

14.1 Financial Assistance Policy COVID update

SUMMARY: Chief Financial Officer, Navec Lorkin

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Council has approved three Community and Business Support Packages to date.

This report recommends supporting a measure from previous support packages being the continuation of the COVID-19 addendum within the Payment Assistance Policy and resolving to not charge interest on rates until 31 March 2022.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Resolve to not charge interest on rates from 1 July 2021 to 31 March 2022 for late payments and charges; and**
- 2. Adopt the revised Payment Assistance Policy COVID-19 Relief Addendum incorporating amendments as set out in Attachment 1.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the declaration of the COVID-19 Pandemic in March 2020, Council has approved three packages of financial support in recognition of the impact on the Knox community. These packages were adopted at the following Council Meetings:

- 30 March 2020
- 25 May 2020
- 21 September 2020

An initiative contained within these packages is the adoption of the updated Payment Assistance Policy addendum and the resolution to not charge interest on rates between March 2020 to 30 June 2021.

2. DISCUSSION

Council is still receiving requests for payment plan assistance relating to the impact of COVID-19 from ratepayers regularly. As of 31 July 2021, Council has 398 rate assessments currently on COVID-19 related payment arrangements and a further 204 were on arrangements where agreed payment schedules have not been maintained and a portion of rates remains outstanding. The majority of arrangements relate to residential ratepayers, with the remainder relating to commercial and industrial rate payers.

As part of the COVID relief arrangements Council approved the Payment Assistance Policy addendum COVID-19 Pandemic Payment Relief. The initial addendum covered the period 31 March 2020 to 30 September 2020. The addendum and Payment Assistance Policy were further approved to be extended to 31 March 2021 and 30 June 2021 respectively.

With the ongoing impacts of the COVID restrictions, it is proposed that the addendum and Payment Assistance Policy be approved to be extended to 31 March, 2022.

The addendum provides details of the assistance available to those currently experiencing, or at the risk of experiencing financial hardship due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. It provides the additional assistance of:

- Payment arrangements for all categories of rate payers.
- Interest free periods for all categories of rate payers.
- Payment plans that exceed a period of 12 months from the date of issue of rates notice (for rates only).
- Council deferral of debt collection where payment plans are in place.
- Council will not instigate legal action for the collection of debts.

Aside from the assistance associated with extending the addendum and Payment Assistance Policy, further work is being undertaken by Council to understand the current and evolving situation associated with the COVID restrictions and the impacts on the community. This will include a review of last year's COVID response and recovery planning and will also involve liaising with the local relief providers and community service providers and groups to understand community need.

2.1 Further support for residents in need

Knox City Council has produced a COVID-19 Community and Welfare Relief Service Provider guide to assist the community in obtaining assistance during the COVID-19 crisis (refer attachment 2). This guide is regularly updated in consultation with local community support services and organisations and is available on Council's website. A range of financial support including those referenced below are available for residents to access should they be experiencing financial difficulties.

EACH Financial Counselling

Knox City Council provides EACH with funding through Council's Community Partnership Fund to enable EACH to offer counselling services for people affected by financial hardship living in the local government areas of Knox, Maroondah and Yarra Ranges. EACH Financial Counsellors can support residents with information and advice to help with developing the skills, knowledge and confidence to take control of individual financial situations. This includes support with managing debt collectors, mortgages, loans, leases, Centrelink debts, utility bills, fines and more.

Centrelink payments for people directly affected by the lockdown

Residents directly affected by the lockdown are eligible to seek assistance from Centrelink. The amount that a person receives will depend on whether they are already in receipt of a payment from Centrelink; the location of the health order; the period you are claiming and the hours of work lost. As an example, a person who does not get a Centrelink payment (such as Jobseeker) but has lost less than 20 hours of work may be eligible to \$375 and if they lost more than 20 hours for the same week may be eligible for \$600. A person receiving a payment from Centrelink such as Jobseeker is also eligible for additional payments.

Support can be accessed through the Centrelink Boronia and Rowville service offices.

Eastern Community Legal Centre – Financial Counselling

People who live, work or study in the local government areas of Boroondara, Whitehorse Manningham, Knox, Maroondah, and the Yarra Ranges can seek free legal advice from ECLC.

ECLC financial counselling is a service provided specifically for Knox community members impacted by Family Violence and/or Elder Abuse who have complex financial needs, often linked with the legal needs. Support can be accessed through the Boronia service site.

3. CONSULTATION

There is ongoing consultation and engagement with residents, businesses, partners and Council Departments during the pandemic. These discussions have informed considerations for the proposed updates.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL/AMENITY ISSUES

There are no environmental or amenity issues pertaining to this report.

5. FINANCIAL & ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

The interest rate revenue in the adopted 2021-22 budget is \$0.580 million. It is anticipated that the majority will unlikely be raised.

6. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The COVID-19 Pandemic is resulting in significant economic and social upheaval. The situations being faced by our community are unprecedented and whilst we have anecdotal information about the types of challenges being faced in our community, we have little understanding of the prevalence of these experiences. Whilst there is data available about the short-term impacts of the pandemic, the medium and potential longer-term impacts of the pandemic and the restrictions imposed in Greater Melbourne at different stages since March 2020 are not yet fully understood. Ongoing conversations with the community, local businesses and non-Council organisations continue to inform recovery planning to rebuild the local economy and address social, health and wellbeing concerns.

As part of Council's Community and Business Support Packages, which aimed to assist the community through and out of the current Pandemic, a household survey was commissioned to inform future action. The results of this survey informed strategic service planning and longer-term relief and recovery planning across Council. A further survey was undertaken in February 2021, to keep up with the changing needs of the community.

While most of the community are still experiencing an impact on food availability, finances and work, fewer are experiencing a big impact in 2021 when compared to 2020. The extent of impact on finances and work is gradually declining but there is still over half the population experiencing an impact.

Resilience has had a slight improvement in line with a reduction in financial challenges, with fewer reporting that they could not access \$2,000 in a week for an emergency. Far fewer residents are experiencing impacts on food and grocery availability.

People are gradually returning to pre COVID levels of exercising and talking to neighbours, but there has not been a shift towards healthier eating and the incidence of people drinking more alcohol than pre-COVID remains constant. Mental health impacts continue to be high and

widespread and whilst the impact has changed very little, the survey shows some reduction in the proportion of people reporting anxiety.

7. RELEVANCE TO KNOX COMMUNITY AND COUNCIL PLAN 2017-2021

Goal 4 - We are safe and secure

Strategy 4.5 - Support the provision of emergency services

Goal 6 - We are healthy, happy and well

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

8. 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.

9. CONCLUSION

The proposed extension of the addendum and Payment Assistance Policy to 31 March 2022 will provide additional support in recognition of the continued impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on parts of the Knox community.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY

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

Report Prepared By: Chief Financial Officer, Navec Lorkin

Report Authorised By: Acting Chief Executive Officer, Ian Bell

Attachments

1. Proposed Changes - Payment Assistance Policy Addendum [**14.1.1** - 8 pages]
2. COVID 19 Community and Welfare Relief Service Providers [**14.1.2** - 11 pages]



Payment Assistance Policy

Policy Number:	2007/04	Directorate:	City Development - Finance and Governance
Approval by:	Council	Responsible Officer:	Manager Business and Financial Services Chief Financial Officer
Approval Date:	24 August 2020	Version Number:	8 88
Review Date:	12 February 2021 28 February 2022 (Addendum to be reviewed on or before 1 March 2021 31 March 2022)		

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide Council with a framework to make available payment assistance to individuals. This Policy provides details of the assistance available to those currently experiencing, or at the risk of experiencing, financial hardship. Council is committed to assisting the community in meeting their financial obligations to Council by providing payment support, including arrangements, for property and service based debts.

The Policy includes a special addendum (addendum 1) in response to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic; with the purpose of establishing the policy framework to provide assistance to those in the Knox community experiencing financial hardship due to the impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic.

2. Context

Part 8 Division 1 of the Local Government Act 1989 (the Act) establishes the power of Council to declare Rates and Charges. Sections 170-172 of the Act discusses the deferment and waiver provisions when considering financial hardship.

Whilst Rates and Charges are the largest source of Council's income, payment assistance may be sought for other fees and charges including the request for payment arrangements.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to balances outstanding from ratepayers and sundry debtor customers who are currently, or are at risk of, experiencing financial hardship.

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 – 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

- Payment Assistance Addendum COVID-19 Pandemic Payment Relief

4.5 Related Council Procedures

- Nil

4.6 Other Guidance

- Hardship Policy Guidelines (November 2013) – Municipal Association of Victoria

5. Definitions

Detail any definitions within the policy.

Council	means Knox City Council, whether constituted before or after the commencement of this Policy.
Deferment	means the postponement of payment in completely or in part and can be for a specified period and subject to any conditions. When Rates and Charges are deferred payment is not required until the Council issues a Notice requiring payment, the property is sold, there is a change in ownership or there is a change in ratepayer. Deferred Rates and Charges remain a charge on the property.
Deferment Interest Rate	means the official 180 day bank bill rate sourced from Council's contracted banking services provider as at 1 July each year and will be the net penalty interest rate levied against overdue amounts where Rates and Charges have been deferred, rounded to 1 decimal place, plus 2.0% per annum
Waiver	means the relinquishment or the removal of the liability to pay and may include the whole or part of any Rate and Charges, interest charge, fee or other charge.

6. Council Policy

Council, in applying this policy, will ensure that wherever possible, all outstanding debts will eventually be recovered.

6.1 Rates and Charges

Rates and Charges, including interest and legal costs, are a charge on the property. Council has the power under Section 181 of the Local Government Act 1989 to sell land (the property) to recover unpaid rates and charges.

Interest and Interest Waivers

6.1.1 Unless otherwise specified in this Policy, penalty interest will be charged on overdue rates and charges in accordance with Section 172 of the Local Government Act 1989. Penalty interest is calculated at the annual fixed rate as declared by the Attorney General under Section 2 of the Penalty Interest Rate Act 1983.

6.1.2 Interest charges may be waived, in part or in full, under the following circumstances:



- 6.1.2.1 Administrative Waiver – interest charges may be waived in the event of an administrative issue, error or omission which caused or significantly contributed to the failure to pay rates and charges by the due date.
- 6.1.2.2 Waiver on Compassionate Grounds – interest charges may be waived where the ratepayer has demonstrated compassionate grounds for the late payment of rates and charges.
- 6.1.2.3 Waiver of Interest due to Financial Hardship – ratepayers experiencing financial hardship may apply to have interest charges waived subject to the following conditions:
 - a) The ratepayer must be experiencing undue financial hardship. Ratepayers who are eligible pensioners or who can prove temporary unemployment may apply for current year rates and charges to be paid within 12 months from the date of issue of the Rates Notice, interest free. Such interest free arrangements only remain in place while agreed payments are being received. Applications should be directed to the Coordinator Rates and Valuations.
 - b) All other ratepayers (not eligible ratepayers or unable to prove temporary unemployment) may apply in writing to the Manager Financial Services detailing the circumstances affecting the ratepayer’s ability to pay current rates and charges by the due date. If approved, the waiver of interest in full or in part will not exceed a period of 12 months from the date of issue of the Rates Notices.

Payment of Rates and Charges by Arrangement

- 6.1.3 Any ratepayer may request to pay outstanding rates and charges by way of a payment arrangement. Payment arrangements will attract penalty interest on outstanding balances but allow ratepayers additional time to make payments. Council will not take any legal action to recover rates and charges provided conditions of the payment arrangements are honoured.

Payment arrangements generally provide support to settle current rates and charges within 12 months. Payment arrangements beyond 12 months require approval of the Coordinator Rates and Valuations.

Deferral of Rates and Charges

- 6.1.4 The deferral of rates and charges and/or interest is available to Residential and Retirement Village property owners only. Rates and charges will not be deferred for Commercial, Industrial, Vacant Land or Cultural and Recreational Land properties.
 - 6.1.4.1 Residential and Retirement Village property owners may apply to have rates and charges and/or interest in full or in part, deferred. Rates and charges including interest will continue to be levied. Applications for deferral will only be considered under the following circumstances:



- a) The ratepayer must be experiencing, and be able to demonstrate, undue and unavoidable hardship; and
- b) The ratepayer is either an eligible pensioner or a current recipient of unemployment benefits for at least 3 consecutive months; and
- c) The ratepayer is both the legal owner of, and resides in, the property; and
- d) The total amount of rates and charges, including any interest, to be deferred should not exceed 10% of the capital improved value of the subject property.

6.1.4.2 Interest charged on overdue rates and charges, including any interest, that are deferred will be set at the Deferment Interest Rate rather than the penalty interest rate. The Deferment Interest Rate only applies after the approval of the deferment. Previous interest charges at the penalty interest rate remain.

6.1.4.3 Deferrals may be offered for a period of up to three (3) years, at which time the ratepayer may apply for a further deferral subject to the assessment of personal circumstances prior to the continuation of any deferral agreement.

6.1.4.4 All deferral agreements must be approved by the Manager Financial Services.

Waiver of Rates and Charges

6.1.5 Rates and charges will not generally be waived. This is to ensure that payment assistance offered to one ratepayer does not have a redistribution effect on Council's rate base.

The Local Government Act 1989 is specific in relation to the grounds for the consideration of waiving rates and charges under financial hardship. The Local Government Act 1989 will be the basis for the consideration of any application for waiver.

Applications for the waiver of rates and charges must be addressed to the Chief Executive Officer. Applications must be supported by evidence of necessitous circumstances causing or likely to cause financial hardship. The waiver of rates and charges must be approved by Council.

Termination of Payment Assistance

6.1.6 Payment assistance support is terminated in the event of the sale or transfer of ownership of the subject property afforded payment support provided in 6.1.1 through 6.1.5 inclusive.

6.2 Sundry Debtor

The principles of this Policy will apply to sundry debtors. Requests for the waiver of a fee or charge must be submitted to the Manager of the relevant service for consideration. Recommendations for the waiver of fees and charges in full or in part must be forwarded to the Manager Financial Services for approval and processing.



Requests for payment arrangements for Sundry Debtor accounts should be submitted to the Manager Financial Services. Payment arrangements will generally not exceed a period of 12 months from the date of the original invoice. Penalty interest may be charged on overdue amounts during the payment arrangement period.

6.3 All information provided in accordance with this Policy will remain confidential.

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.

Policy updated 27 April 2020.

Addendum 1 to Policy updated ~~24 August 2020~~ 23 August 2021.



Knox Payment Assistance Policy – Addendum

COVID-19 Pandemic Payment Relief

Policy Number:	2007/04	Directorate:	City Development – Finance and Governance Office of the CEO
Approval by:	Council	Responsible Officer:	Manager – Business and Financial Services Chief Financial Officer
Approval Date:	24 August 2020 23 August 2020 2021	Version Number:	243
Review Date:	1 March 2021 1 June 2021 2022		

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy addendum is to provide Council with a framework to make available payment assistance to individuals, businesses and other community members currently experiencing, or at the risk of experiencing, financial hardship as a result of impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic

2. Context

Part 8 Division 1 of the Local Government Act 1989 (the Act) establishes the power of Council to declare Rates Council recognises that the effects of social distancing and Australia’s response to Coronavirus will, and already has, led to significant impacts on the entire community including local businesses and households. Some of these impacts include people losing their jobs, people being employed for reduced hours, businesses shutting down and businesses reducing their operations.

Part 8 Division 1 of the Local Government Act 1989 (the Act) establishes the power of Council to declare Rates and Charges. Sections 170-172 of the Act discusses the deferment and waiver provisions when considering financial hardship.

Rates and charges are a critical source of revenue that Council uses to deliver services to the community. In addition, other service charges being, fees, licensing and lease income are also an important source of revenue.

Council is constantly assessing the impact of the COVID-19 and will be reviewing its approach to how it supports the community through the pandemic regularly. This policy addendum provides the framework for how Council implements these decisions with regard to payment assistance.

3. Scope

To provide direction to Council’s Officers when collecting and providing for debts owed and ensure Council takes into consideration the financial hardship on debtors caused by COVID-19.



Council will provide assistance to those in financial hardship in accordance with the Local Government Act 1989, while ensuring it does not jeopardise the funding of its operations.

This policy addendum will be guided by the principles of transparency, efficiency, capacity to pay and equity by treating all debtors consistently and in a fair manner.

4. References

- Refer to the Knox Payment Assistance Policy above 2007/04.

5. Definitions

Review Date means on or before ~~1 March 2021~~ 31 March 2022

6. Council Policy

Council, in applying this addendum policy, will ensure that wherever possible, all outstanding debts will be recovered.

6.1 Financial Hardship – Rates and other services including, fees charges, licenses, leases

Financial hardship is a circumstance of experiencing a lack of financial means, which may be either ongoing or temporary.

This policy addendum is to address temporary financial hardship due to impacts of COVID-19.

Who can apply for hardship?

Any individual, business or community member that has or will experience a loss (or reduced income) of employment or a decrease in sales revenue because of COVID-19 can apply for a payment plan.

People must request assistance from Council **in writing**, providing full details of the circumstances preventing them from meeting their financial obligations to Council.

6.2 Payment Plans

All ratepayers have the option to apply to enter into a payment arrangement to pay off their outstanding rates and charges and Council will not levy interest during this period (refer 6.3 below)

Ratepayers will have the ability to enter into zero payment plans for the period ~~31 March 2020~~ 01 July 2021 to 31 March 2021.

If any debt is still outstanding at 1 ~~April~~ April 2021, Council's Payment Assistance Policy may apply.



6.3 Zero Interest

Interest will not be charged on overdue debts effective from ~~Monday, 1 July 2020~~ ~~31 March 2020~~, until ~~31 March 2020~~ ~~31 March 2021~~. Interest already accrued and charged prior to 31 March 2020 for overdue debts will remain.

Financial thresholds for the waiving of interest (per payment plan or arrangement) are as follows:

- a) Up to \$250.00 - Coordinator Rates and Valuations
- b) Up to \$500.00 ~~— Manager Business and Financial Services—Chief Financial Officer~~
- c) Up to \$750.00 - Director ~~City Development, Interim Finance and Governance~~ City Strategy and Integrity
- d) Up to \$1,000.00 - CEO

6.4 Debt Recovery

Council will make a reasonable attempt to contact debtors during the term of the Addendum, to reassess COVID-19 applications for financial hardship.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Council will hold off on all legal action for the collection of debts.

7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Council officers will monitor Council's cash flow position and will include this report in the monthly finance paper to Executive Management Team and Council.

In the event that the State of Emergency is extended beyond the review date, Council will reassess financial relief and this addendum updated accordingly and/or when Council's cash flow position has been compromised; whichever is the earliest event.

All personal information provided in accordance with this Policy will remain confidential.

8. Administrative Updates

Nil.



COVID 19 Community and Welfare Relief Service Providers

Version 16 - August 2021

The service providers listed in this resource have indicated that they are available to provide support and relief services during the current Covid-19 crisis. The information contained below is accurate as at the date of publishing, but may change without notice.

Due to changing circumstances, and in the interests of staff and volunteer safety, it is strongly recommended that you call providers regarding available services.

Knox City Council – COVID 19 Community and Welfare Relief Service Providers - Updated 1 June 2021.



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Knox City Council has produced this document to assist the community in obtaining assistance during the COVID-19 crisis. We have endeavored to ensure that the information contained in this resource is correct. If any information needs to be updated or removed, please let us know.

Contact:
Community Partnerships Team
Knox City Council
PH: 9298 8225 or 9298 8530
communitytraining@knox.vic.gov.au



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One login.
One password.
One destination.
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myGov username:

To protect your privacy, do not record your password on this card.

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With one password, myGov gives you access to a range of government online services, known as member services, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

When you link your member service accounts to myGov you can lodge your tax return, claim Medicare payments, report income and manage your super all in one place.

Go to **my.gov.au** to find a list of myGov member services.



Handy tip!
To make linking easier, make sure you have easy access to relevant service information such as a Medicare card, Centrelink CRN or bank statement.

With a myGov account, you can:

- ✓ access a growing number of member services in one place
- ✓ be confident your personal information is stored safely and securely
- ✓ receive messages from participating member services in your myGov Inbox
- ✓ update your contact details with participating member services in one transaction.

Need help?
Go to my.gov.au

[youtube.com/mygovau](https://www.youtube.com/mygovau)

[@mygovau](https://twitter.com/mygovau)

Call **132 307** and select **Option 1** for the myGov help desk which operates from:

- Monday to Friday 7:00am to 10:00 pm
- Saturday to Sunday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

myGov

myGov is a simple and secure way for you to access Australian Government services online. You can access 13 government services online, including Medicare, Centrelink, Child Support and the Australian Taxation Office. To get started, you need to create a myGov account. It's easy, go to the myGov website www.my.gov.au. Then, make sure you link to the government services you use. By using myGov, you can:

- Do your tax return
- Claim a Medicare benefit
- Claim a Centrelink payment
- Update your personal details with a number of government services.

You can use your myGov Inbox to keep messages in one place. You'll get a notification by SMS or email when you get a new message in your Inbox. To find out more about myGov, go to the myGov website www.my.gov.au.



COVID-19 Screening Clinics

Please visit the [DHHS website](#) for up to date information on the location of COVID-19 testing sites.

Reporting Racism

At Knox, we welcome and celebrate our diversity and are against any form of discrimination or racism.

If you have experienced racism or witnessed other unfair treatment during COVID-19, you can report it via a Community Reporting Tool — it's quick, easy and you can report anonymously if you wish to.

<https://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/discrimination/making-a-complaint/community-reporting-tool>

Translations

General Advice and Information during coronavirus (COVID-19) including the wearing of face masks is available.

Government has released a number of resources and information sheets about staying safe and keeping healthy during the coronavirus situation. Links to Covid-19 information in a range of languages can be found at:

<https://www.knox.vic.gov.au/culturaldiversity>

Food Relief Services

Emergency Relief Packages

Victorians in mandatory self-isolation due to coronavirus (COVID-19) with no access to food and essential supplies can apply to receive emergency relief packages by calling Victoria's dedicated **coronavirus hotline**. Food packages will include items such as long-life milk, pasta, cereal, canned vegetables and sugar. Personal care packages will also be distributed to eligible households and include soap, toothpaste and deodorant. Additional items may also be provided depending on the needs of the household, such as nappies or baby formula. **Coronavirus hotline 1800 675 398**.

Please also contact your local supermarkets and chemist to see if you are eligible for home delivery.

Knox Infolink, Boronia

Currently continuing with face to face and phone interviews providing Emergency Relief such as food parcels, meat trays, toiletries, Myki cards, phone cards, vouchers for emergency prescriptions and referrals to other agencies. Bread, fruit & vegetables are available from reception. Have various resources tailored for clients who are homeless. For clients who are in isolation, unable to attend due to illness, disability, phone interviews can be done and home delivery where necessary.

PH: 9761 1325 Monday – Thursday 10am-3pm

E-mail: info@knoxinfolink.org.au Website: www.knoxinfolink.org.au Facebook: Knox-Infolink

ADRA Adventist Development & Relief Agency - Knox Hub

Food provisions, takeaway meals, vouchers, essential care packages and home delivery. Offering a home delivery food relief service for the essential care package for people living in poverty or distressed circumstances.

PH: 1800 242 372

adra.info@adra.org.au

Aussie Veterans Op Shop

Shop 10, Boronia Mall, Boronia

Frozen meals available by appointment during pandemic.

PH: Dave 0439 382 346.

Boronia Community Church of Christ, Boronia

Takeaway meals. 1st and 3rd Monday of the month. Pick up 12pm – 12.30pm.

PH: 9762 1277

Boronia Road Uniting Church



Provides a foodbank, which is replenished each evening, located inside the building (masks mandatory). Contact directly for more details.

PH: 0408 596 814

Cavell Corner, One Hope Community Church, Scoresby

Can provide assistance with shopping, food packages, technology support and financial budgeting. Contact for more details.

PH: 9759 9155 or www.facebook.com/cavellcorner/

CHAMPION (Temple Society Australia), Bayswater

Food relief, advice and advisory services. Available by appointment only.

Monday 10am - 12noon and Wed 12:30pm - 3:30pm (except public holidays)

PH: 0433 335 815 or email careworker@templesociety.org.au

<https://www.facebook.com/championcommunityhub/>

templesociety.org.au/champion.html

City Life Community Care, Wantirna South

Can help with food parcels (pick up), frozen meals, fresh produce, meat, bread, personal and household items, food vouchers, MyKi cards, prescription assistance, counselling services, financial assistance, employment coaching and resume writing, budgeting assistance program, energy mentor, Telstra Bill Assistance Vouchers.

For more information or to make an appointment call 9871 8900 or contact us on our web page

<https://www.citylife.care/contact/>

Foothills Community Care, Ferntree Gully

Providing takeaway community meals, fresh food parcels and basic toiletries on Wednesday evening in Ferntree Gully. Can also home deliver meals to isolated and vulnerable people in Knox through the Community Casseroles program (book online).

PH: 8711 8677 <https://www.foothillscare.org.au/>

Glen Park Community Centre, Bayswater North

Community pantry fortnightly to members (live in Boronia, Bayswater or Bayswater North). To be eligible you must be a holder of a health care or concession card. You will also need to complete a registration form.

Community meals - monthly (outside Covid lockdowns of course) 3rd Wednesday of the month at 6.00pm. Open to everyone but we are limited to 30 places.

Uniform and School supplies – by appointment. To be eligible you must be a holder of a health care or concession card. You will also need to complete a very short registration form.

Bread and Egg collection- to be eligible you must be a holder of a health care or concession card. You will also need to complete a very short registration form.

For more information, email: office@glenparkcc.com.au

**HOPE City Mission Inc, Croydon**

This service provides quality food (fruit, vegetables, pantry and perishable, bread), hygiene and material aid (seasonal) and advocacy and financial literacy workshops for those experiencing financial hardship.

During Covid-19 the assessments are conducted online or over the phone and food is distributed through a drive through service.

PH: 1800 865 299

www.hopecitymission.com/

Restore Community Care, Rowville

Short-term emergency food relief. Care Hours Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday: 11am – 3pm, by appointment only.

PH: 8736 7053

www.restorecommunitycare.org

Salvation Army, Boronia

Providing Emergency Relief. Please contact directly for more details.

PH: 9762 7604

Salvation Army, Ferntree Gully

Providing a drive-through style food parcel program, on Wednesday mornings between 9:30 and 10:45. No appointment is required. Contact directly for more details.

PH: 9752 2682

Shree Swaminarayan Temple

Vegetarian/Vegan meals only & Gluten Free available. Takeaway Meals / Food Parcels.

Pick-up and Home delivery available. 7am to 8pm.

69 Wadhurst Drive, Boronia.

Call prior: 0421 506 666

St Paul's Anglican, Boronia

Can provide takeaway meals on Thursday evenings at 6.00pm. Contact directly for more details.

PH: 9761 1797

St Vincent De Paul

Food parcels can be delivered if needed.

Monday to Friday 10am – 3pm

PH: 1800 305 330

Wellington Care Centre, Rowville

Emergency Food Relief, Tuesdays from 10.30am to 12pm. Coats and blankets available during winter. Counselling Services also available.

PH: 9764 3738

www.wellingtoncarecentre.com.au/emergency-relief/



Financial Support Services

EACH – Financial counselling

Financial counselling for people affected by financial hardship living in the local government areas of Knox, Maroondah and Yarra Ranges. Telephone consultations only.

PH: 1300 003 224

www.each.com.au

Centrelink – Boronia Service Centre

3 William Street, Boronia

my.gov.au/help

Centrelink – Rowville Service Centre

5 Fulham Road, Rowville,

my.gov.au/help

Gamblers Help Eastern

Provides phone support for anyone with concerns about gambling harm. Provides services in the Knox LGA as well as Maroondah, Monash, Whitehorse, Manningham, Yarra Ranges, Boroondara and Whitehorse.

All assistance is free, confidential and unlimited.

PH: 1300 131 973 or Email GHEIntake@EACH.com.au

Housing Support Services

Uniting Harrison – Open Door Program

An entry point for homelessness support programs in Knox that support young people, adults, families and couples who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, to access, establish and maintain long-term housing. To arrange an appointment PH: 9051 3000 or 1800 825 955 for an over the phone assessment.

Knox City Council - Housing Support

This service helps eligible Knox residents aged 55 years or older who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Provides support, advice, advocacy, referrals and assistance for public housing.

PH: 9298 8303 or 0478 317 910 for an over the phone assessment.

Family Violence Support Services

Crisis Contact details – if you are in immediate danger call 000

Eastern Domestic Violence Services (EDVOS)

Specialist family violence service for women, their children and pets living in Melbourne's Eastern Metropolitan Region, who are experiencing family violence.

Call 9259 4200 Monday - Friday, 9am – 8pm. Saturday, 9am – 5pm.

Email edvos@edvos.org.au

Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre

A state-wide 24/7 crisis family violence support for emergency accommodation and information.

PH: 1800 015 188 (24 hours)

www.safesteps.org.au

1800 Respect

Confidential information, counselling and support service. Open 24 hours to support people impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence.

PH: 1800 737 732

www.1800respect.org.au

**EACH Family Violence Counselling for Women**

Counselling for anyone with a history of/ or is experiencing family violence and would like to seek support through counselling (Mon – Fri 8.30am – 5.30pm).

PH: 1300 003 224

www.each.com.au

Men's Referral Service (No to Violence)

Support for men who use violence against family members. PH: 1300 766 491

Seniors Rights Victoria

A state-wide service that provides information, support, advice and education to help prevent elder abuse and safeguard the rights, dignity and independence of older people.

PH: 1300 368 821

InTouch

A state-wide specialist family violence service that works with women from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

PH: 1800 015 188, www.intouch.org.au

W/Respect

A state-wide specialist LGBTIQ family violence service.

PH: 1800 LGBTIQ (1800 542 847)

www.withrespect.org.au

Legal Support

For legal assistance with family violence or family law matters, please see Legal Support Services section.

Mental Health Support Services

Crisis Contact details – if you are in immediate danger call 000

Lifeline – 24 hour crisis support and suicide prevention services. PH: 13 11 14

Beyond Blue – Provides information and support to help people achieve their best possible mental health, whatever their age and wherever they live.

PH: 1300 224 636

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/home>

EACH – Generalist Counselling

Prompt counselling, support and advocacy for Knox residents.

PH: 1300 003 224

www.each.com.au

HeadToHelp

Additional mental health support is now available through mental health hubs supported by the Australian Government. Call HeadtoHelp on **1800 595 212 (Mon-Fri, 8.30am-5pm)** to talk to a health professional or connect to a local service.

<https://headtohelp.org.au/>

Headspace Knox

Confidential and free mental health support, health advice, and general information for young people aged 12-25.

PH: 9801 6088

<https://headspace.org.au/>



Outer East Phone Chat

In response to COVID-19, you might be at home by yourself or with a house full of people. It can be nice to have someone else to have a chat with. Call toll free Monday to Friday 10am – 1pm & Monday to Thursday 5pm -9pm.
PH: 1800 984 825

MensLine Australia

Phone and online counselling for men.
PH: 1300 789 978 (24 hours)

Kids Helpline

Private and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25. PH: 1800 551 800

Relationships Australia

A range of services to support children, young people and families.
PH: 1300 364 277
<https://www.relationshipsvictoria.com.au/services/>

Red Cross – COVID CONNECT

A new national telephone service for the COVID-19 pandemic, to help build social connections and learn ways to better connect with your community
PH: 1800 733 276 www.redcross.org.au

Active Ageing Support Services

Older person's COVID-19 Support Line

A support line set up to provide information, support and check on older Australians during the period of social distancing measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. COTA Australia, National Seniors, Dementia Australia and the Older Person's Advocacy Network have worked together to deliver this service with support from the Australian Government.
Free call PH: 1800 171 866.

Bright Ideas Network

A voice for over 55s in Knox. Made up of residents, community groups and local businesses who support older people. They work on events, projects and issues that are important. Receive their monthly newsletter and find out What's On in Knox.
PH: 9298 8828
Email: linda.keenahan@knox.vic.gov.au

Talking Café

A regular weekly chat session with community connector volunteers for people aged 65+ in the Knox area. Make yourself a cuppa, grab a snack and join us via Zoom online meeting (Wednesdays 10 – 11am) or a telephone conference call (Wednesday 2 -3pm). Starting 27 May.
Email: livingourbestlifeproject@gmail.com
Send us a text: 0457 646 384
Phone: 1800 984 825 (Mon – Thurs, 10am – 1pm and 5pm – 9pm).

Other Support Services

Dementia Australia

Specific advice and support for people living with dementia during COVID-19. Can also post out hard copies of fact sheets to community members
National Dementia Helpline PH: 1800 100 500 www.dementia.org.au/



Drug and Alcohol Support Services

EACH - Drug and Alcohol Counselling

Provides individual counselling for alcohol and drug dependence, as well as education and secondary consultation.

PH: 1300 00 3224

<https://www.each.com.au/service/drug-and-alcohol-counselling/>

Legal Support Services

Eastern Community Legal Centre

Free legal advice and support. Assistance with legal matters including Family Violence, Family Law, Elder Abuse, Debt Matters, Criminal Matters, Fines and Infringements.

PH: 1300 32 52 00 / 1300 ECLC 00

Victorian Legal Aid

Free information and help about the law.

PH: 1300 792 387

Transport Services

Knox City Council – Community Transport

The On Demand Bus Service provides transport support for Knox residents who are over 65 years old, frail, mobility impaired or transport disadvantaged. This service is for older residents who can be picked up from home and be transported to destinations in Knox, to do shopping and attend medical centres or outpatient appointments. A single trip costs \$3 and buses run 9am - 4pm on weekdays.

PH: 9298 8000 for more information or to book.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Support Services

Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place

A range of programs and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members living in the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne.

PH: 9725 2166

Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Service

A range of services and programs for Aboriginal individuals and families who are experiencing, or at risk of experiencing family violence or use violence.

PH: 9212 0200.

Ngwala Willumbong Aboriginal Corporation

A range of programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

PH: 9876 9642

Library Services

Eastern Regional Libraries – Knox Libraries

Get library materials delivered to your door, or access free resources online using your library card.

Visit the website www.yourlibrary.com.au or call for more information (Mon - Fri 9am-5pm).

Bayswater - PH: 9800 6498

Boronia – PH: 9800 6488

Ferntree Gully - PH: 9800 6455

Knox (Wantirna) – PH: 9800 6470


Rowville – PH: 9800 6443



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511 Burwood Highway
Wantirna South, VIC 3152
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T 9298 8000
E knoxcc@knox.vic.gov.au

 [knoxccouncil](#)

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 Interpreter
131 450

National Relay Service
133 677

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