accept the tender submitted by the appointed Early Years Managers and independent providers (per Confidential Attachment 1) for the leasing of Council kindergarten facilities under *Contract 3299: Provision of Sessional Kindergarten in Council Facilities*.
2. Note the statutory process regarding the lease of land has been completed in accordance with Section 115 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
3. Enter into a lease for the kindergarten buildings listed for the terms outlined (per Confidential Attachment 1), for the purpose of providing sessional kindergarten services to the appointed tenderers. The annual rent payable is \$450 (including GST), increasing by 4% on the anniversary of the agreement, plus outgoings.
4. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person as the Chief Executive Officer delegates) to negotiate and execute all required leases.
5. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person the Chief Executive Officer delegates) as per Section 125 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, to communicate the content of the confidential attachments to the extent necessary at their discretion, including for the purpose of informing staff and the community about the content of the report and/or Council's decisions.
6. Note that following the execution of the lease:
 - a. Communications to announce appointed providers (tenants) and sites will commence, to staff, families and the wider community.
 - b. Council and the appointed providers (tenants) will apply to the Victorian Government Department of Education for transfer of service. The appointed providers will apply for service funding approval to commence kindergarten service provision from 1 January 2025.
 - c. Officers will commence discussions with appointed providers to explore future opportunities for Council's existing kindergarten workforce.
 - d. Officers will commence transition activities to ensure kindergarten service provision can commence from 1 January 2025.
 - e. Council will formally relinquish its role as an Early Years Manager with the Victorian Government Department of Education as of 31 December 2024.
 - f. Council will focus on its role as municipal planner and infrastructure owner and collaborate with non-Council providers to support continued access to quality early childhood education for the children and families of Knox.

1. DISCUSSION

1.1 Background

On 14 August 2023 at a meeting of Council, Council formally resolved to refocus its role as municipal planner, by remaining a sessional kindergarten provider within its two Early Years Hubs only and to cease to be a provider for all other sessional kindergartens from 1 January 2025. To this end, Council further resolved in its capacity as an infrastructure owner to work with the Department of Education to make available its 26 existing stand-alone kindergarten facilities to non-Council kindergarten service providers to enable the ongoing provision of stand-alone sessional kindergarten to the Knox community. A procurement (tender) process was undertaken to achieve this resolution.

In Victoria, sessional kindergarten programs are delivered through two different organisational structures. EYM organisations (not-for-profits that manage a minimum of three kindergarten sites) and independent providers (volunteer-run not-for-profits that manage up to two sites). Not-for-

profit, community focused Early Years Managers and independent providers, whose core business is the delivery of early years services, typically have low overhead structure and more agile decision-making capacity than local councils, placing them well in the context of the Best Start, Best Life reforms to deliver the kinds of services and flexibility valued by the community.

Both kinds of organisations are licenced and funded by the Victorian Government Department of Education and are positioned well to provide innovative sessional kindergarten service into the future that are flexible and responsive to changing family needs.

1.2 Procurement (Tender) Process

While the commencement date for the leases will be 1 January 2025, a significant transition period will be required to turn over the facilities to the incoming kindergarten providers. This process requires an early award decision to allow for discussions on workforce opportunities as well as the planning and execution of operational transition. As such the procurement (tender) process commenced immediately following Council's August 2023 decision, with applications initially opening in late 2023 with the aim of execution of leases for kindergarten buildings by mid-2024.

Council as an infrastructure owner will lease existing stand-alone sessional kindergarten infrastructure, ensuring access to kindergarten for Knox families. The Victorian Government is responsible for ongoing funding and regulating the provision of the kindergartens, to support free, quality early learning stand-alone sessional kindergarten to Knox families. The Victorian Government Department of Education via a dedicated Strategic Project Officer has shadowed Council's procurement (tender) process, to ensure recommended service providers are suitable for the provision of kindergarten, meeting the health safety and wellbeing of children under the *Education and Care Service National Law 2010* and Regulations and the Kindergarten Funding Guidelines.

The two-stage procurement (tender) process was undertaken in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy. This process was identified as appropriate, allowing for a broad variety of potential providers to be identified; followed by a more rigorous and selective evaluation process to refine selection.

A Procurement Plan was prepared prior to each procurement engagement and endorsed by the Probity Advisor engaged, Hunt & Hunt Lawyers. In line with best practice, an Evaluation Report was produced at the end of both stages of the procurement processes. The Probity Advisor, Hunt & Hunt Lawyers, has provided two reports endorsing that the process was conducted appropriately and to the Advisor's satisfaction (per Confidential Attachment 1 and 2).

The Stage 1 Expression of Interest process was publicly advertised on 29 October 2023. The process revealed considerable market interest, with nine compliant responses. All nine applicants were evaluated according to the pre-approved evaluation criteria outlined in Table 1 below as appropriate to be invited to submit a further application to Council's Stage 2 Request for Proposal. The Stage 2 process was an invitation only process and opened on 21 February 2024. Eight conforming responses as per Confidential Attachment 2 were received by the closing date of 15 March 2024.

The Stage 2 Request for Proposal process occurred from February to June 2024 and comprised an

information session; site visits; clarifications and negotiation meetings; and reference and financial checks. The Evaluation Panel assessed each applicant against the pre-established criteria in Table 2 below with the completed assessment matrix attached to the Evaluation Report (per Confidential Attachment 1 - Request for Proposal Evaluation Report). Each panel member was required to determine their own individual score for each evaluation criteria. At subsequent meetings, individual scores were collated, and consensus scores agreed on.

All Request for Proposal applications were deemed compliant. All applicants are existing sessional kindergarten approved providers and have funding approval through the Victorian Government Department of Education and operate other sessional kindergartens in Victoria. All EYM applicants have been assessed and rated through Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) whilst the independent providers await this assessment to be completed.

1.3 Evaluation Methodology and Criteria

Table 1 and 2 outline the mandatory and comparative evaluation criteria and weighting used across the two-stage procurement (tender) process. Different criteria were used for each stage. This allowed for a broad variety of appropriate and high-quality providers to be identified in the first stage, followed by a more rigorous and selective evaluation process to refine the selection to the recommended providers.

Table 1 – Stage 1 Expression of Interest - Comparative Evaluation Criteria and Weighting

Mandatory Criteria	Pass / Fail
Financial Solvency	Pass/Fail
Organisation’s compliance with relevant legislation and regulations, including but not necessarily limited to Occupational Health and Safety, Child Safe Standards, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), Working with Children and Child Safety Laws and associated standards.	Pass/Fail
Appropriate levels of insurance or ability to obtain if successful - Public Liability \$20 Million; Professional Indemnity \$2 Million; Workcover	Pass / Fail
Criteria	Evidence Requested to Satisfy Criteria
Early Childhood Management Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current services and performance/quality ratings. • Governance and decision-making structures. • Employment practice including professional development. • Ability to meet legislative requirements.
Business Plan and Proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current/proposed service delivery model including timetables and access to free kindergarten. Include information on how the State Reform will be met. • Vision and Plan for business over the next 1-3 years and 4+years.

Financial Investment Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most recent annual report and audited financial statements
Benefits to the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to provide additional benefits for the local community. • Commitment to culturally safe practices that value all communities including but not limited to First Nations and CALD communities.

Table 1 and 2 show some differences in the two service provider models (EYM and independent). As such, while all applicants were assessed against the same criteria, different evidence was requested from each cohort of provider.

Table 2 - Stage 2 Request for Proposal - Comparative Evaluation Criteria (and Weighting)

Criteria	Evidence requested to satisfy criteria
Financial – to minimise risk to service provision in Knox by ensuring sound business planning and ongoing financial viability.	<p><u>Both EYM & Independent</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of appropriate management of staff entitlements including portable leave scheme and adequate provisions for staff entitlements. • How finances are managed (each site or as a group; dedicated bookkeeper or admin for each site, 2024 budget).
	<p><u>EYM Only</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024 budget, including a sample budget from an existing site.
	<p><u>Independent Only</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to date reporting to ACNC or CAV and DE • Appropriate AGM and records thereof • 2023 financial information where not previously provided.
Governance – Providers are operating appropriately.	<p><u>Both EYM & Independent</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any existing compliance actions or issues in relation to services you currently manage. • Staff conditions including evidence of which award used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Including signature to upcoming VECTEA bargaining if relevant. ➢ Evidence if award is a VECTEA mirror. • Examples of notifiable incidents in the last three years, including what, if anything, was changed at the service in response. (Notifiable incidents will not eliminate an applicant; seeking evidence to meet regulatory requirements, reflect and implement necessary changes).
	<p><u>EYM Only</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Note this was extensively addressed by EYM's in</i>

Criteria	Evidence requested to satisfy criteria
	<p><i>the Expression of Interest and information from DE will form the bulk of information for this criterion.</i></p> <p><u>Independent Only</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with constitution/model rules and regulations including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Regular CoM meetings that are appropriately minuted. ➤ Evidence of performance management mechanisms including staff support, professional development and mechanisms for addressing any issues. ➤ Membership of appropriate industry bodies and use of policies such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA) ▪ Community Early Learning Australia (CELA)
<p>Proposals – Planning and management of each site is appropriately developed, and the provider is likely to make a contribution to the wider Knox community.</p>	<p><u>Both EYM & Independent</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to deliver high-quality sessional kindergartens in Council’s facilities including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Specific plans for each site applied for (as per the template attached to the application form). ➤ Policies in place and how this is monitored. ➤ Quality Improvement Plan and evidence of its use. ➤ Plans to encourage and continue community support including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fundraising, working bees etc. • Other community activities. <p><u>EYM Only</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the EYM’s works with Parent Advisory Groups. <p><u>Independent Only</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong Committee recruitment practices.
<p>References – The providers have satisfied customers.</p>	<p><u>Both EYM & Independent</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two referees contacted. For EYMs, one had to be another Local Government. • Family feedback if applicable. • Department of Education feedback.

The evaluation process achieved consensus scores for all applicants as recorded in the consensus assessment matrix contained in the Request for Proposal Evaluation Report (per Confidential Attachment 1).

1.4 Recommended Kindergarten Service Providers

With all clarifications, referee checks and financial assessments completed, the Evaluation Panel reviewed all information and provided scores for each applicant against the established criteria. The Evaluation Panel's final meeting discussed and determined the consensus scores.

The Request for Proposal Evaluation Report (per Confidential Attachment 1) contains further detail on the Evaluation Panel's conclusions that these recommended providers demonstrate the ability to successfully deliver sessional kindergarten to the Knox community for the term of their lease. All five service providers provided strong evidence they fully understood and meet the requirements for sessional kindergarten services in Knox, under the guidance of the *Education and Care Service National Law Act 2010, Regulations* and the Kindergarten Funding Guidelines.

The EYM's provided evidence of strong governance models to support kindergarten workforce to deliver quality early childhood kindergarten programs. The EYM's have many kindergartens within their organisations, as such have been assessed and rated, ranging from Not Yet Assessed though to Exceeding, by ACECQA, a national consistent and mandatory assessment and rating system.

The independent providers provided strong evidence of their long history of providing sessional kindergarten in Knox, strong community connections and an on-going commitment to build their kindergarten community by offering both 3 and 4-year-old kindergarten from 2025. The independent providers showed commitment to the continuous improvement of their governance models and support for their kindergarten workforce to deliver quality early learning programs to children of Knox. The independent providers are yet to be assessed and rated by ACECQA as they gained their national license to operate kindergarten under a year ago, however, have been operating under Victorian license requirements as community managed kindergartens not requiring assessment and rating for many years in Knox as reputable providers.

All recommended providers have been reviewed by the Victorian Government Department of Education as suitable approved providers and have current funding approval to provide free sessional kindergarten.

The unsuccessful tenderers scored significantly below the recommended providers in their cohort and were eliminated by the Evaluation Panel on that basis. Execution of the leases with the five recommended providers will ensure that the Knox community continues to access high-quality sessional kindergarten services. The recommended providers ensure a mixed market provision, allowing families a variety of choice.

1.5 Tender Evaluation Report

A signed Evaluation Report for Stage 2 Request for Proposal (per Confidential Attachment 1) outlines:

- The processes undertaken, including:
 - Site visits and information session;
 - Clarifications process and reference gathering; and
 - The Evaluation Panel meetings and scores.
- Key governance arrangements including:
 - The Probity Advisor;
 - Conflict of interest; and
 - Confidentiality arrangements.

- The final consensus matrix assessment and summation of the evaluation outcomes for each applicant.
- The methodology and discussions employed to determine the allocation of individual kindergarten sites to recommended providers.

All recommended providers have been appropriately screened to ensure they are able to meet the stringent requirements of the *Education and Care Service National Law Act 2010* and Regulations and the Kindergarten Funding Guidelines, including ensuring the health, safety, and wellbeing of children.

1.6 Lease Arrangements

Maddocks Lawyers were engaged to draft an appropriate lease agreement to allow non-Council kindergarten providers to operate out of Council's early years facilities. In accordance with Councils Leasing and Licensing Policy a lease agreement was chosen. A small number of terms in the leases vary between EYM's and independent providers in recognition of their differing risk profiles.

Knox's lease agreement includes a "Building Maintenance Framework", developed by Council officers through consultation across several Directorates including Facilities and Parks and Gardens. This Framework in the lease outlines Council (Landlord) and the Service Providers (Tenants) ongoing responsibilities for managing the facilities over the term of the lease and brings Knox in line with other LGA's. The tenants will now be responsible for annual rent at \$450, utilities, waste, cleaning and gardening costs for each leased site. Council will continue to maintain and be responsible for co-located sites that house, i.e. Maternal Child Health Services and Playgroups, Council sharing the costs with the non- Council kindergarten tenants.

All leases are conditional on the Victorian Government Department of Education's consent to transfer service approvals from Knox Council to the incoming providers. Council officers have been liaising with DE throughout the process to ensure this transfer is well understood and can commence once leases are signed.

Broad agreement on the lease has been reached with all recommended providers. These negotiations will be completed, and leases prepared for execution, should Council endorse the recommendations. When leases are signed by both parties, they will ensure 18 sessional kindergarten facilities currently in operation will continue operation with incoming providers from 1 January 2025.

1.7 Suspended Sessional Kindergarten Facilities

Knox Council assets include 28 kindergarten facilities, inclusive of the two early years Hubs, and 26 standalone sessional kindergarten facilities. Of these 26 standalone facilities, 18 are currently operating; the remaining eight sites are suspended due to declining enrolments. All 26 facilities were offered for consideration as part of this two stage procurement (tender) process.

Recommended EYMs initially indicated interest in the suspended sites from 2026, when demographics and the Victorian Government reforms were likely to increase demand. However, the Victorian State Budget 2024-25 (released May 2024) announced a delay to the kindergarten reforms by pushing the commencement date for doubling of 4-year-old hours out a further five years to 2036. This will decrease the demand for sessional kindergarten in Knox across the life of

the initial lease (which will expire ahead of 2036). Following this budget announcement, the EYMs withdrew their interest to enter lease arrangements for any suspended sites at this time.

Council officers will continue to consider the best future management options for these suspended sites. The following strategic work is already underway and will influence future decisions for infrastructure needs:

- Understanding patterns of demand and supply: Council will review its Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan in collaboration with the Victorian Government Department of Education prior to December 2025. This will provide a clearer picture of the municipality's requirements over the next decade considering the changes to the reform roll out.
- Council has recently commenced work on a Strategic Property Prioritisation Framework. This framework will support Council's ability to plan and prioritise its management of the asset portfolio by providing a strategic, long-term approach to asset management. Council will be better able to proactively and strategically identify land and buildings that are surplus to needs or present alternative value-add opportunities.

2. ENGAGEMENT

Significant public consultation was undertaken ahead of Council's decision on 14 August 2023. Consultation for this subsequent process has been narrower and focussed on ensuring recommended providers are suitably qualified to deliver high-quality sessional services in the Knox context.

The Stage 1 Expression of Interest process was advertised in The Saturday Age, to ensure a wide variety of potential providers were identified. The Stage 2 Request for Proposal was by invitation only but included more engagement to ensure applicants were informed about the Knox-specific context. Engagement overall has been conducted between February 2024 and June 2024 and included an information session, site visits, clarification meetings, reference, financial checks and negotiation meetings.

Current and future families and the Knox community have been kept informed at key milestones through the project via media releases.

The Victorian Government Department of Education via a dedicated Strategic Project officer has shadowed Council's procurement (tender) process, meeting at key milestones throughout the procurement process to ensure appointed service providers are suitable for the provision of kindergarten, meeting the health safety and wellbeing of children under the *Education and Care Service National Law 2010* and Regulations and the Kindergarten Funding Guidelines. The Victorian Government Department of Education's feedback was provided to the Evaluation Panel.

2.1 Knox Kindergarten Workforce

Council kindergarten staff have been provided with support services and appropriate updates as this procurement (tender) process has progressed. Should Council accept the recommendations in this paper and accept the leases proposed under Contract 3299, Council is committed to supporting staff and transitioning the kindergarten service to the recommended providers.

Once the terms and conditions of occupancy are fully settled for recommended providers, discussions can commence on workforce opportunities for existing kindergarten staff. Officers will

update kindergarten staff once recommended providers have signed leases. Council will work with all potentially impacted kindergarten staff to ensure we fulfil Council's industrial obligations and legislative requirements.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Broad community engagement activities undertaken in 2023 with children and families demonstrated that Knox sessional kindergartens are highly valued. They are seen as providing quality staff, strong kindergarten programs and enhancing community connections and relationships. The Community Panel undertaken in 2023 highlighted opportunities for Council to build on and enhance these existing strengths if the facilities were leased to other providers. These include (though are not limited) to:

- Centralising registration and enrolment – a best practice model for local Councils and other organisations to support families and carers to secure a kindergarten place for their children.
- Municipal planning – Council can focus on municipal-wide trends in supply and demand, coordinate a strategic approach to the reform roll out and support the delivery of quality early years services.
- Providing suitable facilities – the environment where children are educated and cared for, where they play, learn and interact makes an important contribution to the quality of experiences.

The five recommended providers will ensure a mixed market and that the families of Knox have access to high-quality sessional kindergartens. Quality early childhood education is critical to the future of Knox's youngest citizens. Council can focus on its role as municipal planner and infrastructure owner as qualified, high-quality sessional kindergarten providers deliver on-the-ground education.

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

Implementation of the recommendations are considered to have no direct implications or has no direct impact on environmental issues.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Due to the nature of the lease arrangement, no money will flow from Council to the tenderers. The annual rent payable by the kindergarten service provider (tenant) is \$450 (including GST), increasing by 4% on the anniversary of the agreement, plus outgoings.

The below outgoings are the responsibility of the tenant:

- Utilities, cleaning and gardening and for each site leased.
- Maintenance, Rates (Fire Services Levy), rubbish and waste removal for each site leased.
- Whilst the tenant is responsible for Rates, they are able to apply for a Rate exemption.

Council will continue to pay the Essential Safety Service, utilities and cleaning for common areas of the buildings shared with Maternal Child Health and Playgroups.

No additional expenditure from Council is expected following execution to the lease. Changes in expenditure have been anticipated in the existing Council budget.

Financial implications from the workforce changes will not be finalised until future opportunity discussions with incoming providers have concluded: these discussions cannot commence until the leases are executed.

Financial checks have been undertaken on the recommended providers via Equifax to ensure ongoing financial viability and probity.

7. RISKS

Leases must be executed prior to the commencement of a regulatory process with the Victorian Government Department of Education to transfer service approval from Council to incoming providers. This process is subject to regulatory timelines. Signature of the leases ensures that these processes can commence in time for incoming providers to commence on 1 January 2025.

Finalising negotiations under CEO delegation will minimise the risk of delays.

8. KNOX COMMUNITY AND COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025

Opportunity & Innovation

Strategy 1.2 - Encourage and support opportunities for skills development and lifelong learning for all people in Knox.

Connection, Resilience & Wellbeing

Strategy 4.2 - Foster inclusivity, equality, belonging and safety within the community.

Strategy 4.4 - Support the community to identify and lead community strengthening initiatives.

Civic Engagement & Integrity

Strategy 5.2 - Manage our resources effectively to ensure financial sustainability and improved customer experience.

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.

The negotiated leases include clauses relating to Child Safe Standards to ensure tenants are aware of their legislated and regulatory requirements.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

Attachment 1 and 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:

- Council business information (that will prejudice Council's position when negotiating these contracts if prematurely released).
- Legal privileged information, (being confidential communication between Council and its lawyer created for the dominant purpose of the lawyer providing legal advice to Council).
- Confidential meeting information (being the records of the Evaluation Panel's various meetings that were closed to the public).

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

8.7 Contract 3353: Cyclic Arboricultural Services

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Decision
Author:	Project Officer Trees, Teri Hawke
Manager:	Manager Green Spaces & Environment, Andrew Dodd
Executive:	Director, Infrastructure, Grant Thorne

SUMMARY

This report evaluates and recommends the appointment of a contractor for the delivery of proactive street tree maintenance services under Contract 3353 – Cyclic Arboricultural Services. This contract will commence 23 July 2024 and continue until 22 July 2026 with no extension options.

The scope of works includes proactive tree auditing, pruning, and removal, with an emphasis on supporting Knox Councils Urban Forest. This contracted tree maintenance service is primarily compliance based, with a key focus on adhering to specific vegetation clearances aligning to power lines a key focus.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to:

1. Award Contract 3353 - Cyclic Arboricultural Services, to Active Tree Services Pty Ltd (ABN 56 002 919 299), as a lump sum program, for a period of two (2) years, commencing 23 July 2024 until 22 July 2026.
2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person they nominate) to formalise and execute all required contract documentation.
3. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person they nominate) to execute all parts of this contract including CPI increase; and
4. Advise all tenderers accordingly.

1. DISCUSSION

Council currently manages approximately 72,000 street trees and 780 hectares of treed open space, embodying the leafy green image of Knox. The Electrical Line Clearance Regulations (2020) and Council's Street Tree Asset Management Plan require that all trees are maintained to specified clearances from infrastructure such as power lines and service cables.

Risk management principals, Council insurance requirements and best practice guidelines mandate the inspection of street trees and reserve trees on a cyclic basis. Council currently inspects all street trees biennially under the Proactive Zone Pruning Program. These inspections generate works to mitigate identified risks and ensure compliance with the regulatory requirements mentioned above.

Contract 3353 replaces the proactive (cyclic) portion of contract 2967, Pruning and General Arboricultural Services, which was awarded for an initial term of two years from 1 July 2022 to 1

July 2024, with an option to extend for two additional two-year terms. This contract had a pro-active cyclic component with a lump sum cost and a reactive schedule of rates component.

The extension options were not awarded for the cyclic portion of this contract due to the cost increases. However, the reactive component (schedule of rates) of the current contract was extended, as costs remained in line with expectations.

1.1. Proposed Works/Services

The proposed contract is to undertake the following pro-active arboriculture maintenance activities throughout the municipality, under specific categories.

I.D	Name	Description
A	Wire Clearance	Pruning around power lines to clearance thresholds under the Electrical Line Clearance Regulations (2020)
B	General Pruning	Pruning of tree limbs including weight reduction, crown lifting and limb pruning as well as tree removal
C	Formative Pruning	Shaping less mature trees to improve structure and form
D	Live Line	Pruning under high voltage, live line power lines under the Electrical Line Clearance Regulations (2020)

1.2. Advertising of Public Tender

Council advertised a public tender for this contract on the 30 March 2024, in accordance with Councils Procurement Policy and approved Procurement Plan. The tender closed on 29 April 2024.

The following tenders were received for all categories advertised:

- Active Tree Services Pty Ltd
- DNA Tree Services Pty Ltd
- Envirotree Pty Ltd
- Tree Serve Pty Ltd

One submission (Envirotree Pty Ltd), was deemed non-conforming as it did not meet the requirements of the tender process according to the released specification. Consequently, they were not included in the assessment process.

1.3. Tender Evaluation Panel

The tender evaluation panel consisted of the following members:

Title	Department
Coordinator Urban Forest and City Presentation	Green Space and Environment
Project Officer Drainage	Engineering Services & Operations
Project Officer Arboriculture Services	Green Space and Environment
Capital Project Delivery Officer	Green Space and Environment

All members of the Panel signed the Tender Evaluation Panel Declaration Form indicating that they had no conflict of interest or association with any tenderers.

1.4. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria, as listed in the Conditions of Tender, were assigned the following weightings:

Comparative Criteria	Weighting
1. Project Delivery	30
2. Price	30
3. Relevant experience, past performance	20
4. Equipment and human resources	10
5. Social, local and environmental	10
Total	100%

1.5. Tender Evaluation

The evaluation process outlined in this report, yielded consensus scores, which were applied to the approved assessment matrix for all tenderers. A comprehensive tender evaluation report detailing this process has been developed (Attachment 1).

At the completion of the assessment process, one tenderer was selected as the preferred supplier for Contract 3353 and it is recommended that Council accept their lump sum offer for categories A and B only.

As per section 1.1, Contract 3353 is divided into four service categories. Due to the prices received for each item exceeding the available budget, the contract work scope has been reduced to include only categories A and B to manage costs effectively.

Works under categories C and D formed only a minor portion of the contract scope (approximately 8%). If required, these works will be covered under Contract 2967's schedule of rates component of tree maintenance works. This approach will balance proactive and reactive work, potentially resulting in minor service level changes in areas of lower risk or priority if necessary.

2. ENGAGEMENT

Consultation has occurred with relevant stakeholders during the phases of tender preparation and advertising. Consultation has also occurred with the current project officers and the wider Parks Management team during the evaluation phase to ensure a successful tendering process was achieved.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The services delivered under this contract support Knox Council's Urban Forest, enhancing the community's enjoyment of a leafy green environment. Tree management offers numerous

benefits, including aesthetic enhancement of the landscape, improved general and mental health, reduced stormwater runoff, increased property values, and enhanced air quality.

4. CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS

All preferred contractors are committed to integrating considerations for climate change into their ongoing works.

Urban forest management plays a crucial role in mitigating climate change impacts, primarily by maintaining healthy tree populations that mitigate the heat island effect prevalent in suburban areas.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Tree management offers numerous environmental benefits, including enhancing landscape aesthetics, carbon sequestration, reducing stormwater runoff, improving air quality, mitigating the heat island effect, and supporting biodiversity.

All work conducted under this contract will comply with AS 4373-2007 Pruning of Amenity Trees. Any identification of foreign tree pests and diseases will be promptly reported to Agriculture Victoria and managed according to best practices.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The cost to deliver this contract, after reducing the scope to award categories A and B only (as referenced in section 1.5), is \$2,903,436 (excluding GST) over the two-year period, comprising \$1,374,510 for Year 1 and \$1,528,926 for Year 2.

While this cost exceeds the current allocated budget for this specific line item by \$331,883 (excluding GST) over the contract's life, it will be covered within the broader Tree Management budget allocation of \$5,258,533. This will require carefully balancing reactive and proactive maintenance works, which may result in service level changes in lower risk/priority areas where necessary.

Due to the variable nature of seasonal requirements, it is challenging to specify exactly where funding for this variance will be drawn from annually. However, some service standard reductions are likely, potentially including:

- Deferring lower risk reactive works to subsequent financial years.
- Securing medium risk reactive works and postponing their completion to following financial years.
- Focusing park tree maintenance on high-risk areas only (e.g., around playgrounds, car parks, and places of higher visitation).
- Carrying over lower-risk bushland tree works (second year of contract only).

While these scenarios represent worst-case outcomes, such adjustments may be necessary over the contract's life to meet financial constraints.

To minimise the impact of these potential service reductions, we will continuously monitor and prioritise tree management activities based on risk assessments and community needs. We will also explore opportunities for operational efficiencies and alternative funding sources to maintain the highest possible service standards within the available budget.

7. RISKS

The financial risk to Council for this service is low, as payment is made upon completion of each zone area. The preferred contractor has demonstrated their capability to deliver services on time and to the required specifications, having worked for Council for extended periods.

Additionally, they undertake similar works across numerous Local Government Areas (LGAs) throughout Australia.

To mitigate operational risks, Council has in place quality control measures, including regular performance reviews and on-site inspections.

Environmental risks associated with tree management are addressed through strict adherence to best practices and relevant regulations. The contractor is required to follow Council's guidelines to minimise any potential negative impacts on local ecosystems.

While potential service level changes may affect the community, Council is committed to prioritising high-risk areas.

8. KNOX COMMUNITY AND COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025

Neighbourhoods, Housing & Infrastructure

Strategy 2.2 - Create, enhance, and maintain places and spaces for people to live, work, play and connect.

Natural Environment & Sustainability

Strategy 3.1 - Preserve our biodiversity and waterways and enhance our urban landscape.

Strategy 3.2 - Prepare for, mitigate, and adapt to the effects of climate change.

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 1 will be 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:

- private commercial information, that is a trade secret possessed by tenderers which gives them an advantage over their competitors.
- private commercial information, that if released, would unreasonably expose tenderers to disadvantage because it would release financial information about the business that is not generally available to their competitors or other reasons may be available.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

8.8 Community Engagement Policy

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Decision
Author:	Head of Communications & Engagement, Penny Jones
Manager:	Manager Customer & Communications, Imogen Kelly
Executive:	Director, Customer & Performance, Greg Curcio

SUMMARY

The Community Engagement Policy has been reviewed and updated to reflect community, officer and Councillor feedback. The updated policy focusses on Council's commitment to undertaking genuine community engagement to inform its decisions, with strengthened principles to guide the design of community engagement programs.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the Community Engagement Policy as set out in Attachment 1.

1. DISCUSSION

Council is committed to undertaking genuine community engagement to inform its decisions. Community engagement is one of many inputs used to make decisions and helps us to better understand the needs and priorities of our communities and stakeholders.

Well planned and purposeful community engagement creates greater transparency and trust and fosters stronger relationships with our community and stakeholders. It also helps the community to understand the range of perspectives and inputs that Council must consider when making decisions.

We have undertaken a review of the Community Engagement Policy 2021 to ensure we continue to adapt with the changing landscape, maturity of organisational practice and community expectations.

The Local Government Act 2020 requires Council to have a Community Engagement Policy that:

- Be developed in consultation with the municipal community
- Give effect to the community engagement principles
- Be capable of being applied to the making of Council's local laws
- Be capable of being applied in relation to the Council's budget and policy development
- Describe the type and form of community engagement proposed, having regard to the significance and complexity of the matter and the level of resourcing required
- Specify a process for informing the municipal community of the outcome of the community engagement
- Include deliberative engagement practices which must include and address any matters prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this paragraph and be capable of being
- applied to the development of the Community Vision, Council Plan, Financial Plan and Asset Plan
- The sale, purchase and lease of land must be undertaken in accordance with the policy.

Regular review and evaluation of our implementation and practice over the last four years, along with consultation with community, officers and Councillors has informed the review. Consistent themes from all stakeholders as opportunities for improvement in the Policy and also in our engagement practice identified:

- Confusion about the definition of engagement and when the Policy applies.
- Need to ensure information shared to inform engagement is clear and easy to understand.
- The scope of each engagement process needs to be clear, including how the decision will be made.
- Delivering consistent experience for participants and using diverse tools and techniques adapted to the matter being considered.
- Closing the loop with the community.

The feedback received will also inform a review of internal guidelines and planning processes to support the application of the Policy in practice.

Changes proposed in the draft Policy

The revised Policy includes the following changes:

- Refined definition of community engagement. The new definition provides clarity that engagement is a formal process, separate to the work Council undertakes everyday connecting with stakeholders on service design and delivery.
- Clearer policy scope, defining when we will engage, and what other information can be used to inform decisions.
- Articulate what the different levels of the IAP2 Spectrum mean at Knox and reflect that the level of engagement will vary over the life of the project.
- Adapt the Principles outlined in the Local Government Act to better articulate community expectations and include a commitment to share a summary of the community engagement plan for transparency with the community.
- Remove procedural detail and prescriptive examples to enable bespoke solutions that reflect the needs of the impacted stakeholders and the scope of influence.

2. ENGAGEMENT

Feedback, both anecdotal and formal, has been gathered and shared through community engagement practice over the last four years. This informed the design of the engagement plan for this review that first sought to deep dive into community experience rather than gather high level general commentary.

The development of Knox's Reconciliation Action Plan included considerable conversation with First Nations communities around how they wish to engage with and be consulted by Council. This feedback has been considered in the development of the draft Policy. In particular, engagement specifically targeting First Nations audience should be planned and designed to be genuine and culturally sensitive.

The community engagement plan for this project was undertaken in two phases and designed at the *Involve* level on the IAP2 Spectrum.

Phase 1:

Designed to dive deeper into feedback through in-depth discussions with the community and opportunity to ask clarifying questions for greater understanding of experiences and expectations.

Across November 2023, six focus groups were attended by 49 participants. Participants represented the diversity of our community being aged 12 to over 80, male and female, included people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

A survey was also made available for community members not selected or available to participate in a focus group discussion, with 34 responses.

Key themes from the focus groups and survey:

- Once you have a connection with Council it's easier to stay up to date and get involved, otherwise it can be hard to find information.
- People feel more valued where there is an existing relationship with Council staff
- We need to improve how we close the loop on what was heard with community engagement and the decision made.
- Community engagement activities should be coordinated to avoid fatigue and reduce asking the same questions, especially from a place-based approach.
- Council needs to go to the community, connect with local community groups and networks.
- Council needs to be clear from the outset about what the community can influence and how the decision will be made.

This feedback directly informed the Principles of Engagement and clarifications to definitions and descriptions within the draft Policy. Removing operational processes was seen as an opportunity to reduce confusion and unmet expectations within the community.

Phase 2

This phase sought to engage with advisory committees and the wider community to explore the draft Policy, with particular emphasis on the scope of the draft Policy; Council's promise in line with the IAP2 Levels of Engagement; and the Principles of Engagement.

Approximately 70 members of Council's Disability, Multicultural, Active Ageing, Early Years and Youth Advisory Committees, as well as the internal LGBTIQ+ working group had the opportunity to inform the draft Policy.

The draft was exhibited to the community from 22 April to 20 May 2024. The Have Your Say page was viewed by 196 people, with 25 providing feedback on suggested changes. Five people provided feedback at the in person pop up, held in the foyer prior to a Council meeting to engage people directly interested in Council's decision making processes.

Overall the community supported the revised Policy and feedback received informed final adjustments to the draft Policy to reflect community expectations, including:

- Revision of the 'Respect' principle to be more action oriented and include stronger commitment to actively seeking feedback from diverse audiences.
- Addition of 'culturally appropriate' as a consideration for engagement design and delivery.
- Including 'environment' as a consideration in decision making

The most notable change was the inclusion of a statement to publish a summary engagement plan to demonstrate how the Principles of Engagement will be achieved.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Well planned and purposeful community engagement creates greater transparency and trust and fosters stronger relationships with our community and stakeholders.

The development of the Community Engagement Policy has specifically sought to understand the needs of parts of our community that may want to engage in a different way or need additional supports to do so. Our engagement has specifically targeted Advisory Committees to provide advice and guidance.

This engagement will also inform the upcoming update of our internal procedures and guidelines which will inform how staff plan and implement community engagement, ensuring they design activities to be accessible, inclusive and culturally sensitive. We will continue to engage with these communities to enhance our practice to ensure all impacted stakeholders have the ability to influence and inform Council decisions.

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 anticipated environmental or amenity considerations or implications arising from this report.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The proposed changes to the policy outlined in this report do not pose any additional financial or economic implications to the organisation.

7. RISKS

Engagement being poorly planned or not designed to suit the decision being made can result in us not understanding community needs. This can impact project timelines, scope and cost; or the end outcome not being satisfactory.

Community engagement that does not meet community expectations in terms of our engagement process presents a reputation risk and can result in criticism and even delays in decision making and project delivery.

These risks are mitigated through the proposed changes to the Community Engagement Policy, that provides clear scope for when community engagement should be undertaken and guidance on what a well-designed engagement experience should reflect. Once the Policy is adopted, it will also inform a complete review of our procedures, guidelines and tools to strengthen our internal practice.

An additional risk to both project delivery and reputation is the community's expectations of the decision making process, including the extent they can influence the outcome. Likewise, the desire

for the decision maker to receive a clear direction from the community to inform their decision is not always possible, and at times they need to choose between opposing viewpoints or possibly conflicting evidence from other technical sources. The proposal to share how a decision will be made will not prevent these challenges, however will provide greater transparency to all stakeholders from the outset to set realistic expectations.

8. KNOX COMMUNITY AND COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025

Civic Engagement & Integrity

Strategy 5.1 - Provide opportunities for all people in Knox to have their say.

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 - Community Engagement Policy 2024 [8.8.1 - 10 pages]

knox



Policy

Community Engagement Policy

Policy Number: 2007/10	Directorate: Customer and Performance
Approval by: Council	Responsible Officer: Head of Communications and Engagement
Approval Date: Meeting Date	Version Number: 1
Review Date: July 2028	

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline Council's commitment to undertaking genuine community engagement to inform its decisions. Community engagement is one of many inputs when we make decisions and helps us to better understand the needs and priorities of our communities and stakeholders.

Well planned and purposeful community engagement creates greater transparency and trust and fosters stronger relationships with our community and stakeholders. It also helps the community to understand the range of perspectives and inputs that Council must consider when making decisions.

2. Policy Objectives

This Policy defines why and when Council will engage and the principles that will inform how we design and deliver community engagement processes. It recognises that every engagement plan is unique and needs to respond to the scope and scale of the decision being made; the level of influence the community can have on the outcome; and the people who are impacted.

3. Context

Statutory Requirements

The Local Government Act (Vic) 2020 requires all councils in Victoria to develop a community engagement policy (Section 55). The Act is principles based which means that while it is a local government requirement to produce a policy, each council's policy will look different to respond to local requirements.

There are a number of other state government acts that reference requirements for Council to undertake community engagement, in particular relating to management of assets and



infrastructure that may impact the community.

Land Use Planning

Strategic and Statutory Planning matters, particularly planning permit and planning scheme amendment processes are defined and controlled by separate legislative requirements and regulations set by the state government.

This Policy does however apply outside of the above statutory requirements, noting the community has greater influence over municipal and local plan and planning controls formulation through strategic planning processes. These set the strategic direction for statutory planning processes.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all community engagement processes initiated by Knox City Council.

For the purposes of this policy, community engagement is defined as:

The formal process to gather information from the community to inform a decision. It involves the development of a plan that outlines: level of influence; impacted and interested community members; activities to gather feedback; and a process for communicating the outcome to the community.

For the purposes of this policy, community engagement does not include stakeholder management which is considered part of everyday service design and delivery.

We will undertake community engagement when:

- The community can influence the outcome; and
- A policy, project or decision is likely to impact the community - the impacts may be economic, social, environmental, built form or governance related; and / or
- When we need information from the community to help make a decision or progress a project.

The Local Government Act requires the policy to be applied in the development of:

- The Community Vision, Council Plan, Financial Plan and Asset Plan, which must be developed using deliberative practices
- Local laws
- Budget and policy development

The Act requires the following property matters to be undertaken in line with this policy (in summary):

- Purchase or compulsory acquisition of land
- Sale or exchange of land



- Lease of land meeting one of the below criteria (which was not included in the Adopted Budget):
 - The rent is greater than \$100,000 for any one year of the lease;
 - The term is 10-years or more.

Decisions will be informed by other information in addition to community engagement. This information could include, but is not limited to:

- Population, demographics, and service usage data
- Technical
- Financial
- Environmental
- Research and previous community engagement data
- Legal, government and regulatory requirements.

5. Our approach

Our community engagement approach utilises the International Association of Public Participation Spectrum of Public Participation (IAP2 Spectrum). This model is recognised internationally as best practice for planning community engagement.

The IAP2 Spectrum, shown in Table 1, outlines five levels of engagement and what the goal is at each level. We have included a Knox promise to the community on what they can expect at each level when participating in a community engagement with us.






The level of engagement may change across different phases of a project or matter. For example, the development of a masterplan might start at *Involve* with in depth conversations to understand aspirations and discuss options, and then shift to *Consult* when we are seeking feedback on a draft to *Inform* when we communicate the outcome. There may also be different levels assigned to different members of the community, for example a football club president will *Collaborate* with us on the design for a new pavilion, while those that walk their dogs in the surrounding reserve might sit at *Consult*.

In the context of the Knox promise, *Inform* is assigned when a project may not be gathering feedback at that time or where identified community members do not have any influence on the decision. Where we do not intend to seek community feedback at any time, it is considered communications, not community engagement, and this policy does not apply.

The nature of Local Government, and the role of Councillors as a decision making body elected by the community, means the *Empower* level is only considered in rare situations. Use of this level of influence in the design of an engagement approach would require consideration by Council.



Table 1: IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

IAP2 Level	IAP2 Public Participation Goal	Knox promise to you	
Inform	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions		We will keep you informed.
Consult	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions.		We will listen to what you say and consider it when we make a decision.
Involve	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.		We will work with you to ensure your feedback is reflected in the decision.
Collaborate	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.		We will work with you as we identify issues and opportunities and develop solutions. We will consider your advice as much as possible when we make the decision.
Empower	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.		We will implement what you decide.

Deliberative engagement

Deliberative engagement is where citizens are provided with a high level of inclusion in the process and influence on a decision that affects them. Participants are representative of the community being impacted and are given the time to consider options and discuss an issue/s in depth before coming to a considered view. A deliberative process is designed in response to the scope and scale of the decision, available budget and can range in the number of participants. Deliberative practices can be incorporated into engagement at *Involve*, *Collaborate*, and *Empower* levels of engagement.

The Local Government Act (2020) requires Council to utilise deliberative engagement practices in the development of our long-term strategic plans: the Community Vision, Council plan, Financial Management Plans and Asset Management Plan. Council may also choose to undertake deliberative engagement on other matters when it is suitable to the scope, complexity, and impact of the decision.



6. Principles of Engagement

We will apply the following principles to each engagement process we undertake. These principles provide guidance on the qualities we strive to achieve when engaging with our community.

Community engagement at Knox is:

Meaningful: We provide our community with genuine opportunities to participate in decisions that affect them.

Transparent: We explain the level of influence the community can have on the outcome and detail what the community can and cannot influence and why. We will describe how the decision will be made and by who and share the outcomes of engagement processes with our community.

Respectful: We seek to understand the values, perspectives and needs of the community and communicate regularly throughout the life of the project. We actively seek out those who may be impacted by a decision to ensure their voices are heard.

Inclusive: We consider our diverse community members when designing our communications and engagement activities. We provide information in easy-to-understand accessible and culturally appropriate formats and provide support to those who need assistance to take part in our activities.

Informed: We provide relevant, accessible, and easy-to-understand information to support engagement and enough time to review the information and respond. We share information with the community at key milestones.

How these principles are applied and demonstrated will vary for each engagement process. For each engagement process we will share a summary of the engagement plan detailing:

- The decision being made
- What the community can and cannot influence
- Impacted and interested community members and their level of influence on the IAP2 Spectrum
- What other information will inform the decision
- Anticipated project timelines.

For projects that have multiple phases of engagement, it is likely the engagement approach will vary for each phase. A summary plan will be shared for each phase. It is also possible an engagement approach may need to be adapted during implementation. We will communicate any changes with stakeholders.



7. Planning Community Engagement

Each community engagement plan will be unique to the decision being made, relevant to:

- The scope, scale, and complexity of the decision
- Who in the community will be impacted or interested, and how much
- What the community will need to participate meaningfully, including the information they will need from us and what information we need from them
- Resourcing available to implement the engagement plan.

The community engagement plan will detail:

- What the decision to be made is
- What information we need from the community to inform that decision
- Who are the specific parts of our community that will be impacted by or interested in decision (stakeholders)
- What level of influence each stakeholder will have on the outcome
- What activities will we use to engage the different stakeholders
- How we will report back to participants
- How we will evaluate the engagement process.

Reporting back to participants

At completion of an engagement process, we will report back to participants what we have heard and the decision made. This will include an overview of engagement activities, who participated, what we heard and next steps. This report should be provided within a practical time of the engagement closing, considering the scope and scale of engagement and analysis required.

Depending on the situation, the decision may not be made straight away, in which case the outcome should be reported separately to the report on engagement.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

The specific roles and responsibilities will be confirmed within the engagement plan.

Responsible officer

The Council officer who is responsible for preparing the community engagement plan in line with this Policy.

Approver

The person responsible for approving the engagement plan, ensuring that:

- The requirements of this Policy are met, and the principles can be achieved



- The level of engagement assigned is appropriate
- The activities will gather the information required to make a decision
- There is adequate time and resources to implement the plan
- There is a plan for reporting back to the community the outcome of the engagement.

Decision maker

Depending on the decision to be made, the final decision maker could be:

- Council staff member
- A formal decision of Council.

9. References

Community & Council Plan 2021 -2025

- Provide opportunities for all people in Knox to have their say.

Relevant Legislation

- Local Government Act 2020
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
- Planning and Environment Act 1987
- Road Management Act 2004

Human Rights and Gender Equity

- This policy has been assessed against the rights contained within the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and is deemed compatible with the Charter
- An Equity Impact Assessment has been completed to guide the development of this Policy

Child Safe

- Child Safe Policy
- Child Safe Code of Conduct

Related Council Policies

- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Media Policy
- Complaints Policy

Related Council Procedures



- Community Engagement Process
- Communications Process

10. Definitions

Communication	<p>The act of providing information to the community or stakeholder. Communication could occur using one or more ‘channels’ or methods of communicating, including but not limited to; Knox News magazine, community papers, letters, fliers, signs, emails, website, social media. It can also include less formal channels such as conversations.</p> <p>The selection of channel will be appropriate to the information to be communicated and the target audience.</p>
Community	<p>Broadly, the Knox community includes those who live, work, study, visit or do business in the City of Knox.</p> <p>For an engagement process we will define the specific community/s that are impacted or interested in the matter being considered. These could be groups or individuals within a specific location, of a certain demographic profile or with a certain interest. These may also be referred to as stakeholders.</p>
Community Engagement	<p>The formal process to gather information from the community to inform a decision.</p> <p>It involves the development of a plan that outlines: level of influence; impacted and interested community members; activities to gather feedback; and a process for communicating the outcome to the community.</p>
Consult / consultation	<p>This term is commonly used interchangeably with ‘engagement’ when referring to the general practice of community engagement. ‘Consult’ is also a specific level of influence on the IAP2 Spectrum.</p> <p>To avoid confusion we will only use this term when it relates to the level of influence.</p>
Council (we)	<p>Knox City Council, whether constituted before or after the commencement of this Policy.</p>
Councillor(s)	<p>An elected representative of the municipality.</p>



Council officer	<p>Employee - Any permanent, part-time, temporary, or casual employee of Council. This includes roles in the management and executive positions.</p> <p>Contractor/Agency/Labour Hire Worker - Any contractor/agency/labour hire worker who provides services or undertakes work on behalf of Council.</p> <p>Volunteer/s - A member of the public when contributing directly to a Council program/service/event and who: is registered as a Council volunteer; or is part of any count with regard to volunteer hours contributed to Council programs/services/events. For the purposes of this Policy a volunteer also includes students on work/student placement.</p>
Decision	<p>There are many types of decisions that Council makes. A decision could be a formal decision by Council at a Council meeting or made by Council officers through delegated responsibilities.</p> <p>Decisions will be made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To endorse final documents such as strategies, plans and policies • The development and drafting of those documents • Service and program design.
Deliberative Engagement	<p>Deliberative engagement is where citizens are provided with a high level of inclusion in the process and influence on a decision that affects them. Participants are representative of the community being impacted and are given the time to consider options and discuss an issue/s in depth before coming to a considered view. A deliberative process is designed in response to the scope and scale of the project, available budget and can range in the number of participants. Deliberative practices can be incorporated into engagement at <i>Involve</i>, <i>Collaborate</i>, and <i>Empower</i> levels of engagement.</p>
Participant/s	<p>Community members that provide feedback through an engagement process.</p>
Stakeholder/s	<p>Identified member/s of the community that are impacted by or interested in the decision being made. These could be groups or individuals within a specific location, of a certain demographic profile or with a certain interest.</p>
Stakeholder Management	<p>Interaction between Council and stakeholders such as working on everyday service design and delivery; and meetings or conversations with community members where they may provide feedback or comment on Council services.</p> <p>This is not considered Community Engagement within this Policy.</p>



11. Administrative Updates

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

8.9 Lease Agreement - Victorian Electoral Commission

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For Decision
Author:	Policy and Governance Advisor, Renee Russell
Manager:	Manager Governance and Risk, Andrew Dowling
Executive:	Director Customer and Performance, Greg Curcio

SUMMARY

Under the standard agreement between each individual Victorian Council and the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC), Councils can provide premises for the VEC to use to as an election office in their municipality, or alternatively the VEC will source a venue under a commercial lease at Council's expense.

Officers have been liaising with the VEC to locate a suitable venue for the 2024 Knox general election available between 5 August to 6 December 2024. A Council-owned venue has been identified adjacent to Picket Reserve at 4 Mossfield Avenue, Ferntree Gully which formerly accommodated the Knox Gymnastics Club.

As the venue is proposed to be exclusively occupied by the VEC, this report seeks authorisation from Council for the Chief Executive Officer (or such person as the Chief Executive Officer selects) to negotiate suitable terms and execute a formal lease agreement between Council and the VEC.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to:

1. Enter into a lease between Knox City Council (Lessor) and the Victorian Electoral Commission (Lessee) for the premises at 4 Mossfield Avenue, Ferntree Gully from 5 August to 6 December 2024 for the purpose of the 2024 Knox Council election and generally in accordance with the provisions of this report.
2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person as the Chief Executive Officer selects) to negotiate terms for the lease agreement; and
3. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or such person as the Chief Executive Officer selects) to prepare and execute all lease documentation required to execute the above-mentioned lease agreement once satisfied with these negotiations.

1. DISCUSSION

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) requires the use of a facility within the Knox municipality to support their work as the delivery partner for the 2024 Knox local government election. Access to the facility is required from 5 August to 6 December 2024.

Where Council is unable to provide a Council-owned venue for the election office, the VEC would seek a short-term commercial lease at Council's expense. The VEC have previously estimated such a lease would cost Council in the vicinity of \$106,000.

The Council-owned facility located at 4 Mossfield Avenue, Ferntree Gully meets the requirements for the VEC to support Knox's general election. The facility will be vacant at the end of July and

there were no planned tenancy arrangements beyond this date that would be interrupted or displaced by the VEC's occupation of the site.

While the VEC's occupation of the site is considered routine and very low risk; they will be exclusively occupying the venue so a formal lease agreement is considered appropriate and is also in line Council's Lease and Licensing policy; and will be prepared based on Council's standard lease templates and in consultation with the VEC.

2. ENGAGEMENT

The lease is for less than 10 years and a rental valuation assessment has been undertaken confirming the market rental value for the site is less than \$100,000 per annum. As such, there is no requirement under the *Local Government Act 2020* to undertake community consultation, nor advertise the proposed lease.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Availability and accessibility of community facilities affects the quality of life of residents within the Knox community. This lease would enable an otherwise vacant premises to be utilised for a short period of time and will support the community to exercise their democratic right of voting for the 2024 general election.

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 impacts to note.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The VEC estimated a commercial lease for a suitable venue would cost around \$106,000. Commercial leases for election venues are typically quite expensive, due to the nature of the tenancy and the short lease term.

Any costs incurred by the VEC in leasing and operating the Knox Election Venue are ultimately recouped from Council under the statutory provisions for Council elections so the lease to the VEC will consequently be at a peppercorn rate.

Some outgoings have and will be incurred preparing the site for the VEC's occupation, such as installation of an accessible carpark adjacent to the entrance, (approximately \$1,400), and a safety hoarding around the trampoline pits inside the gymnasium. Council will also meet the cost of security monitoring and utility outgoings for the site during the VEC's occupation, some of which would be incurred even if the building were vacant.

Despite these costs, utilisation of a Council venue is still anticipated to generate a significant cost saving to Council when compared to a commercial tenancy.

7. RISKS

The VEC routinely occupies Council spaces for the conduct of Council elections and consequently although the risks associated with the VEC's occupation of the venue are considered extremely low, a formal lease agreement is none-the-less considered prudent and appropriate where the venue is exclusively occupied and controlled by the VEC.

Without the requisite authority to enter a lease of the venue at 4 Mossfield Avenue to the VEC, the VEC will not have access to suitable premises from which to conduct Knox's 2024 general elections.

8. KNOX COMMUNITY AND COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025

Civic Engagement & Integrity

Strategy 5.1 - Provide opportunities for all people in Knox to have their say.

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

Nil

9 Supplementary Items

10 Notices of Motion

11 Urgent Business

12 Questions Without Notice

13 Confidential Items

**13.1 South East Metropolitan Advanced Waste Processing Procurement
Participating Council Briefing**

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:

- legal privileged information, being confidential communication between Council and its lawyer created for the dominant purpose of the lawyer providing legal advice to Council.
- private commercial information, that is a trade secret possessed by an affected party and gives them an advantage over their competitors
- private commercial information, that if released, would unreasonably expose an affected party to disadvantage because it would release financial information about the business that is not generally available to their competitors