

Knox Dementia Friendly Action Plan 2023-2025

Statement of Acknowledgement

Knox City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation as Traditional Custodians of the land. The Knox Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community come from a variety of different Nations within Australia and Torres Strait, including 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 history.

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 the First Nations People and the traumatic stories of colonisation.

The journey ahead for Knox involves the land, the traditional custodians, the local Indigenous community, the wider community and the Council itself. Walking together and listening together to create a culturally safe and culturally rich community for all.

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Introduction

Background

Dementia is currently the second leading cause of death in Australia and the leading cause of death for women. Within Knox, there is currently 3,219 residents living with dementia, and it is estimated that there will be a 148% increase over the next 35 years.

Dementia describes a collection of symptoms caused by disorders affecting the brain. It is not a specific disease, rather dementia is a broad term used to describe a loss of memory, intellect, rationality, social skills and physical functioning. It also impacts a person's judgement and behavior and can interfere with their social and working life. There are many types of dementia including Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, frontotemporal dementia and Lewy body disease. Dementia can happen to anybody, but is more common after the age of 65. Importantly, no two people experience dementia in the same way. ¹

The way people experience dementia depends on many factors including physical health, emotions and assistance available to them. People living with dementia can continue to live full and active lives for many years after their diagnosis with the right help and support.

Local Government can play an important role in the dementia space by becoming a dementia friendly organisation and supporting people living with dementia and those close to them to live well. Living well with dementia means finding ways to promote wellbeing and quality of life for everyone affected by the disease.

Purpose

The Knox Dementia Friendly Action Plan 2023-2025 will guide Council to become a Dementia Friendly organisation and support Knox to work towards becoming a dementia friendly community. Council has partnered with Dementia Australia to develop and implement the Dementia Friendly Communities program.

The Knox Council Plan 2021-2025 has an action for Council to undertake the initiative of *developing and implementing the Dementia Friendly Action Plan*. This relates to the strategy: *Foster inclusivity, equality, belonging and safety within the community*.

¹ Dementia Australia: <https://www.dementia.org.au/about-dementia/what-is-dementia>

Knox Community Vision

Knox: where we connect with our people and environment, ensuring that they are safe, supported and have every opportunity to thrive.

Objectives

The Dementia Australia *Dementia Friendly Communities program* aims to build awareness, understanding and acceptance of dementia, so that people living with dementia can participate and remain active in the community. The goals of the program are to:

- Increase public awareness of dementia across Australia
- Increase opportunities for interested community members to better identify the signs of dementia and effectively communicate with a person living with dementia
- Improve levels of engagement with people living with dementia
- Enable dementia friends to network, learn and support each other
- Provide the ability to search, list and share the latest evidence, information and best practice approaches
- Enable dementia friends to increase self and community awareness
- Create physical environments that are safe, easy to navigate and increase the likelihood that people living with dementia will engage with these spaces and thus remain independent for longer
- Support people living with dementia.

Principles

There are five principles of working towards becoming a Dementia-Friendly organisation:


1. People living with dementia have been involved in and support development of the Action Plan.
2. Dementia awareness, training, and education for management and staff.
3. Improving customer service, communication techniques, positive language, and compassionate attitudes for management and staff when communicating with people living with dementia.
4. Environmental improvements to facilitate inclusion and accessibility for people living with dementia.
5. Commitment and submission of an Action Plan to Dementia Australia.

Development of the Plan

The Plan has been guided and informed by the following frameworks, plans, data and insights:

- Dementia Friendly Communities Toolkit for Local Government, 2016 (Dementia Australia)
- National Dementia Action Plan 2023 – 2033 (Draft) (Commonwealth Government)
- Knox Dementia Friendly Community survey, October 2022 and Knox Dementia Friendly Focus Groups, December 2022 (Knox City Council)
- Census Population and Housing data, 2021 (Australian Bureau of Statistics)
- National Prevalence Data (National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling).

What does Dementia look like in Knox?

<p>3,219 Residents are currently living with dementia</p> <p>7,983 Residents are estimated to be living with dementia by 2058</p>	<p>487,500 Australians are currently living with dementia</p> <p>1.1 million Australians are expected to be living with dementia by 2058</p>
<p>Knox Dementia Friendly community survey Oct to Dec 2022 370 respondents</p> <p>65% of respondents didn't know where they could access specific services and supports</p>	<p>50% of respondents identified raising awareness as the most important thing that Council and the community could do</p> 
<p>40% of respondents described their understanding of dementia as either Fair or Poor</p> <p>57% of people living with dementia have weekly face-to-face contact with family/friends</p>	<p>77% of respondents had some kind of connection with someone living with dementia</p> <p>35% of people living with dementia feel less included in the lives of their family/friends</p>
<p>People living with dementia identified the following as the main barriers to their participation in activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of technology - Lack of confidence - Need for assistance 	<p>Carers/family/friends require improved access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information and resources - Services and supports - Physical and social activities

Dementia Advisory Group, Community survey and Focus Group discussions

Council has established a partnership with Dementia Australia and is committed to implementing the Dementia Friendly Communities program. Critical to achieving this is the appointment of an Age and Dementia Friendly Communities Project Officer and the forming of the Knox Dementia Friendly Advisory Group. The Advisory Group is made up of people living with dementia, carers, community members, community groups and organisations, and industry representatives. The Advisory Group has and will continue to play a critical role in supporting Council to become a dementia friendly organisation and work towards Knox becoming a dementia friendly community. The Advisory Group contributed to the design and implementation of the Knox Dementia Friendly Community survey, and, the facilitation of a series of focus group discussions to explore survey results and themes.

In October 2022, 2,700 hard copies of the Knox Dementia Friendly Community survey were distributed to community houses, libraries, residents, retirement villages, senior's social clubs and dementia support services across the municipality. In addition, an online version was promoted via Council's *Have Your Say* platform and in e-newsletters and social media. In total, 370 survey responses were received, which importantly, included 25 people living with dementia. Whilst the number of people living with dementia that participated in the survey was relatively small, feedback and suggestions on how to increase dementia awareness and improve access and participation opportunities, was consistent and, combined with carer and family and friends' insights, provided Council with a sense of current needs and future aspirations.

In December 2022, a series of small focus group discussions were held and initial thoughts and possible responses were tested and validated with the community. The combination of the survey results and the focus group discussions has guided the Knox Dementia Advisory Group to develop this Action Plan. An Action Plan that is realistic, responsive and proactive, and one that will be delivered on over the next two years in partnership with the community.

Priority Areas

The Action Plan is underpinned by Dementia Australia's five principles and has a strong focus on the following Council strategic priority outcome areas:

1. Inclusivity and Equality
2. Belonging
3. Safety

Anticipated outcomes: what does success look like?

By delivering on the Actions and Key Tasks outlined in the Action Table, the anticipated outcomes would include:

- A. Increased awareness of dementia across the Knox community
- B. Increased awareness of how to reduce the risk of dementia
- C. Enhanced social connections for people living with dementia and their families and carers
- D. Improved access to services and support for residents living with dementia and their families and carers
- E. Recognition of Knox as a Dementia Friendly community
- F. Establishment of an independent Knox Dementia Alliance

These anticipated outcomes have been mapped against the Action table

Related Council documents

- Council Plan 2021 – 2025
- Child Youth and Seniors Plan 2021-2025
- Connection, Access, Respect, Equality and Safety Strategy 2022 - 2027
- Customer Strategy 2022 – 2025
- Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025

Action Table

Priority Area 1 – Inclusivity and Equality								
Action	Role of Council	Partners	Key Tasks	Anticipated outcome	Year	Responsible officer/group	Resourcing	
1.1 Establish and facilitate Knox Dementia Advisory Group meetings to guide and support Action Plan implementation and review.	Plan Provide Educate Support	KCC Communications, Dementia Australia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruit 10 Advisory Group volunteers with a desired spread of community members living with dementia, carers, family or friends of people with dementia, and industry representatives. 2. Conduct a minimum of six Knox Dementia Advisory Group meetings a year. 3. Identify and progress implementation of the actions throughout years 1-2. 4. Encourage all members of the Advisory Group to register as a Dementia Friend and participate in other learning and development opportunities. 5. Review Action plan and share lessons learnt paper by 30 June 2025. 	A, B, C, D, E, F	1-2	Age and Dementia Friendly Communities Project Officer, Knox Dementia Advisory Group	Within current resourcing	
1.2 Work with libraries and Early Childhood Education and Care Services to help children understand the concept of memory loss.	Educate Support Advocate	KCC Family & Children’s Services, KCC Youth Team, Your Library	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support storytime sessions using books - such as Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge - within Your Library locations and KCC Kindergartens. 2. Advocate to have the concept of memory loss added to school curriculum and discuss with KCC Youth team to identify suitable pilot schools. 	A, C	1-2	Age and Dementia Friendly Communities Project Officer, Intergenerational Project Officer	Within current resourcing	

Priority Area 1 – Inclusivity and Equality (continued)

Action	Role of Council	Partners	Key Tasks	Anticipated outcome	Year	Responsible officer/group	Resourcing
1.3 Create a hard and soft copy Information pack containing services and supports related information that is clear and easy to understand.	Plan Provide Educate	Dementia Australia, Dementia Support Australia, EACH, GPs, Haven Day Centre, Medical Centres, North Eastern Public Health Unit, Services Australia, and other key partners.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Information Pack will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An introduction/overview of Dementia Key Dementia Australia services and support information and help sheets Contact list of carers groups, social groups, specialists and supports in Knox and surrounds How to contact and navigate MyAgedCare. Accessible mobile phones and tablet options for seniors. Checklist of best practice universal design for indoor areas An evaluation sheet to check whether the Information Pack has made a positive impact. Launch the Information Pack during Dementia Awareness Week (September 2023). Promote the Information Pack to at least 10 Medical Centres throughout Knox. Promote the Information Pack to the North Eastern Public Health Unit. Make available on Council Dementia Friendly webpage and share with MAV and EMR Councils. 	A, B, C, D, E	1	Age and Dementia Friendly Communities Project Officer	Within current resourcing

Priority Area 1 – Inclusivity and Equality (continued)

Action	Role of Council	Partners	Key Tasks	Anticipated outcome	Year	Responsible officer/group	Resourcing
1.4 Review and strengthen current digital connection pathways, services and supports.	Advocate Plan Provide Educate Support	Bridges Connecting Communities, Community Houses, Services Australia, Your Library	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with the Knox Digital Connection Stakeholder Group to determine the accessibility, reach and effectiveness of current services and supports for people living with dementia. 2. Communicate the accessible mobile phone and tablet options through the Information pack, Community Houses and Your Library. 3. Work with key partners to design and pilot new and innovative digital connection programs and services. 	B, C, D	1-2	Age and Dementia Friendly Communities Project Officer	Within current resourcing
1.5 Seek feedback on Council’s Customer Service and online/web performance from people with lived experience with dementia.	Plan Educate Support	KCC Customer Service	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Survey and/or interview people living with dementia to better understand what their experience has been when seeking information from Council’s website, about the various Knox City Council services and/or supports eg waste, pet registrations etc. 2. Provide feedback to Customer Service and support any recommended improvements. 	D	1	Age and Dementia Friendly Communities Project Officer	Within current resourcing

Priority Area 1 – Inclusivity and Equality (continued)

Action	Role of Council	Partners	Key Tasks	Anticipated outcome	Year	Responsible officer/group	Resourcing
1.6 Plan for and support the transition of the Knox Dementia Advisory Group to the Knox Dementia Alliance	Plan Provide Support	Dementia Australia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support the development of the Alliance Terms of Reference. 2. Support the development of an Alliance Action Plan. 3. Attend and participate in Alliance meetings. 	F	2* ²	Age and Dementia Friendly Communities Project Officer, Knox Dementia Advisory Group	Within current resourcing
1.7 Advocate for and provide access to affordable and convenient transportation options.	Advocate Plan Provide	Bridges Connecting Communities, KCC Community Transport, KCC Sustainable Infrastructure, VicRoads, Public Transport Victoria	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with Community Transport providers to refine their current offerings and/or investigate the development of a program for people living with dementia that could increase their participation in social activities. 2. Use collected survey/interview, program, and other data and insights to advocate to State Government for transport accessibility and affordability changes. 	A, C, D	1-2	Age and Dementia Friendly Communities Project Officer	Within current resourcing

² Key Tasks 3 and 4 will occur post this Action Plan’s timeframes, however, Council is committed to ensuring a smooth transition process and to provide ongoing support to the Alliance.

Priority Area 2 – Belonging

Action	Role of Council	Partners	Key Tasks	Anticipated outcome	Year	Responsible officer/group	Resourcing
2.1 Increase awareness of dementia, services and supports within the broader community, to reduce misconceptions about dementia.	Plan Provide Educate	Aged Care and Home Care Providers, Dementia Australia, Dementia Support Australia	1. Deliver eight Dementia Friend sessions hosted at various locations across Knox for community members. The locations will include Council owned buildings, churches, Community Houses, Libraries and Seniors Clubs.	A, B, C, D, E	1-2	Age and Dementia Friendly Communities Project Officer, Knox Dementia Advisory Group	Within current resourcing
			2. Deliver five Dementia Friend sessions for Council staff prioritising Communications, Connected Communities, Customer Service, Facilities and Knox Multicultural Advisory Committee.		1-2		
			3. Regular upskilling on dementia for Customer Service and Community Access and Support staff.		1-2		
			4. Promote Dementia Friendly initiative at Knox City Council events including Knox Seniors Festival, Stringybark Festival, and Knox Festival.		1-2		
			5. Promote awareness through social media, printed material, newsletters eg KCC Economic Development business newsletter, radio, medical clinics, Knox Community Space at Westfield etc.				

Priority Area 2 – Belonging (continued)

Action	Role of Council	Partners	Key Tasks	Anticipated outcome	Year	Responsible officer/group	Resourcing
2.2 Increase awareness of services and social support programs for people living with dementia and their carers, family and friends.	Plan Provide Educate Support	Dementia Australia, Dementia Support Australia, EACH, The Haven Day Centre	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deliver four awareness sessions at Community based venues for people living with dementia. 2. Encourage carers, family and friends to sign up as a Dementia Friend. 3. Promote the Knox Dementia Friendly Information Pack. 	A, B, C, D, E	1-2	Age and Dementia Friendly Communities Project Officer, Knox Dementia Advisory Group	Within current resourcing
2.3 Increase awareness of carer supports and social groups.	Plan Provide Educate Support	EACH, The Haven Day Centre, Others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote bi-annually via KCC newsletters such as Knox News and Bright Ideas, through our key partners and, as part of the Knox Dementia Friendly Toolkit. 	A, B, C, D, E	1-2	Age and Dementia Friendly Communities Project Officer	Within current resourcing
2.4 Create social participation opportunities for people living with dementia.	Plan Provide Educate Support	Community Houses, Knox Community Arts Centre, Knox Historical Society, Martin Luther Homes, Your Library	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Partner with a local community house or other community club to investigate the establishment of a Dementia Friendly program in a café setting. 2. Work with key partners to develop a movie program for people living with dementia. 3. Promote calming tools such as: art therapy, music DVDs, robot pets, sensory blankets (with a variety of textures), therapy dolls, three dimensional jigsaws and virtual reality reminiscence event. 4. Work with key partners to support people living with dementia, their carers and family and friends to access participation and funding opportunities. 	A, B, C, D, E	1-2	Age and Dementia Friendly Communities Project Officer, Program Lead Social Connections	Within current resourcing

Priority Area 2 – Belonging (continued)

Action	Role of Council	Partners	Key Tasks	Anticipated outcome	Year	Responsible officer/group	Resourcing
2.5 Explore the potential for a dementia sensory garden to be established within the municipality.	Plan Provide Educate Advocate Support	Botanical Gardens, Dementia Australia, EACH, KCC Biodiversity, KCC City Futures Knox Environment Society, KCC Open Spaces	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with people who are living with dementia and their carers, family and friends, to determine whether there are aspirations for a dementia sensory garden in Knox. If aspirations exist: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with key stakeholders to seek external funding to support sensory garden design and installation. Promote the sensory garden through social media, printed materials, radio, medical clinics etc. 	A, B, C, D, E	1-2	Age and Dementia Friendly Communities Project Officer	Would require external funding
2.6 Facilitate physical activities appropriate for people living with dementia and their carers, family and friends.	Plan Provide Educate Support	KCC Allied Health, Knox Leisureworks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Support people living with dementia and their carers to remain active by promoting participation in recreation activities at the Seniors Exercise Park and Knox Leisureworks. Support people living with dementia and their carers to remain active by encouraging joining Walking Groups and weight training groups. 	A, B, C, D, E	1-2	Age and Dementia Friendly Project Officer, KCC Senior Exercise Champions	Within current resourcing

Priority Area 3 – Safety

Action	Role of Council	Partners	Key Tasks	Anticipated outcome	Year	Responsible officer/group	Resourcing
3.1 Ensure selected Council and community owned sites can be accessed/navigated by people living with dementia.	Plan Provide	Carrington Park, KCC Customer Service	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and review signage at Carrington Park and KCC Civic Centre Customer Service. 2. Apply best practice dementia universal design in these facilities and in new buildings when appropriate. 3. Develop and share examples of best practice dementia universal design. 	C, D, E	1-2	Age and Dementia Friendly Communities Project Officer, Coordinator Facilities.	Within current resourcing

Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

Implementation and budget

Council staff will work in partnership with community members, community groups and organisations, and service providers, to deliver on the actions in this plan. The actions will primarily be delivered by the Community Access and Support department, in conjunction with the Knox Dementia Advisory Group, and be supported by relevant Knox Council Advisory Committees and teams.

To strengthen our commitment to becoming a dementia-friendly organisation, and working towards Knox becoming a dementia friendly community, a Council Project Officer will deliver a number of projects and actions.,

The Project Officer will be the main resource to deliver on actions and associated costs are contained within current Department budgets. Joint projects with external partners will involve the shared use of resources, and external funding will be sought as indicated for some actions.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Knox Dementia Advisory Group - which comprises a Council Project Officer, community volunteers with lived experience of dementia, and local service providers who support people living with dementia and their carers - will meet monthly to monitor the implementation of the plan, and support progression of the actions.

Monitoring and evaluation of specific actions will be led by the Project Officer and captured in departmental business planning and reporting processes.

The plan will be formally reviewed upon completion of the two year period.

Keeping in touch and opportunities to Have Your Say

Knox City Council is committed to seeking feedback, making sure you are aware of issues that affect you and providing opportunities to have your say.

Visit our Have Your Say website to see how you can contribute to projects and tell us what you think of our draft plans and strategies – www.knox.vic.gov.au/haveyoursay

Knox City Council has several Advisory Committees that provide advice on the development, implementation, monitoring, and review of programs or activities. These committees are made up of community members, Council officers and current Councillors. Find out if there are opportunities available in your area of interest on our website: www.knox.vic.gov.au/our-council/about-council/council-committees.

Sign up to receive Knox eNews, our monthly email newsletter which will keep you informed about the latest news, events and activities across the community: www.knox.vic.gov.au/email-newsletter

Sign up to receive the Bright Ideas Newsletter, our monthly email newsletter which will keep you informed about the latest news, events and activities across the community: www.knox.vic.gov.au/our-services/children-family-and-community-services/seniors-and-over-55s/bright-ideas-network

Contact Council

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