

MINUTES

Mid Month Meeting of Council

Held at the
Civic Centre
511 Burwood Highway
Wantirna South
On
Monday 8 April 2024

The Agenda for the Mid Month Meeting of Council, Monday 8 April 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 Mid Month Meeting of Council.



The meeting commenced at 7:05pm.

PRESENT:

<i>Cr M Timmers-Leitch</i>	<i>Collier Ward</i>
<i>Cr Y Allred (Via Zoom)</i>	<i>Baird Ward</i>
<i>Cr J Dwight (Chairperson)</i>	<i>Chandler Ward</i>
<i>Cr S Grasso</i>	<i>Dinsdale Ward</i>
<i>Cr M Baker</i>	<i>Dobson Ward</i>
<i>Cr S Laukens</i>	<i>Friberg Ward</i>
<i>Cr L Cooper (Via Zoom)</i>	<i>Scott Ward</i>
<i>Cr D Pearce</i>	<i>Taylor Ward</i>
<i>Cr N Seymour</i>	<i>Tirhatuan Ward</i>
<i>Mr G Curcio</i>	<i>Acting Chief Executive Officer</i>
<i>Mr M Hanrahan</i>	<i>Acting Director - Infrastructure</i>
<i>Mr P Dickie</i>	<i>Acting Director - City Liveability</i>
<i>Mr L Westberry</i>	<i>Acting Director - Customer & Performance</i>
<i>Ms J Chalkley</i>	<i>Director - Connected Communities</i>
<i>Mr A Dowling</i>	<i>Manager - Governance & Risk</i>

Order of Business

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1 Apologies

Nil.

2 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

Nil.

3 Confirmation of Minutes

The Chairperson, Councillor Jude Dwight invited Councillors to raise any opposition to the Minutes of the Mid Month Meeting of Council held on Tuesday 12 March 2024. There being none, the Chairperson declared the Minutes be confirmed.

4 Officer Reports

4.1 Capital Works Program Update

SUMMARY:

The Capital Works Program Report shows projects on Council's Capital Works Program and indicates the status of each project as of 28 March 2024.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Capital Works Program Report, as of 28 March 2024.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Grasso

SECONDED: Councillor Laukens

That Council receive and note the Capital Works Program Report, as of 28 March 2024.

CARRIED

4.2 Preventing Homelessness Among Older Women Research Project Outcomes

SUMMARY

The Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA) recently completed a 12-month research project on Preventing Homelessness Among Older Women. As single women over 55 are the fastest growing cohort experiencing homelessness in eastern metropolitan Melbourne and across Australia, the project explored contributing factors and focuses on two key solutions.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to receive and note the report provided in Attachment 1.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Laukens

SECONDED: Councillor Grasso

That Council resolve to receive and note the report provided in Attachment 1.

CARRIED

4.3 Councillor Expenses and Support Policy

SUMMARY

The Local Government Act 2020 requires Council to establish and maintain an expenses policy for reimbursing out-of-pocket expenses incurred by Councillors and delegated committee members. The current Councillor Expenses and Support Policy, adopted in August 2020, has undergone a thorough review, taking into account Councillor feedback and alignment with best governance practices.

Presented for Council's consideration is a revised draft policy, inclusive of proposed changes across various categories including travel; ICT equipment; professional development, training, seminars, conferences, and other representation; attendance at the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly; and other Councillor support expenses. These adjustments aim to enhance clarity, accountability, and efficiency in the management of Councillor expenses.

Upon Council resolution, the draft policy will undergo community engagement to gather public input before final consideration by Council. This process ensures transparency and inclusivity in shaping policies that govern public resources and uphold Council accountability to the community.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the draft Councillor Expenses and Support Policy as set out in Attachment 2 of the officer's report for the purpose of community engagement.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

MOVED: Councillor Pearce

SECONDED: Councillor Timmers-Leitch

That Council resolve to suspend standing orders.

CARRIED

STANDING ORDERS WERE SUSPENDED AT 7:37pm.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

RESUMPTION OF STANDING ORDERS

MOVED: Councillor Baker

SECONDED: Councillor Timmers-Leitch

That Council resolve to resume standing orders.

CARRIED

STANDING ORDERS WERE RESUMED AT 8:17pm.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Dwight

SECONDED: Councillor Baker

That Council:

- A. Endorse the draft Councillor Expenses and Support Policy as set out in Attachment 2 of the officer's report for the purpose of community engagement, subject to:**
- 1. Section 6.4.2 (Annual Budget Allocation for Conferences, Seminars, Training, Professional Development and Representation) being amended as shown below:**

Subject to consideration and approval of the annual Council budget, an allocation for Conferences, Seminars, Training, Professional Development and Representation of:

- \$5,500 will be made in respect of each Councillor;**
- \$7,000 for the Deputy Mayor; and**
- \$11,000 for the Mayor;**

for use within a given mayoral year at the discretion of the individual Councillor. Allocations are not cumulative as between mayoral years.

CARRIED

- 2. Section 6.4.4 (Councillor Induction and sector training) being amended to include the following additional text:**

A Councillor's entitlement to have met or reimbursed the cost of undertaking the Australian Institute of Company Directors', Company Directors Course is subject to and conditional upon the course commencing prior to the calendar year in which a general election is to be held.

CARRIED

- 3. Section 6.5.1 (Attendance at the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly (NGA)) being replaced with the following:**

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are entitled under this section to have met or reimbursed, the costs for attending and representing Council at the Annual National General Assembly of the Australian Local Government Association

(ALGA), which provides Councils with the opportunity to participate and engage in advocacy and discussion on matters of national importance to local government.

In the event the Mayor and/or Deputy Mayor are unable, or do not wish to attend, a substitute Councillor may attend in their place and shall be entitled to have met or reimbursed, the costs for attending. Where more than two Councillors (inclusive of the Mayor and or Deputy Mayor if attending) wish to claim an entitlement under this section, the Mayor shall consult with Councillors seeking to reduce the number of delegates to two. Priority will be given to Councillors who have not previously attended the NGA in the current term of Council. Where, following consultation with the Mayor, more than two Councillors wish to claim an entitlement under this section, the matter shall be referred to Council for determination.

The total cost for attending the NGA (excluding meals and transport costs) under this section shall not be deducted from individual Councillors' Conference, Seminar and Representation Expenses entitlement.

At the request of the Mayor, and subject to available budget provisions, the Councillor delegation to the NGA may be supported (at Council's expense) by the Chief Executive Officer.

LOST

A Division was called by Councillor Dwight.

For the motion: Councillor Dwight.

Against the motion: Councillor Laukens, Councillor Pearce, Councillor Baker, Councillor Grasso, Councillor Timmers-Leitch, Councillor Seymour, Councillor Cooper and Councillor Allred.

Abstention: Nil.

LOST 1:8

4. Section 6.8.2 (Alcohol) being replaced with the following:

Where this policy makes allowance for refreshments or meals for the Mayor, Councillors or Committee members, in the absence of a prior resolution of Council, the cost of alcoholic beverages shall not be met or reimbursed as an expense except:

- **Where they cannot be reasonably avoided (such as where alcoholic beverages are included as part of the ticket price of an event or function.)**

- **Where the Chief Executive Officer has determined the provision of alcoholic beverages is appropriate at a Knox City Council civic or other function involving members of the community, having regard to:**
 - **The nature and purpose of the function.**
 - **Community expectation and the policy principles set out in section 6.1.1**
 - **The impact alcohol can have on the safe, competent and professional performance of the duties of a Councillor, or other attendees.**

CARRIED

5. Section 6.11 (Subscriptions) being replaced with the following:

Councillors can access The Age newspaper as part of a Your Library Membership.

Council will directly pay for, or reimburse the cost of a subscription to The Herald Sun newspaper.

Other subscriptions may be considered in accordance with section 6.15 of this Policy.

CARRIED

- B. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to make such consequential amendments to the draft Councillor Expenses and Support Policy as set out in Attachment 2 as are considered necessary to give effect to the changes in the preceding resolutions.**

CARRIED

CARRIED

5 Motions for Which Notice has Previously Been Given

5.1 Notice of Rescission Motion No. 144 - Waste Collection Frequency

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Timmers-Leitch

SECONDED: Councillor Laukens



Council Meeting



26 March 2024

Notice of Rescission Motion No.144

Waste Collection Frequency

We hereby give notice that it is our intention to move the following motion at the Council Meeting on 8 April 2024:

That Council resolve:

A. That the following resolutions of the Council Meeting on 25 March 2024 in relation to Item 8.3 Kerbside Reform Update be rescinded:

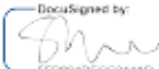
That Council resolve to:

1. *Note the Kerbside Reform Update report including broad implications of any potential change to the rubbish collection frequency.*
2. *Note Contract 3149: Kerbside Bin Based Collection Services is scheduled to commence on 1 July 2024 which was tendered and awarded based on the current collection frequencies:*
 - a) *General waste (yellow lid) fortnightly collection*
 - b) *Recycle waste (blue lid) fortnightly collection*
 - c) *Organic waste (green lid) weekly collection*
3. *Express its strategic intention to change the waste collection frequency to:*
 - a) *General waste (yellow lid) change to weekly collection*
 - b) *Recycle waste (blue lid) remains as fortnightly collection*
 - c) *Organic waste (green lid) remains as a weekly collection,**noting that a future report to Council will be required in order for Council to make a final decision on the matter.*
4. *Note officers will need to undertake work including but not limited to the following matters in order to inform a future report to Council regarding a waste collection frequency change:*
 - a. *Understand any probity issues associated with varying Contract 3149 to assess the integrity of the procurement process given the proposed frequency change. This includes ensuring transparency and fairness of the process.*
 - b. *Obtain legal advice to inform any variations to Contract 3149 in a manner which delivers best value to Council and complies with Council's procurement obligations under the Local Government Act 2020.*
 - c. *Having regard to points 4a and 4b, commence negotiations regarding a possible variation to Contract 3149 including understanding applicable contract variation costs, changes to bin lift rates, route planning, fleet composition and the timelines associated with the contractor implementing any change to the delivery frequency.*

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- d. Calculate the increase to the Residential Garbage Charges that would be required to fully recover the additional costs associated with varying Contract 3149 and consider the process for this being determined through a future Council Budget or Revised Budget.
 - e. Consider the timeline and process for the implementation of any change to the collection frequency, including community engagement and a communications program prior to implementation.
 - f. Further assess the environmental impact of the proposed change including changes in greenhouse gas emissions due to increased collection frequency, landfill emissions and landfill capacity.
 - g. Assess the resources required to implement the proposed change to the frequency of collection, including within the waste, communications, customer services and rates teams, and the impact this will have on other planned actions including the planned change of bin lids in the 2024/25 financial year.
5. Note that implementing point 4 of this resolution will impact on existing priorities currently planned within the impacted teams, requiring other actions and projects to be delayed.
6. Given the level of work involved, note a subsequent report covering the matters in point 4 of this resolution, along with any other matters deemed relevant, will be presented to Council in the first six months of 2025, in order for Council to make a final decision on any rubbish collection frequency change.
- B. To note the Kerbside Reform Update report as presented to the Council Meeting on 25 March 2024.**
- C. Receive a further report to Council no later than April 2025 regarding the progress of the Kerbside reforms and service outcomes delivered to the community.**

DocuSigned by:

E4088308-D90E-4B25-9F2F-7E5CFBDA3A8C
Cr Susan Laukens
Date: 26/3/2024 | 16:06:24 AEDT

DocuSigned by:

E4088308-D90E-4B25-9F2F-7E5CFBDA3A8C
Cr Marcia Timmers-Leitch
Date: 26/3/2024 | 16:36:50 AEDT

CARRIED

PROCEDURAL MOTION

MOVED: Councillor Dwight

SECONDED: Councillor Pearce

That this matter be adjourned until the Council Meeting on 22 April 2024.

CARRIED

6 Supplementary Items

Nil.

7 Urgent Business

7.1 Urgent Business

Nil.

8 Confidential Items

Nil.

MEETING CLOSED AT 8:35pm

Minutes of Meeting confirmed at the
Mid Month Meeting of Council
held on Monday, 13 May 2024

.....
Chairperson

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

AGENDA

Mid Month Meeting of Council



To be held at the

Civic Centre

511 Burwood Highway

Wantirna South

On

Monday 8 April 2024 at 7:00 PM

This meeting will be conducted as a hybrid meeting

Order of Business

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Bruce Dobson
Chief Executive Officer

1 Apologies

2 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

3 Confirmation of Minutes

Confirmation of Minutes of Mid Month Meeting of Council on Tuesday 12 March 2024

4 Officer Reports

4.1 Capital Works Program Update

Final Report Destination:	Mid Month Meeting
Paper Type:	For noting
Author	Coordinator, Capital Works Planning, John Bixby
Executive:	Acting Director Infrastructure, Matt Hanrahan

SUMMARY:

The Capital Works Program Report shows projects on Council's Capital Works Program and indicates the status of each project as of 28 March 2024.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Capital Works Program Report, as of 28 March 2024.

1. DISCUSSION

This report summarises Council's Capital Works Program for the 2023/24 financial year. The aim of this report is to provide a regular and succinct status summary of each project over the last month. The Capital Works Report, as of 28 March 2024, is attached as Attachment 1.

Highlights of the Works Report as of 28 March 2024 include:

- Completion and opening of the new Knox Library at Westfield;
- Completion and imminent opening event for the Fairpark Pavilion;
- Continuing progress on the Carrington Park Leisure (squash) facility;
- Finalisation of works for the Erica Avenue streetscape upgrade within Boronia;
- Completion of designs to support the delivery of next year's capital works program.

Council officers with delivery responsibility for the program have recently met with Infrastructure Directorate leadership group to provide year end projects across the program, including identification of works to be completed across the balance of the year and carry forward projections. Project budget figures in this report are inclusive and reflective of October Amended budget and include 2022/23 carry forward funding endorsed by Council.

2. CONFIDENTIALITY

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

Attachments:

1. Capital Works Program - Works Report as at 28 March 2024 [4.1.1 - 17 pages]

Knox City Council Project Status Report

28-Mar-2024

Project Number	Project Name	Total Adjusted Budget
1	Bridges Renewal Program	\$339,971
All Wards	Detailed investigations into several culvert structures are currently underway to determine extent of renewal works required. Public tendering process underway to engage bridge consultants to conduct detailed investigations and scoping of the top 25 bridge renewal priorities. This consultant report will include a detailed risk analysis and set the renewal priorities for future years.	
4	High Risk Road Failures	\$425,000
All Wards	Crack sealing works are in progress at various locations and one patching package is underway, Package 2 is being scoped now. Works have been prioritised based on the recent road condition audit.	
7	Road Surface Renewal Program	\$4,596,025
All Wards	Road resurfacing works are in progress at various locations. The second half of the program is being scoped in preparation to be allocated to contractors for delivery March/April 2024. Works have been prioritised based on priorities identified in the recent road condition audit.	
8	Drainage Pit and Pipe Renewal Program	\$2,600,000
All Wards	Budget is fully committed. Internal Patching and Relining Packages 2 & 3 are nearing completion. Scoping to commence for next year's projects in the coming months.	
9	Footpath Renewal Program	\$2,761,278
All Wards	Over 95% of the 23/24 program has been delivered and the remaining 5% has been allocated to contractors.	
10	Bicycle and Shared Path Renewal Program	\$619,200
All Wards	Half the program has been completed and preliminary works have occurred to prepare the remainder of the program. Works about to commence at Kelletts Road, Burwood Hwy, Blind Creek (near Renou Rd), Ferny Creek (near Bryden Drive), and patching works at various locations.	
16	Building Renewal Program	\$4,700,052
All Wards	Actual Spend at 45% of budget, 61% including commitments. Fire Services works at Transfer Station delayed by delivery of Diesel Pump in May. All other works to be completed shortly. Knox Leisureworks accessible ramp 70% complete, final works to be completed in April. Contribution towards renewal items to complete upgrade works at Carrington Park - Leisure Centre (external Painting/Rendering, internal ceilings grid and floor covering) and Fairpark Multipurpose Facility (internal painting and floor covering at U3A) to be raised in coming weeks for imminent completion. Quotes received for Program of Hot Water System replacements and works scheduled across 7 x Early Years Facilities. Roof Renewals at 10 x Early Years Sites are out to the Builders Panel as an RFQ, to be awarded and scheduled in early April. Other Early Years works to be scheduled for 2024/25. Bayswater Senior Citizens and Ambleside Historic House Roof renewals to be sent to Builders Panel similarly in coming weeks for award in late April. Cosmetic repairs to affected areas at Ambleside to be included in that scope. Lacework to veranda posts to be arranged ASAP. Templeton Reserve Tennis Pavilion DDA Compliant Bathroom renewal to commence in April. Glenfern Park Tennis Pavilion Amenities/kitchen renewals/internal Painting proceeding with additional designs for DDA Carpark and repurposed shower included. To be issued to Builders Panel for RFQ in April.	

Knox City Council Project Status Report

28-Mar-2024

Project Number	Project Name	Total Adjusted Budget
	Windermere Reserve Pavilion and Miller Park Reserve Pavilion Kitchen Renewals to be sent to Builders Panel for RFQ in April, Design to be completed this year for Marie Wallace Pavilion and Walker Reserve Pavilion Amenities for renewals in 24/25. Epoxy Floor Application at an additional 8 x Public Toilet blocks scheduled under FMS Contract. Design of Knoxfield Shopping Centre Public Toilet to be completed for Construction in early 2024/25. External Painting of Adult Education and Community Services Facility, internal painting and LED Lighting upgrades at The Basin Senior Citizens Centre.	
17	Playground Renewal Program	\$1,890,125
All Wards	Knox Playspace Renewal 2022-23: The tender of the Tim Neville Arboretum playground renewal has now been awarded with construction anticipated to commence April 2024. The request for quotation (RFQ) for the delivery of playspace renewals at Kent Park, Castlefield Square and Val Boyd Reserve has also been awarded with an anticipated commencement in May 2024. Knox Playspace Renewal 2023-24:	
22	Fire Hydrant Replacement Program	\$0
All Wards	Expenditure is not likely to be incurred until late June.	
24	Carpark Renewal	\$576,800
All Wards	Carpark renewal program is nearing completion with recent works occurring at Thaxted Pde carpark (Wantirna Mall), Murrindal Family Centre, and Eastgate Court carpark. Awaiting final claims from contractors.	
25	Plant & Machinery Renewal Program	\$2,734,500
All Wards	Fleet Renewal Program progressing. To date, Council has 75% of funds committed and 65% of funds expended.	
26	Street Tree Replacement Program	\$523,666
All Wards	Tree stock secured at nurseries. All POs raised. Tree planting scheduled to commence in May 2024.	
31	Stamford Park Redevelopment	\$3,968,219
Tirhatuan	First viewing deck installation has commenced. Other decks to follow prior to final footpath connections.	
104	Roadside Furniture Renewal Program	\$103,000
All Wards	Quotes have been sought from our panel of civil contractors for the renewal of the retaining wall at 34 Clematis Ave Ferntree Gully. Construction activity is expected to occur April/May. This project will complete the 2023/24 program.	
147	Energy Retrofits for Community Buildings	\$199,013
All Wards	Scoping of additional electrification opportunities across Council facilities currently underway.	

Knox City Council Project Status Report

28-Mar-2024

Project Number	Project Name	Total Adjusted Budget
229	Building Code Australia Compliance	\$75,000
All Wards	Funding used predominantly reactively to address Essential Safety Measure (ESM) defects identified during routine inspections of ESM items at Council's buildings. Also used to set up ESM Cabinets and establish site specific requirements for any additional sites and for updating of evacuation plans as required. Remainder of budget will be used in rectifying any non-compliances that are received from recent ESM inspections.	
345	Asbestos Removal	\$75,000
All Wards	Priority works complete. Remainder of budget to be used towards Asbestos Audit, for tender in April/May. Audit Program to commence shortly after, with funding from this year's budget to contribute towards early stages of next year's program.	
347	Miscellaneous Industrial Roads - Pavement Rehabilitation	\$170,000
All Wards	Works to commence in Havelock Road Bayswater in April. Patching works programmed for April/May at various locations.	
409	Parks Furniture Renewal	\$90,000
All Wards	Installation of new furniture at Chatham Ave and Walker Reserve completed.	
410	Parks Signage Renewal	\$20,000
All Wards	Scoping works for remainder of 2023/2024 financial year.	
412	Water Sensitive Urban Design Renewal	\$234,020
All Wards	Civil works for all stormwater pond and basin renewals have been completed throughout February-March. Revegetation to take place in April-May.	
441	Significant Municipal Site Renewal	\$140,000
All Wards	Awaiting completion of Tim Neville Arboretum path renewal.	
443	Reserves Paths Renewal	\$80,000
All Wards	Renewal of path at Emerson reserve completed.	
492	Food Act Compliance - Kitchen Retrofitting	\$25,000
All Wards	Windermere Reserve Football/Cricket Pavilion and Miller Park Reserve kitchens to proceed. Will require complete renewal, with this funding used to address requirements of the Food Act. Works planned to be tendered in April for completion by end of financial year.	
536	Parkland Asset Renewal	\$95,000
All Wards	Awaiting delivery of reserve furniture for ongoing renewal expenditure.	
537	Roadside Plantings Renewal	\$80,000
All Wards	Project team currently scoping final works package for 2023/2024 financial year.	

Knox City Council Project Status Report

28-Mar-2024

Project Number	Project Name	Total Adjusted Budget
566	Artwork Renewal	\$81,600
All Wards	Upgrade lighting for Aeroplane Boy sculpture in Bayswater is progressing and will be completed in June 2024. Renewal of Totem Poles at the entrance to Ferntree Gully Arts Centre and restoration of two Opperman Sculptures being addressed.	
675	Public Art Project	\$285,346
All Wards	Major Public Art installations that support neighbourhood renewal, village placemaking, tourism and cultural development projects are progressing well. Major Public artworks for Knox Regional Netball Centre, Fairpark Reserve and First Nations artwork for Knox Library completed. Public Art Light Sculptures (Lanterns) for Erica Avenue Boronia are now installed and will be commissioned in April. FTG Creative Placemaking Project is in its final stages with major Public Art mural being installed at 46 Station St Ferntree Gully and First Nations Light Specific Artwork completed by May. Preparations for Immerse have commenced and the procurement of site-specific activations in progress.	
708	Cricket Run Up and Goal Square Renewal Works	\$100,000
All Wards	All works have been completed.	
746	Revegetation Plan	\$110,000
All Wards	Community Event site preparation underway for Dandenong Creek, Blind Creek & Koolamara wetlands revegetation days in June-Aug.	
834	Oversowing of Sports Fields	\$90,000
All Wards	On schedule. Over sowing commenced in March and finishes in April.	
837	Westfield Library (Permanent) - Construct and Fit out	\$5,256,916
Dinsdale	Fit out construction works are complete as of 23rd February and handover for library fit out complete. Library opened for trade on 8th March and event opening held at the end of March.	
867	Knox Regional Netball Centre Extension	\$573,547
Dobson	Construction works completed. Project is presently under a defects liability period until October 2024.	
868	H V Jones, Ferntree Gully - Masterplan Implementation Stage 3	\$423,787
Friberg	Carpark construction completed.	
871	Energy Performance Contract Implementation	\$50,872
All Wards	All projects completed. Evaluation and Monitoring underway and will be completed by June 2024.	

Knox City Council Project Status Report

28-Mar-2024

Project Number	Project Name	Total Adjusted Budget
935	Scoresby (Exner) Reserve - Tennis Court Renewals	\$650,000
Tirhatuan	(1) Contractor appointed for renewal of Courts 4-5. Awaiting submission of pre-construction documentation before providing Possession of Site. On site meeting with Club and the Contractor held recently and agreed to commence works in May 2024. (2) Awaiting outcome of ongoing investigations and negotiations with Insurance Co. before deciding extent and timing of resurfacing of Courts 1-3.	
941	Knox Regional Netball Centre - Court Renewals	\$150,000
Dobson	Court re-surfacing to be completed during the Easter school holidays break.	
944	Knox Central (Former Operations Centre)	\$21,485
Dinsdale	The final report is being reviewed by the Auditor for final sign off.	
948	Modular Building Program	\$187,343
All Wards	All residual works have been completed.	
951	Community Toilet Replacement Program	\$446,357
All Wards	Chandler Park Public Toilets Completed. UFTG Shopping Centre Public Toilet stakeholder engagement complete and final design expected in May/June for Construction in early 2024/25. Carry Forward of funds likely to support construction in 24/25. Design and Service preparations for future Public Toilet implementations at Carrington Park and Emerson Park Reserves.	
961	Knox Regional Netball Centre Floodlight Outdoor Courts 5 to 8	\$6,777
Dobson	This project is not proceeding.	
999	Lewis Park, Wantirna South - Masterplan Implementation - Stage 1 - Waterways	\$1,012,000
Dinsdale	Construction is progressing well.	
1003	Wantirna Reserve, Wantirna - Masterplan	\$80,000
Collier	Draft Master plan progressed through Internal and External Stakeholder consultation. Public consultation completed, council approval targeted March 2024.	
1054	Knox Regional Sports Park - Stages 2 and 3 (VARMS)	\$91,586
Scott	The project is now complete following the end of the defects period.	
1123	Public Tennis / Netball / Basketball Court Renewals	\$175,000
All Wards	Bollard installation at Fairpark netball courts is complete. All the remaining budget will be spent by the end of May.	
1124	Sportsfield Fencing Renewals	\$75,000
All Wards	Works on schedule for completion by June 30 2024, incorporating repair of Knox Gardens and Lakesfield Reserve netting.	

Knox City Council Project Status Report

28-Mar-2024

Project Number	Project Name	Total Adjusted Budget
1173	Quarry Reserve, Ferntree Gully - Masterplan Implementation Stage 3	\$235,000
Dobson	The Quarry Reserve City Skyline Lookout is now complete and open to the public.	
1176	Solar in Community Facilities	\$252,582
All Wards	Solar PV installation completed at Knox Civic Centre. Commissioning and grid connection underway.	
1180	Forest Road to Koolunga Reserve, FTG - Wetland Construction	\$386,000
Chandler	Future directions plan now complete. Currently investigating stormwater opportunities identified within the future directions plan.	
1182	Norvel Quarry Reserve Water Quality System - Design & Construction	\$0
Baird	Concept design underway. Site investigation completed with Bushland, and Urban Forest and Habitat Assessment teams to investigate suitable design options.	
1183	Peregrine Reserve - Wetland Construction	\$0
Taylor	Concept design currently underway.	
1184	Egan Lee Reserve - Wetland Construction	\$877,000
Scott	Integrating the proposed wetland works with the carpark works associated on nearby site, as well as similar wetland & carpark project at Gilbert Park. Tender closed with evaluation underway.	
1261	Wantirna Reserve - Car Park Upgrade	\$40,000
Collier	Additional feature survey underway after feedback received from Open Space to support complementary works identified in now endorsed Masterplan.	
1267	Early Years Facilities - Landscaping Upgrades	\$100,000
All Wards	Minor Projects to remove unsafe fixed structures identified in the 2024 playground audit to be completed over the April School Holiday break. Wantirna Hub yard redevelopment plan to be completed by 30 June with any works minor works to be completed at this site.	
1281	Ferntree Gully Road, Knoxfield (O'Connor Road and Henderson Road)- Shared Path	\$40,000
Tirhatuan	Property team drafting a Lease/License Agreement for use of the private land for a shared path - for consideration of the affected Body Corporate properties.	
1300	Parking Management Plan Implementation	\$30,000
All Wards	Contractor appointed to install parking signage in Gateshead Drive, Wantirna. Have Your Say consultation for Bayswater Activity Centre Parking Management Plan is currently being analysed. Report to Council planned for June.	
1308	Kevin Ave, Ferntree Gully Flood Investigation - Scoping	\$30,000
Dobson	In the process of scoping future works based on flood mapping.	

Knox City Council Project Status Report

28-Mar-2024

Project Number	Project Name	Total Adjusted Budget
1309	1825 Ferntree Gully Road - Flood Mitigation Works	\$0
Friberg	Project funding was removed as part of the October adopted amended budget.	
1310	Flood Mitigation Reactive Complaints Upgrade Works	\$150,000
All Wards	Conyers Street construction underway. Daffodil Road flood mitigation works to commence shortly. Knox Construction Group coordinating construction.	
1311	Major Roads LED Streetlight Replacement	\$1,400,000
All Wards	Design of roads that require night works have been completed. Tender Documentation that incorporates night works detail has now been included in readiness for re-tendering in early April. Installation expected to commence in June 2024 at the earliest.	
1315	Fairpark Reserve - Pavilion Upgrade (incorporating U3A extension)	\$4,363,675
Baird	Stage 1 including new pavilion and southern car park has received Occupancy Permit and has been handed over to U3A and clubs. Event opening scheduled for 9 April, 2024.	
1320	Eildon Park Reserve, Rowville - Tennis Court Renewals	\$146,140
Taylor	Contract works completed. Additional tree planting scheduled to provide appropriate screening for upgraded tennis courts.	
1322	Glenfern Park (FTGTC) - Tennis Court Renewals - Design	\$0
Dobson	Design works completed.	
1365	Programmed Road Renewal Works from June annual Audits	\$8,500
All Wards	Expenditure on miscellaneous works has occurred and majority of funds expended.	
1386	Parks - New Tractor	\$120,000
All Wards	Council has received delivery of the new tractor which is now in operation.	
1389	Egan Lee Reserve Renewal - Top Oval Renewal	\$4,046,406
Scott	The stabilising work has been completed. The project is now progressing well. Construction to finish by the end of June with a Practical Completion date of end of August.	
1391	Knox Hockey Facility Development	\$377,905
Collier	Maintenance and defects liability period ongoing until 23 June 2025.	
1412	Macauley Place, Bayswater - Shared Safety Zone	\$10,000
Dinsdale	Engineering feature survey complete. Engineering design to be amended to allow for "as constructed" features such as doors, slopes and surfaces adjacent to retail properties.	

Knox City Council Project Status Report

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Project Number	Project Name	Total Adjusted Budget
1413	Kings Park Reserve, Upper Ferntree Gully - Masterplan Implementation	\$89,790
Dobson	Council endorsed the draft masterplan and implementation strategy on 27 November 2023. Design not yet commenced. Consolidating internal stakeholder's feedback - due to commence design in April 2024.	
1414	Cardiff Street - Flood Mitigation Works	\$575,000
Baird	Stage 1 construction underway. Approximately \$70,000 spent to date with works ongoing, some unspent funds expected to be carried forward into 24/25.	
1415	Olivebank to Underwood & Alexander Reserve, FTG - Wetland Treatment - Scope	\$320,000
Dobson	Knox Construction Group coordinating construction. Construction is currently underway.	
1419	Carrington Park Reserve - Stormwater Harvesting Upgrade	\$120,000
Friberg	Quotes for first stage of renewal works at Batterham Reserve, Wally Tew Reserve, and Carrington Park have been approved and works to commence shortly.	
1422	Gilbert Reserve - Wetland (Scoping & Analysis)	\$985,500
Friberg	Integrating the proposed wetland works with the carpark works associated on nearby site, as well as similar wetland & carpark project at Egan Lee Reserve. Tender closed with evaluation underway.	
1426	The Basin Triangle Masterplan	\$30,000
Chandler	Project on-hold while the Basin Parking Management Plan project is being conducted. Council Officers will re-engage with the community for both projects once they are ready for consultation.	
1443	Faraday Street Boronia - Road Reconstruction	\$589,000
Baird	This project has been packaged as part of Road Renewal construction contract for 2023/24. Construction underway with works around 20% complete.	
1462	Knox Athletics, Knoxfield - New Shade Structures	\$95,874
Friberg	Shade structure works will trail the majority of site works for athletics track and will likely require carry forward into 24/25.	
1465	Knox Athletics, Knoxfield - Lighting to Track	\$382,182
Friberg	Sportsfield lighting work has started. The work is scheduled to be completed by mid June, including testing and commissioning.	
1470	Electronic Entry to Sporting Pavilions.	\$63,000
All Wards	Quote received for Glenfern Park Tennis Pavilion and works to be included with Renewal of kitchen, DDA Bathroom/Carpark and Amenities, scheduled to be sent to Builders Panel for RFQ in April. Delay in tendering of Electronic Locking Contract has some doubt on whether additional works can be tendered for delivery this year. Team are currently reviewing.	

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28-Mar-2024

Project Number	Project Name	Total Adjusted Budget
1473	Egan Lee Reserve, Knoxfield - Car Park Extension	\$430,000
Scott	Integrating the proposed carpark works with the wetland works associated on nearby site, as well as similar wetland & carpark project at Gilbert Park. Tender closed with evaluation underway.	
1474	Knox Skate & BMX Park, Knoxfield - Carpark	\$540,000
Friberg	Integrating the proposed carpark works with the wetland works associated on nearby site, as well as similar wetland & carpark project at Egan Lee Reserve. Tender closed with evaluation underway.	
1498	Pleasant Road, Ferntree Gully - Footpath Scope	\$80,000
Dobson	Survey and preliminary footpath alignment complete. Consultation with Arborist undertaken and advice received that planning permit and directors approval will be required for removal of one of the significant trees. Additional survey completed to support potential tree preservation following consultation with Traffic & Transport. Detailed design underway and 50% complete.	
1505	Mountain Highway, Boronia - Shared Path - Design	\$45,000
Chandler	Design complete. Cost estimate to be finalised.	
1515	Major Crescent Reserve, Lysterfield - Landscape Plan Implementation	\$200,000
Taylor	Requests for quotations (RFQ) have now closed. Currently under evaluation with the anticipation the contract will awarded in March 2024.	
1517	Flamingo Reserve, Wantirna South - Landscape Plan	\$25,000
Collier	Design proposals are 95% completed, however works have been deferred to until 2028/29 to support aspirations for a re-oriented site/playground facility and the costs required to meet this objective.	
1518	Schultz Reserve, Wantirna - Landscape Plan Implementation	\$150,000
Collier	Requests for quotations (RFQ) have now closed. Currently under evaluation with the anticipation the contract will awarded in late March/early April.	
1521	Erica Avenue Streetscape Renewal	\$750,000
Baird	Construction complete with Practical Completion imminent.	
1524	Harley Street - Road Reconstruction - Construction	\$422,892
Friberg	This project has been packaged as part of Road Renewal construction contract. Construction is complete with Practical Completion imminent.	
1525	Allister Close - Road Reconstruction - Construction	\$421,500
Friberg	This project has been packaged as part of Road Renewal construction contract for 2023/24. Construction well underway and expected to be completed by late April 2024 - works are around 40% complete.	

Knox City Council Project Status Report

28-Mar-2024

Project Number	Project Name	Total Adjusted Budget
1526	The Haven - Road Reconstruction - Construction	\$161,000
Dinsdale	This project has been packaged as part of Road Renewal construction contract for 2023/24. Anticipate construction to commence around late April 2024 and completed by late May 2024.	
1527	Rickards Avenue - Road Reconstruction - Construction	\$711,108
Friberg	This project has been packaged as part of Road Renewal construction contract. Construction is complete with Practical Completion imminent.	
1528	Chandler Road - Road Reconstruction - Design	\$33,000
Chandler	Design integrated with Greenspine corridor project and Consultation with VicRoads regarding Chandler/Dorset intersection design has been completed. Detailed Design and Engineering Estimate complete with review changes underway. External Government funding application was presented to the March Boronia Renewal Board meeting, awaiting Board decision.	
1529	Knox Athletics Track Renewal & Upgrades	\$4,718,024
Friberg	Works have started. Expected completion date is 30 December 2024. Practical Completion expected January/February 2025 noting the need for track certification and quality control requirements.	
1532	Batterham Reserve Oval 1 - Sportsfield Renewal	\$0
Chandler	Project has been cancelled as requested by the tenant clubs.	
1537	Bayswater Oval - Cricket Net Renewal	\$550,000
Dinsdale	The project has been delayed as works require build over easement and currently awaiting consent from South East Water. The project is still targeting a June 30 completion date, however risks exist in meeting this deadline.	
1540	Pickett Reserve - Cricket Net Renewal	\$369,640
Baird	Project is completed.	
1541	Golf Practice Nets (Signage)	\$6,000
All Wards	Will assess all cages and signage for repair works.	
1543	Sportsfield Infrastructure program replacement	\$75,000
All Wards	Job completed.	
1544	Irrigation Infrastructure Program Replacement	\$70,000
All Wards	Ongoing renewal/reactive replacement program to rectify non-functioning elements.	
1546	Rowville Recreation Reserve - DDA and Baby Change Facilities Upgrade	\$200,000
Taylor	Site works have commenced Feb 24. Slab, framing and roof sheeting have been completed. Plumbing, electrical and other works are in progress.	

Knox City Council Project Status Report

28-Mar-2024

Project Number	Project Name	Total Adjusted Budget
1547	Kings Park (Baseball) - Floodlighting Upgrade	\$387,733
Dobson	Power upgrade has been confirmed as necessary. Ausnet to complete upgrade by mid May. Completion anticipated by end of June 24.	
1548	Guy Turner Reserve - Floodlighting Upgrade	\$290,937
Dinsdale	New light poles due for delivery late April/early May. Completion expected by end of June 24.	
1550	Park Ridge Reserve Existing Pavilion Refurbishment	\$3,550,000
Taylor	Concept design complete. Architect underway with detailed design.	
1554	The Basin Community House - portico	\$43,150
Chandler	Works completed.	
1555	Community Facilities Signage - Upgrades	\$42,486
All Wards	All documents for signage currently with Communication department for project management.	
1556	Rose Street - Footpath Design & Construction	\$5,000
Dobson	Construction of driveway is complete.	
1557	Sundew Avenue, Iris Crescent and Herbert Street, Boronia - LATM Treatment Design	\$130,000
Tirhatuan	Construction is complete. Invoices to be finalised.	
1558	Napoleon Road Stage 4 - Shared Path Construction	\$324,100
Taylor	Contractor appointed. Works to start in April.	
1559	Upper Ferntree Gully Rail Link - Shared Path Construction	\$148,000
Dobson	Metro Trains Melbourne has considered proposal and sent a draft agreement for works. Risk workshop to be held in April.	
1560	Liverpool Road west side Salvation Army to Retarding Basin - Shared Path Design	\$1,500
Chandler	Design finalised. Costing being reviewed internally for consideration of inclusion in future Capital Works Program.	
1561	Harold Street Onroad Bicycle Facilities - Design	\$0
Collier	Previous design is being reviewed. Final design will be packaged with Templeton Street road reconstruction design later in 2023/24. Potential funding of Amesbury Avenue pedestrian crossing under Safe Local Roads Program (TAC and DTP).	
1563	Stud Road Onroad Bicycle Facilities - Design	\$43,750
Taylor	Additional traffic counts being arranged to pick up turning movements and cyclist volumes. Consultation with Department of Transport & Planning and community planned to occur in mid 2024.	

Knox City Council Project Status Report

28-Mar-2024

Project Number	Project Name	Total Adjusted Budget
1565	Napoleon Rd - Electronic 40km/h signs at school crossings	\$79,230
Dobson	Reviewing pedestrian survey at crossing points. Information will be included in application to the Department of Transport and Planning for approval to reduce speed limit. Carry forward likely to be required given timeframes required for approval.	
1566	Brenock Park Drive Footpath and Bus Stop works	\$30,000
Dobson	Programmed for feature survey in 2024.	
1567	193 Forest Rd, Boronia Stormwater Upgrades - Design	\$30,000
Dobson	Concept design currently underway.	
1568	EV Charging stations in Council facilities for fleet charging	\$50,000
All Wards	Continue to investigate options for replacing existing 50kW DC Fast Charger with a higher capacity charger. Project to be deferred to 2024/25 to allow for a higher capacity/faster charger as replacement.	
1573	Lupton Way Future Public Art Lighting	\$70,000
Baird	Grant funded project, carried forward as committed funds for public art lighting inclusions within the Boronia Station Vic Gov Upgrade Masterplan. Relocation of public art lighting from Lupton Way to Erica Avenue was due to Boronia Station masterplan timeline. Erica Avenue Lantern Public Art and street upgrade is now completed with the commissioning of the Lanterns to be undertaken in April.	
1574	Fairpark Reserve, Ferntree Gully - Cricket Net Renewal	\$13,000
Baird	The demolition of the existing pavilion has been completed and geotech and site surveys are booked for early April. A quote will also be requested for the design and engineering of the nets and shed.	
1575	Templeton Reserve, Wantirna - Cricket Net Renewal	\$450,360
Collier	Project is almost completed. A small amount of electrical work is required in the storage shed.	
1576	Ambleside Homestead Upgrade Review	\$99,808
Dobson	Report received from consultants. Final decision on the way forward being considered as part of 2024/25 budget process.	
1577	Tormore Reserve Pavilion - Facility Redevelopment Design	\$220,000
Baird	Design Development Plans approved by clubs 11 March. Detailed Design Commenced. Federal and State Government funding has been approved.	
1578	Templeton Road - Design	\$113,000
Collier	Survey and geotechnical investigation completed. Design underway - 80% complete. Engaging contractor to undertake service proving for drainage upgrades.	

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Project Number	Project Name	Total Adjusted Budget
1579	Station Street - Road Reconstruction - Design	\$35,000
Dobson	Survey and Geotechnical investigations completed. Design has commenced and around 80% complete.	
1580	Blackwood Park Road - Road Reconstruction - Design	\$60,000
Dobson	Survey and geotechnical investigation completed. Design underway and around 75% complete.	
1581	Wally Tew Reserve Oval 1 - Sportsfield Renewal - Design	\$20,274
Dobson	The design is completed, just waiting for the Bill of Quantities.	
1582	Lewis Park - Oval No.2 - Sportsfield Renewal - Design	\$37,073
Dinsdale	The design is completed, just waiting for the Bill of Quantities. The sportsfield lighting design is also completed. The two projects will be packaged together next year under the one contract.	
1583	Knox BMX Track Renewal Works	\$300,000
Friberg	After meeting with the stakeholders, we were able to review and reduce the scope of works and understand the impact of drainage works on the track. Scope management is currently ongoing by officers, having regard to available budget. A request for quotation process is expected before the end of financial year.	
1584	Eildon Park Oval 1 - Fencing Renewal	\$65,000
Taylor	The project has been completed and handed over to the sportsfield maintenance team.	
1585	Windermere Reserve - Cricket Net Renewal - Design	\$15,000
Friberg	All reports are completed and engineers' quotes are complete.	
1586	Gilmour Park - Shade Shelter	\$50,000
Dobson	The detailed design has been submitted for review and will be formally submitted to Melbourne Water for approval to construct.	
1587	Walker Reserve - Pedestrian Lighting	\$3,300
Scott	Project completed.	
1588	Carrington Park Pavilion - Design	\$110,000
Collier	Procurement Plan for Concept Design approved. Tender advertised 16 March 2024. Tender closes 16 April 2024.	
1589	Wantirna Reserve - Pavilion Upgrade - Scope	\$19,482
Collier	The design/ construction drawings and performance solutions have been completed.	
1591	Wally Tew Pavilion Upgrade	\$182,004
Dobson	Architect is currently working on concept plan with Quantity Surveyor input.	

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Project Number	Project Name	Total Adjusted Budget
1592	Bayswater Oval - Floodlighting Upgrade	\$250,000
Dinsdale	Light poles erected, anticipated completion Mid-March.	
1593	Windermere Reserve - Floodlighting Upgrade	\$300,000
Friberg	All construction work completed. Lux reading remains which is scheduled for late February.	
1594	Egan Lee Lighting Upgrade	\$300,000
Scott	The sportsfield lighting is almost complete with just the night testing and LUX report to come.	
1595	Knox City Tennis Courts - LED Lighting Upgrades	\$140,000
Dinsdale	Leisure Team currently exploring the possibility of additional funding for a different lighting system.	
1596	Stud Park Reserve - Car Park Upgrade - Design	\$35,000
Tirhatuan	Survey and Geotech completed. Scope confirmed, detailed design underway and 40% complete.	
1597	Carrington Park (Tennis/Scouts) - Car Park Upgrade - Design	\$35,000
Friberg	Carpark design integrated with extension of access road and squash court development. Design completed.	
1598	Knox Park Reserve - Car Park Upgrade	\$35,000
Friberg	Consultation with Club and Traffic & Transport complete. Design 60% complete.	
1599	Knox Regional Netball Centre - Wayfinding Signage	\$80,000
Dobson	The entry sign and court numbers were installed prior to the KRNC opening. The proofs for the remaining signs were approved by communications team in March. Installation will be completed by the end of April.	
1600	Knox Regional Netball Centre - Outdoor Scoreboards - Courts 1 to 18	\$15,000
Dobson	This project is not proceeding.	
1601	Rowville Community Centre Hall Line Marking Redesign	\$10,000
Tirhatuan	This project is currently under review, having regard to budget and potential use of renewal budget being considered.	
1602	Make safe storage rooms across all children & family centres	\$100,000
All Wards	Works have not commenced.	
1603	The Basin Senior Citizens Hall - Upgrade	\$35,000
Chandler	Quotation process completed. Works Scheduled for April, expected to take 4 weeks. Funds expected to be expended.	

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Project Number	Project Name	Total Adjusted Budget
1604	HV Jones Pavilion - fit for purpose upgrade	\$25,000
Friberg	Work to commence 9 May.	
1605	Carrington Park Multi-Purpose Hub - Wall Mirror Install	\$5,634
Tirhatuan	Works completed.	
1606	Boronia Progress Hall - access ramp	\$10,000
Baird	Design complete.	
1607	Cypress Avenue east side between 37 Cypress Ave and Boronia Rd - Footpath	\$300,000
Baird	Design complete, quotation process underway. Anticipate works to commence in late April '24 and be complete by June '24.	
1608	Olive Grove north side Dorset Road and Albert Ave - Footpath - Design	\$40,000
Chandler	Title re-establishment and feature & level survey completed. Concept plan prepared and feedback from Traffic & Transport received. Design has commenced and is 30% complete.	
1609	Mount View Road south side between Dawson Street and Willow Road - Footpath	\$10,000
Dobson	Draft concept design received and being reviewed.	
1610	Musk Gr west side between Hilltop Rd and Glass Rd - Footpath	\$10,000
Dobson	Location assessed. Any path design unlikely to Disability Discrimination Act compliant.	
1611	Oak Avenue between Dorset Road and Range view Road - Footpath - Design	\$10,000
Chandler	Draft concept design received and being reviewed.	
1612	Wyandra Way, Rowville - LATM Treatment	\$15,000
Friberg	Concept design to be developed.	
1613	Wellington Road between Pinehill Drive - Napoleon Road Shared Path	\$31,693
Taylor	Survey complete. Design due to commence in mid-April '24.	
1614	Scoresby Road/Victoria Road/Devenish Road intersection - Redesign	\$48,000
Baird	Concept design under review. Planning an assessment of cycling options along Victoria and Devenish Roads as input into the final concept design.	
1615	Barmah Drive West - Line and Intersection Treatments	\$60,000
Collier	Consultation with residents underway. Quotes being sought. Construction expected in April 2024.	

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Project Number	Project Name	Total Adjusted Budget
1616	Burwood Hwy - Stud Rd to The Knox School - Shared path lighting	\$60,000
Collier	Purchase order raised for Ausnet to carry out the works. Construction is dependent on Ausnet contractor availability.	
1617	Turramurra Drive - Kerb outstands at Arcadia Park	\$60,000
Tirhatuan	Consultation underway.	
1618	Railway Parade - Street Light Improvements	\$25,000
Dinsdale	Confirmed lighting details with Ausnet. Now seeking firm quotation.	
1619	Teddington Way (At Brentwood Drive) - Splitter Island	\$10,000
Collier	Works complete.	
1620	High Street Road Bus Stop Connections	\$55,000
Scott	Survey completed. Consultation with VicRoads and property owner underway. Design completed and review undertaken with minor design alterations to follow pending outcome of consultation.	
1621	Dog Park Lighting	\$36,260
All Wards	Lighting has been installed and the project is now complete.	
1622	Bayswater Oval (Marie Wallace) - Stormwater Harvesting Upgrade	\$220,000
Dinsdale	Design completed by contractor and quote for installation of GPT received. Exploring alternative options within concept design to identify the most viable solution.	
1623	Liberty Avenue Reserve Wetland/ Harvesting System	\$40,000
Taylor	Concept design currently underway.	
1624	Green spine Corridor (Chandler Road) - Design	\$68,307
Chandler	Consultation with VicRoads regarding Chandler/Dorset intersection design completed. Design integrated with Chandler Rd road renewal project and Consultation with VicRoads regarding Chandler/Dorset intersection design has been undertaken. Detailed Design complete with review changes underway. External Government funding application was presented to the March Boronia Renewal Board meeting, awaiting Board decision.	
1625	Boronia Basketball stadium demolition	\$50,000
Baird	The methodology design report is currently in progress, and will be used as basis for tendering for the demolition contractor.	
1626	Boronia Park Master Plan Implementation	\$50,000
Baird	Internal meeting held, working closely with storm-water and the Major Initiatives Team to accommodate flood management works and basketball stadium demolition.	

Knox City Council Project Status Report

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Project Number	Project Name	Total Adjusted Budget
1627	Boronia Park Retarding Basin Flood Management Works	\$26,900
Baird	Council has sought quotes and awarded the works. The contractor will undertake analysis modelling scenario and provide Council with a suitable asset to rectify flood issues at this site. Scope of works will be completed by April 2024.	
1628	Boronia Wayfinding Strategy	\$120,000
Baird	Council has completed a detailed analysis and section of sites where signage will be implemented. Design of signage has been completed with procurement to occur in March. Council expects signage fabrication and installation to occur late March to June.	
1629	Community Planning to support Boronia railway station development	\$100,000
Baird	Works have not commenced. State Government have not supported Council engagement on project at this stage.	
1630	Chandler Park Reserve Flood Lighting	\$300,000
Chandler	Lux testing completed. Report indicated that lights had to be re-aimed to comply with the Standards.	
1631	Carrington Park - Squash Court	\$623,242
Friberg	Fire water main is due to commence installation shortly. Access road works will commence shortly afterwards to complete required works scope.	
1632	Knox Leisureworks - Strategic Review	\$150,000
Baird	Project brief being developed in conjunction with Council's Major Initiatives team.	
1633	Westfield Library (Permanent) - Furniture Fit Out	\$213,113
Collier	Fit out complete.	
1634	Carrington Park Squash Court Contribution	\$1,499,727
Friberg	Building shell nearing completion. Internal fit-out has commenced.	
		Total: \$75,437,266

4.2 Preventing Homelessness Among Older Women Research Project Outcomes

Final Report Destination:	Mid-Month Council
Paper Type:	For Noting
Author	Coordinator Integrated Community and Health Planning, Kathryn Renwick
Manager:	Manager Community Wellbeing, Kerryn Jansons
Executive:	Director Connected Communities, Judy Chalkley

SUMMARY

The Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA) recently completed a 12-month research project on Preventing Homelessness Among Older Women. As single women over 55 are the fastest growing cohort experiencing homelessness in eastern metropolitan Melbourne and across Australia, the project explored contributing factors and focuses on two key solutions.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to receive and note the report provided in Attachment 1.

1. DISCUSSION

The Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA) recently completed a 12-month research project on Preventing Homelessness Among Older Women which was supported by \$180,000 in funding from the Victorian Government's Metropolitan Partnerships Development Fund.

As single women over 55 are the fastest growing cohort of people experiencing homelessness both locally and Australia-wide, this vital piece of work highlights the local impact, those most at risk and ways to address the issue.

The research project, conducted by Umwelt Consultants, included liaising with women in the region who have experienced homelessness, along with service providers with sector knowledge, to gain insights and ultimately find practical solutions. One-hundred and twenty (120) participants were involved through interviews, surveys and focus groups.

The project explored factors contributing to women's homelessness in the region and identified service gaps and key stages of early intervention to prevent homelessness. The research identified solutions, including two key recommendations:

1.1 Tapping into Under-Utilised Homes and Buildings

Under-utilised buildings are a substantially untapped resource across Victoria. Prosper Australia, a non-profit membership-based association that focuses on the management of exclusive and essential resource allocation through tax, estimates that approximately 64,000 properties are vacant in Victoria each year – enough to house over 185,000 people (Prosper Australia, 2019). Under-utilised homes represent a significant resource, with 75% of Australians aged over 65 having a spare bedroom (James et al. 2020). Across the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR), over 37,000 sole residents aged 60 years and above live in dwellings with two or more bedrooms (ABS, 2021).

These facts represent opportunities to deliver housing for older women at risk of homelessness if connected to the correct resources, stakeholders and actions. This research suggests key ways Local and State Government can assist:

- Support building owners with temporarily unused buildings to generate “meanwhile use” temporary accommodation for older women at risk of homelessness. This could be undertaken in collaboration with Housing All Australians, with funding from private industry, State Government or philanthropy;
- Work as a connector to ensure recent changes to increase flexibility around secondary dwellings (or granny flats) result in increased affordable housing options for older women at risk of homelessness. Build familiarity within the EMR about the role of social enterprise property managers like HomeGround Real Estate to link property owners with potential tenants;
- Advocate for or allocate funding to pilot a program to support home-sharing for older people in the EMR (and then extend if successful). This could be undertaken with Homeshare Australia and New Zealand Alliance (HANZA) or another provider; and
- Establish a Housing Portal where anyone can upload ideas about solutions, land parcels, buildings or services relevant to delivering affordable housing. The Queensland State Government provides an example of how this can be a successful mechanism in crowd-sourcing ideas and resources.

1.2 Retirement Villages and Independent Living Units

There are 476 retirement villages in Victoria. While some of these retirement villages are targeted exclusively at high income retirees, many provide essential affordable housing for low-income older women. This is particularly true of Manufactured Home Estates, not-for-profit Independent Living Units (ILUs) and rental retirement villages.

The retirement village sector is becoming increasingly corporatised as additional for-profit organisations enter the sector. Despite this, there are ways to support not-for-profit retirement village models and encourage for-profit actors to include a proportion of affordable options. Our research suggests the local and state government can assist through:

- Identifying existing State/Local Government-owned land or buildings with the capacity to host affordable retirement village-style housing for older women, partnering with a not-for-profit housing provider and tapping into State Government for funds to deliver housing for vulnerable older people in the EMR. The Big Housing Build and Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF) provide relevant mechanisms for accessing funds with initiatives to deliver homes to women and children escaping family violence;
- Negotiating for affordable retirement homes within retirement villages and Manufactured Home Estates at the planning application stage. Victoria’s Section 173 Agreement provides a mechanism for this; and
- Identifying where existing ageing retirement villages may be disused, under-utilised or at risk of being purchased and converted into more expensive retirement villages. Work with State Government to purchase these developments and ensure they are retained as affordable ILUs.

There are many opportunities for members of the EAHA to progress the delivery of additional housing for older women at risk of homelessness in Melbourne’s EMR. Local Government can

work as an advocate, service provider, landowner, developer, approver or networker to progress these solutions.

The report in Attachment 1 provides background context for how this may be achieved, with an emphasis on local case studies that highlight the steps Local and State Government can take to implement similar models within the EMR.

The research project was designed to develop implementable solutions and to build the networks and levels of familiarity required to deliver them. The value of outputs lies not only in the written findings but also in the formal and informal connections between participants, the advice from lived experience advocates, the awareness-raising aspects of the project and the development of mailing lists, partnerships and idea sharing that emerges from Participatory Action Research.

Next phases of action will focus on researching further a Housing Opportunities Portal and seeking funding to explore the implementation of other recommendations from the project.

2. ENGAGEMENT

The research project, conducted by Umwelt Consultants, included liaising with women in the region who have experienced homelessness, as well as service providers with sector knowledge, to gain insights and ultimately find practical solutions. One-hundred and twenty (120) participants were involved in the research through interviews, surveys and focus groups. These included:

Services Australia	Young Women's Christian Association	RMIT
Housing for the Aged Action Group (HAAG)	Village Well	Whitehorse Churches Care
Eastern Health Homelessness Outreach Psychiatric Service	Uniting, Housing & Family Violence	Sacred Heart Mission - St Kilda
Villa Marie Catholic Homes	DEC Housing	HANZA Homeshare
Homes Vic	Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place	Haven Home Safe
Your Home Living Studio	Ingenia Communities	WEAVERS - University of Melbourne Family Violence & LE experts
Latrobe Community Health Service	Stable One	Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry & Regions (Metropolitan Partnerships)
Eastern Metropolitan Partnership	Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance	Knox City Council
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing	Wintringham	Women's Property Initiatives
Launch Housing	Eastern Region Group of Councils	Manningham City Council
Maroondah City Council	Monash City Council	Whitehorse City Council
Yarra Ranges Council	Holy Fools / Winter night shelter advocacy	Eastern Community Legal Centre

EACH Community Health	Community Housing Industry Association Victoria	Safe Steps
HomeGround Real Estate	Communities Council on Ethnic Issues (CCOEI)	Housing All Australians

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Recommendations within this report seek to address the disproportionate numbers of older women experiencing homelessness. Homelessness has implications for health, mental well-being and premature aging, economic impacts on the health system, welfare supports and economic productivity.

4. CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS

The report is considered to have no direct implications or has no direct impact 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 immediate environmental impacts of this report, however homelessness can contribute to amenity issues.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

EAHA is funded by contributions by the six Eastern Councils. There are no immediate financial or resource implications for Knox Council.

7. RISKS

There will be negative social and economic implications from housing instability and homelessness.

8. KNOX COMMUNITY AND COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025

Neighbourhoods, Housing & Infrastructure

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

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

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 4.3 - Honour and integrate First Nations Culture into actions and environments.

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.

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

This report is compatible with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, as it does not raise any human rights issues.

There are no child safe considerations.

The Preventing Homelessness Among Older Women research project focused on the gendered impact of housing insecurity on Woman over 55. The gendered drivers of homelessness were explored, and implications of the recommendations of the report were considered through a gender lens.

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 - Phase Two report - Preventing Homelessness Among Older Women Final - 2023-11 [4.2.1 - 69 pages]

Attachment 1

Preventing Homelessness Among Older Women

PHASE TWO SOLUTIONS REPORT

November 2023



PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS AMONG OLDER WOMEN

Phase Two Report

FINAL

Prepared by
Umwelt (Australia) Pty Limited
on behalf of
Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA)

Project Director: Dr Sheridan Coakes
Project Manager: Dr Kate Raynor
Report No. 22901/R04
Date: December 2023



75 York Street Teralba NSW 2284



This report was prepared using
Umwelt's ISO 9001 certified
Quality Management System.



Acknowledgement of Country

Umwelt would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the country on which we work and pay respect to their cultural heritage, beliefs, and continuing relationship with the land. We pay our respect to the Elders – past, present, and future.

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Document Status

Rev No.	Reviewer		Approved for Issue	
	Name	Date	Name	Date
Draft V1	Dr Sheridan Coakes	14/11/23	Dr Sheridan Coakes	14/11/23
Draft V2	Dr Kate Raynor	30/11/23	Dr Kate Raynor	30/11/23
Final V1	Dr Kate Raynor	01/12/23	Dr Kate Raynor	01/12/23





1.0 Executive Summary

The Preventing Homelessness Among Older Women (PHOW) Research Project was commissioned by the Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA), delivered through funding from the Victorian Government's Metropolitan Partnerships Development Fund, with support from Knox City Council. This two-phase research project aims to understand:

- the context of older women's homelessness in Melbourne's Eastern Metropolitan Region (Phase One); and
- develop solutions to address this issue (Phase Two).

This report summarises findings from Phase Two of the Project and focuses on two key solutions:

1. how retirement villages and Independent Living Units can better support older women at risk of homelessness; and
2. how under-utilised buildings and homes can be utilised to unlock much-needed housing supply.

These solutions were identified based on consultation conducted during Phase One of the project and represent two mechanisms with the potential to increase housing supply for at-risk older women in the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR). The Eastern Metropolitan Region is comprised of Yarra Ranges Council, Manningham City Council, Maroondah City Council, City of Knox, City of Whitehorse and City of Monash.

1.1 Project Process

Since the end of 2022, this project has mapped the prevalence of older women at risk of homelessness across the region and the services that support them and has identified a number of ways to address homelessness in this cohort.

Utilising outcomes of interviews, surveys and focus groups with 147 participants, the project has focused on what the experience of seeking and delivering housing and homelessness support in Melbourne's EMR, what it is like to experience housing stress and homelessness, and what we should be doing to resolve the growing prevalence of homelessness among older women. Across its phases, the project has worked to give a voice to women who have often felt invisible. The Project methodology is summarised below in **Figure 1.1**.



Figure 1.1 Summary of project methodology

1.2 Key Findings

1.2.1 Centring Women’s Experiences in Decision Making

Both the research and engagement outcomes of the project have emphasised the importance of lived experience. The Project was designed to generate nuanced understandings of older women’s life courses and to centre women’s experiences and preferences in the development of housing and care solutions. The report has built on the concept of gradual and rapid pathways into homelessness (Burns & Sussman, 2019) to provide insight into two key cohorts of women who experience homelessness in later life. The stories of Grace (refer to **Figure 1.2**) and Julie (refer to **Figure 1.3**) are outlined below to highlight two of the unique stories shared during the project. These stories have helped to inform discussion about older women’s homelessness solutions.

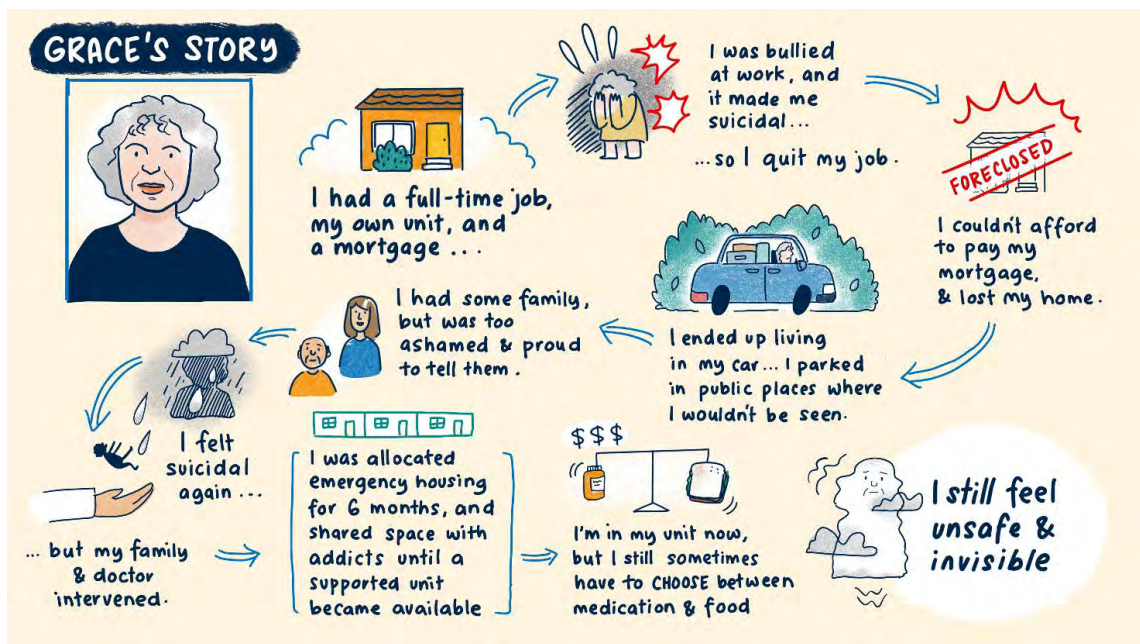


Figure 1.2 Grace's story

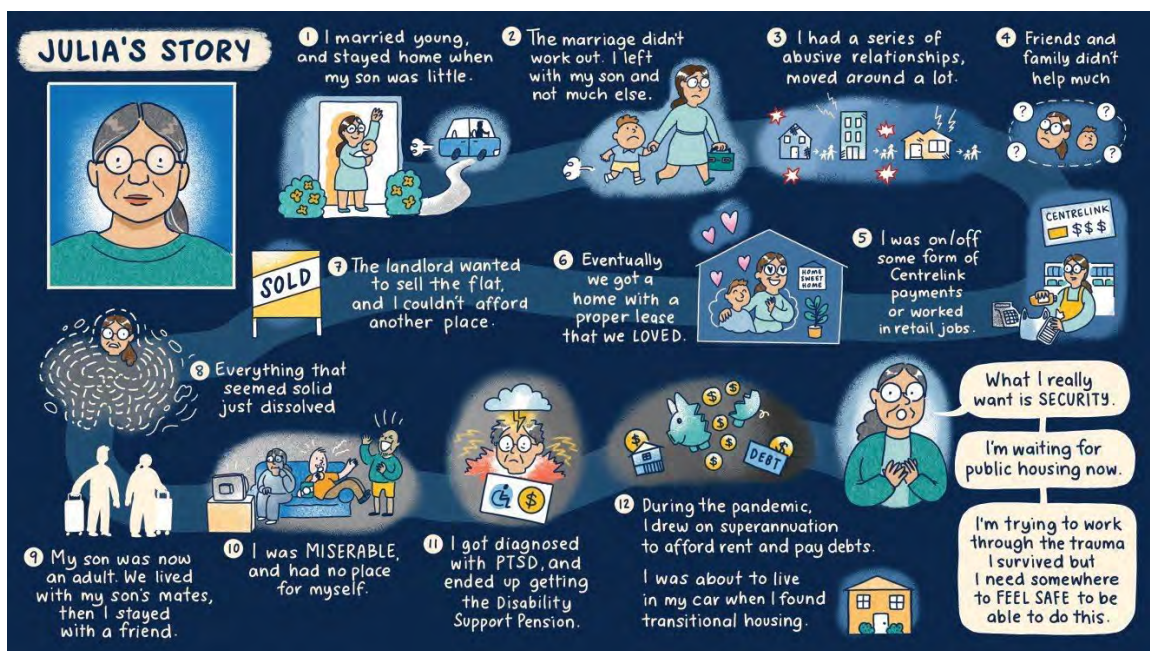


Figure 1.3 Julie's story



1.2.2 Tapping into Underutilised Homes and Buildings

Under-utilised buildings are a substantially untapped resource across Victoria. Prosper Australia, a non-profit membership-based association that focuses on the management of exclusive and essential resource allocation through tax, estimates that approximately 64,000 properties are vacant in Victoria each year – enough to house over 185,000 people (Prosper Australia, 2019).

Under-utilised homes represent a significant resource, with 75% of Australians aged over 65 having a spare bedroom (James et al. 2020). Across the EMR, over 37,000 sole residents aged 60 years and above live in dwellings with two or more bedrooms (ABS, 2021).

These facts represent opportunities to deliver housing for older women at risk of homelessness if connected to the correct resources, stakeholders and actions. Our research suggests that the key ways local and state government can assist are:

1. **Support building owners** with temporarily unused buildings to generate ‘meanwhile use’ temporary accommodation for older women at risk of homelessness. This could be undertaken in collaboration with Housing All Australians, with funding from private industry, state government or philanthropy.
2. **Work as a connector** to ensure recent changes to increase flexibility around secondary dwellings (or granny flats) result in increased affordable housing options for older women at risk of homelessness. Build familiarity within the EMR about the role of social enterprise property managers like HomeGround Real Estate to link property owners with potential tenants.
3. **Advocate for or allocate funding** to pilot a program to support for homesharing for older people in the EMR (and then extend if successful). This could be undertaken with Homeshare Australia and New Zealand Alliance (HANZA) or another provider.
4. **Establish a Housing Portal** where anyone can upload ideas about solutions, land parcels, buildings or services relevant to delivering affordable housing. The Queensland State Government provides an example of how this can be a successful mechanism in crowd-sourcing ideas and resources.

1.2.3 Retirement Villages and Independent Living Units

There are 476 retirement villages in Victoria. While some of these retirement villages are targeted exclusively at high income retirees, many provide essential affordable housing for low-income older women. This is particularly true of Manufactured Home Estates, not-for-profit Independent Living Units (ILUs) and rental retirement villages.

The retirement village sector is becoming increasingly corporatised as additional for-profit organisations enter the sector. Despite this, there are ways to support not-for-profit retirement village models and encourage for-profit actors to include a proportion of affordable options. Our research suggests that the key ways the local and state government can assist are:



1. **Identifying existing state/local government-owned land or buildings** with the capacity to host affordable retirement village-style housing for older women, partnering with a not-for-profit housing provider and tapping into state government for funds to deliver housing for vulnerable older people in the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR). The Big Housing Build and Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF) provide relevant mechanisms for accessing funds with initiatives to deliver homes to women and children escaping family violence.
2. Negotiating for affordable retirement homes within retirement villages and Manufactured Home Estates at the planning application stage. Victoria's Section 173 agreements provide a mechanism for this.
3. **Identifying where existing ageing retirement villages may be disused**, underutilised or at risk of being purchased and converted into more expensive retirement villages. Work with state government to purchase these developments and ensure they are retained as affordable ILUs.

There are many opportunities for members of the EAHA to progress the delivery of additional housing and care services for older women at risk of homelessness in Melbourne's EMR. Local government can work as an advocate, service provide, landowner, developer, approver or networker to progress these solutions. State government can provide the funding, overarching strategy and policy framework, resources and linkages to support localised solutions. The following report provides background context for how this may be achieved, with an emphasis on local case studies that highlight the steps EAHA and the Victorian Government could take to implement similar models within the EMR.

The current research project has been designed to develop implementable solutions and to build the networks and levels of familiarity required to deliver them. The value of outputs lies not only in the written findings but also in the formal and informal connections between participants, the advice from lived experience advocates, the awareness-raising aspects of the project and the development of mailing lists, partnerships and idea sharing that emerges from Participatory Action Research. Next phases of research and action may focus on funding and piloting a single idea from the above list to progress outcomes.

1.2.4 Next Steps

The purpose of Phase Two of this report and action research project has been to build the evidence base and networks necessary to deliver the solutions highlighted above. Next steps by EAHA and the Victorian Government should include:

- Identifying and allocating funding to pilot or scale the solutions identified above.
- Appropriately resourcing EAHA with the funds and staff required to implement and champion the solutions identified above.
- Sharing the findings and testing the applicability of this research project with other Metropolitan Partnerships and local stakeholders.
- Maintaining the network developed through this research through targeted events, email updates and the generation of opportunities for cross-sectoral collaboration.



Abbreviations and Glossary

Term	Definition
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics.
Affordable Housing	Housing, including social housing, that is appropriate for the needs of a range of <i>very low to moderate</i> income households, and priced so these households are able to meet their other essential basic living costs (i.e., not more than 30% of their income).
Age-in-place	The ability of older adults to remain in their own homes and communities as they age, with access to the necessary support services, healthcare, and transportation.
Age Pension	An ongoing payment from the government designed to support people who meet age, financial and residency requirements to meet basic living standards. As of 1 July 2023, those requirements are: aged 67 years or older, an Australian resident living in Australia at time of claim, and eligible after means testing (income and assets). The maximum basic rate is \$971.50/fortnight for singles, or for couples combined, \$1464.60/fortnight.
AHURI	Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
AR	Action Research
At Risk	Refers to individuals or groups who are more likely to experience homelessness due to a combination of risk factors such as poverty, housing insecurity, disability, mental health or substance abuse issues, domestic violence, and social isolation.
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CaSPA	Centralised Application Service for Physician Assistants
CBD	Central business district
Community Housing	Housing owned or managed by community housing agencies for low-income people, including those eligible for public housing. Community housing agencies are regulated by the government.
Disability	A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as walking, seeing, hearing, or learning.
EAHA	Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance
EMR	Eastern Metropolitan Region. The EMR includes Manningham City Council, Maroondah City Council, Knox City Council, Monash City Council, Yarra Ranges Shire Council and Whitehorse City Council.
ESG goals	Environmental, social and corporate government goals – forming the three pillars of the risk and opportunities management framework for organisations.
GCF	Geelong Community Foundation
GP	General Practitioner
HAAG	Housing for the Aged Action Group
HAFF	Housing Australia Future Fund
HANZA	Homeshare Australia and New Zealand Alliance
Housing Stress	A household is considered in housing stress if they are a very low or low income household and are spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs.



Term	Definition
Homelessness	The condition of lacking a stable, safe, and permanent place to live, often accompanied by a lack of basic necessities such as food, clothing, and healthcare. May include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tertiary homelessness: people living in single rooms in private boarding houses without their own bathroom, kitchen or security of tenure. • Secondary homelessness: people moving between various forms of temporary shelter including friends, emergency accommodation, youth refuges, hostels and boarding houses. • Primary homelessness: people without conventional accommodation (living in the streets, in deserted buildings, improvised dwellings, under bridges, in parks, etc).
ILU	Independent Living Unit
LGA	Local Government Area
Low Income	In Victoria, a low-income household is defined as one that earns between 50% to 80% of Area Median Income. The figures below are adjusted based on household composition and number of occupants. Low income ¹ for people living in the Greater Capital City Statistical Area of Melbourne is as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single: \$29,771 to \$47,630. • Couple: \$44,651 to \$71,450. • Family (Single / Couple with dependent children) \$62, 511 to \$100,030 (Planning Victoria, 2023).
LpD	Litres per Day
Manufactured Home Estates (MHE)	Manufactured homes are moveable or relocatable homes that are installed in an estate owned and run by a site operator. In this model, occupants buy the home and rent or lease the land under the land. This is an increasingly popular model and is often cheaper than other forms of retirement village.
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
PCA	Property Council of Australia
PHOW	Preventing Homelessness Among Older Women
Public Housing	Housing owned and managed by the State and provided to eligible disadvantaged Victorians.
RVRA	Retirement Village Residents Association
Shared equity	A shared equity scheme is a type of home ownership arrangement where a home buyer partners with an equity partner, often a government or non-profit organization, to purchase a property. Under this arrangement, the equity partner provides a portion of the capital required to buy the property, allowing the homebuyer to make a smaller initial deposit and have lower ongoing housing costs. However, the homebuyer also has reduced equity in the property, meaning they will receive a reduced capital gain when they sell the property.
Shelter	A temporary living arrangement for people experiencing homelessness, often provided by non-profit organizations or government agencies.
Social Impact Investing	Refers to investments that are granted for not only a financial return, but a measurable social return as well.

¹ These numbers are subject to annual change



Term	Definition
Social Isolation	A state of loneliness or disconnection from others, often resulting from a lack of social support or interaction.
Social Housing	An umbrella term that refers to both community and public housing.
Very Low Income	<p>In Victoria, a very low-income household is defined as one that earns up to 50% of Area Median Income. The figures below are adjusted based on household composition and number of occupants.</p> <p>Very low income for people living in the Greater Capital City Statistical Area of Melbourne is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single: Up to \$29,770. • Couple: Up to \$44,650. • Family (Single / Couple with dependent children) Up to \$62,510 (Planning Victoria, 2023).
YWCA	Young Women’s Christian Association



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Appendices

Appendix A	Draft Interview Guides
Appendix B	Round Table Invitation



2.0 Introduction

2.1 Report Purpose

The PHOW Research Project was commissioned by the Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA), delivered through funding from the Victorian Government's Metropolitan Partnerships Development Fund, with support from Knox City Council. This two-phase research project aims to understand the context of older women's homelessness in Melbourne's Eastern Metropolitan Region (Phase One) and develop solutions to address this issue (Phase Two).

The purpose of the Phase Two Report is to summarise findings from the second phase of the Preventing Homelessness Among Older Women (PHOW) Project which focused on developing recommendations for place-based solutions for older women's homelessness in the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR) of Melbourne.

In this phase we focus on two key solutions:

1. The role of **retirement villages and Independent Living Units** in housing and caring for older women at risk of homelessness.
2. The capacity for **under-utilised buildings and homes** to unlock much-needed housing supply.

These solutions were chosen based on consultation conducted during Phase One of the project and represent two mechanisms with the potential to increase housing supply for at-risk older women in the EMR.

A key aim of this project is to provide evidenced-based advice to government and stakeholders and inform Victorian Metropolitan Partnerships priorities. This includes providing practical advice on the implementation of priority interventions/actions in the EMR.

The project methodology and outcomes are scalable and able to be adapted to other regions and state-wide.

2.2 Phase One Summary

Since the end of 2022, the project has mapped the prevalence of older women at risk of homelessness across the region and the services that support them. Utilising outcomes of interviews, surveys and focus groups with over 90 participants, the project focused on:

- the experience of seeking and delivering housing and homelessness support in Melbourne's EMR
- the lived experience of housing stress and homelessness and
- insights into what we should be doing to resolve the growing prevalence of homelessness among older women.
- The key findings from Phase One are summarised in **Figure 2.1**.



Figure 2.1 Key findings from Phase One of the PHOW Project

Source: (Umwelt, 2023)

2.3 Introduction to Older Women's Homelessness

Single women over 55 years old are the fastest growing cohort of people experiencing homelessness in Australia (ABS, 2018). A report released in 2020 suggests that over 400,000 older women in Australia are at risk of homelessness (Lester & Faulkner, 2020). This includes 240,000 women aged 55 years or older and 165,000 women aged 45 to 55 years. This figure is likely to have increased in response to greater housing prices and rental prices since the onset of COVID-19. Women are increasingly reaching retirement either without ever having purchased a home, with a large mortgage remaining, or having exited homeownership due to financial hardship, relationship breakdown and/or ill health.



Reasons for rising homelessness and housing insecurity include rapid house price increases and rental costs, evident since the late 1980s, as well as long-term declines in social housing provision (Raynor & Panza, 2021). Older women are particularly vulnerable to these structural problems as, on average, they live longer than men; they earn less over their lifetimes and accrue less superannuation; they disproportionately take on unpaid caring roles; and are more likely to experience ageism in the workplace (Darab, Hartman, & Holdsworth, 2018)

Women also tend to experience homelessness differently to men as they are more likely to be staying with friends, living in their car, or remaining in at-risk situations of physical, emotional, economic and/or sexual violence in the home. For these reasons, their homelessness is more likely to be 'statistically invisible' and therefore underreported (Thredgold, Beer, Zufferey, Peters, & Spinney, 2019).

2.3.1 Who is Most at Risk of Homelessness?

Risk of homelessness is highest amongst First Nations women, women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds, single parents, and those that have previously experienced homelessness (Lester & Faulkner, 2020). In addition, LGBTIQ+ elders are more likely to live in poverty and experience homelessness compared to the mainstream population, due to both the complexity of their experiences and difficulty accessing services (Walton, 2020). Those renting in the private rental sector are at highest risk of housing stress.

A woman aged 45 years and above is most at risk of homelessness if they have one or more of the following attributes:

- have been previously at risk
- are not employed full-time
- are an immigrant from a non-English speaking country
- are in private rental
- would have difficulty raising emergency funds
- are First Nations
- are a lone person household
- a lone parent who is separated, divorce or widowed, or
- specifically indicate they would have trouble paying their mortgage or rent (Lester & Faulkner, 2020).

These risks are also compounding, with Lester and Faulkner (2020) finding that:

- for women aged 55–64 years in a private rental, approximately 28% are likely to be at risk
- for women who are also not employed full-time the percentage of risk increases to approximately 34%
- for those who are also a lone parent, the risk rises to over 65%



- the risk increases to over 85% if, in addition, they have experienced at least one prior occurrence of being at risk.

A summary of the prevalence of these risk factors for homelessness in women aged over 55 in the EMR of Victoria are provided in **Figure 2.2**, based on Census data. There are just under 150,000 women aged over 55 living in the EMR, representing 16% of the region’s population. The most prevalent risk factors identified in this population included very low to low income and unemployment, however this is to be expected in a cohort at or approaching retirement age. Other prevalent attributes include living alone and renting in the private rental sector.

Please note, when calculating numbers of older women in the EMR, this study used women of 55 years for the broader cohort and women over 45 for those who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. This is due to existing research as well as feedback gathered during this project that emphasised the premature ageing and associated vulnerability experienced by First Nations women.



Figure 2.2 Attributes of women aged over 55 in the EMR

Source: (Umwelt, 2023)



3.0 Project Methodology

3.1 Methodology Overview

This report represents the culmination of outcomes of Phase Two of the broader research project as illustrated in **Figure 3.1**.



Figure 3.1 Project Methodology

Source: Umwelt, 2023

A high-level summary of the research methodology that has been adopted for the Project is provided in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1 Phase 2 Project activities and inclusions

Activity	Inclusion
Understanding the Solutions – Key Stakeholder Interviews	Interviews (total of 10 interviews) were conducted with key stakeholders with expertise in retirement villages or unoccupied homes to understand current solutions offered along with challenges in the EMR. Refer to Appendix A for further detail on interview questions. The purpose of the interviews was to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build understanding of two chosen solutions: affordable access to retirement villages and access to underutilised dwellings, rooms and buildings. • Share information about the two chosen solutions. • Identify stakeholders to be engaged or speak at the Round Table events.
Briefing Notes	Two briefing notes, one for each solution, were issued prior to the Round Table sessions. These briefing notes were developed based on interview findings and desktop research and were designed to build participant knowledge of the topic ahead of discussions. These briefing notes informed this final report.



Activity	Inclusion
Understanding the Solutions – Round Table sessions	<p>Two sessions (Round Table One: 38 attendees & Round Table Two: 39 attendees) were hosted with industry experts from the public and private sector and older women with lived experience of homelessness on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether retirement villages and Independent Living Units can support older women at risk of homelessness • How we can tap into under-utilised buildings and homes to unlock much-needed housing supply <p>The goal of these sessions was to share information, spark new ideas and build a knowledge base for the Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance and their partners. Industry experts shared their perspectives and big ideas on each topic, then the session shifted to ‘world café’ style conversations where smaller groups could speak directly with each expert to ask follow-up questions, provide feedback or network over shared passions.</p> <p>See Appendix B for the Round Table invitation.</p>
Information Sharing Activities	
Presentation to Knox City Council	A final public research presentation was delivered on November 23rd to share findings from the entire project.

Source: Umwelt (2023).

3.2 Action Research Approach

The Project was designed to deliver an Action Research (AR) approach to understanding older women’s experiences of homelessness and housing stress in the Eastern Metropolitan Region and to identify solutions to address this challenge.

AR is both an ethical approach to research and a framework for guiding methodology. It seeks transformative change through taking action and undertaking research. It is based on methodological, ethical and epistemological values that promote direct participation of affected communities and a commitment to transformative activities (Saija, 2014).

Participatory AR places emphasis on the following:

- Involving impacted communities (i.e., older women at risk of homelessness and the individuals and organisations seeking to support them).
- Creating platforms and opportunities for collaborative problem solving.
- Delivering ethical, inclusive, trauma-informed, and emancipatory research methods and approaches.
- Creating opportunities for transformative action, moving from research to place-based solutions in housing, homelessness, or care systems.
- Commitment to partnerships, relationships and networks of long-term collaborators to ensure the longevity and application of identified solutions.
- These concepts have underpinned the methodology applied throughout the research project.



4.0 Applying a Pathways Approach

Research in Australia and overseas suggests that there are two key ‘cohorts’ of older women who experience homelessness for the first time in later life with distinct pathways into homelessness (Om, Whitehead, Vafeas, & Towell-Barnard, 2022; Burns & Sussman, 2019). These include the gradual and rapid pathways, as summarised in **Figure 4.1** and further described below.

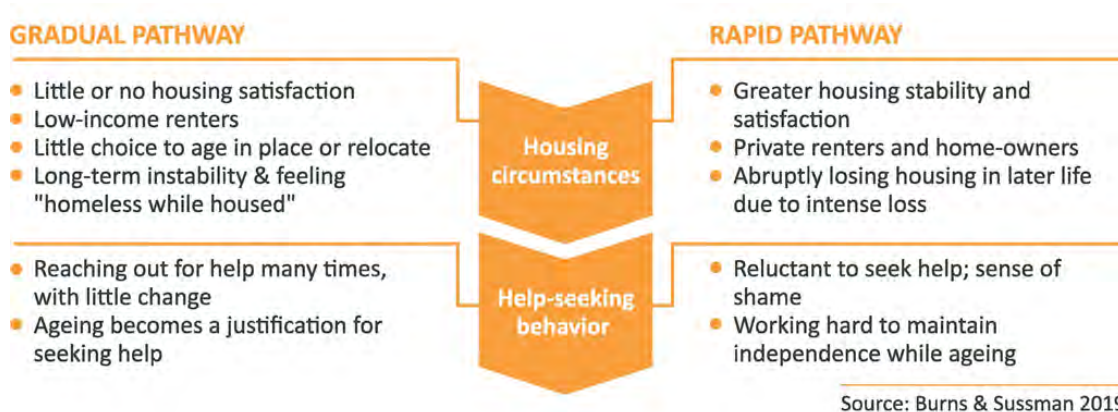


Figure 4.1 Two divergent pathways into first-time homelessness in later life: rapid and gradual

Source: (Burns & Sussman, 2019).

4.1 The Gradual Pathway

Women in this group often follow a slow pathway into homelessness after sustained periods of housing instability. They often endure many years of poor housing conditions, long periods of housing insecurity and a lack of social support (Om, Whitehead, Vafeas, & Towell-Barnard, 2022). Individuals may experience a gradual decline into homelessness through precarious employment, diminishing finances leading to poverty, poor mental and physical health, decreasing social connections, psychiatric conditions, or alcoholism (Dietz, 2009). They often have histories of asking for housing or homelessness support but have not been able to access it. They may be unemployed or under-employed and have relatively transient housing and employment histories. For example, they may spend many years renting formally or informally, living in caravan parks with precarious contracts or couch surfing. Their capacity to age-in-place and prepare for older age is severely limited (Burns & Sussman, 2019).

The following case study is a summary of Emma’s story (pictured in

Figure 4.2), shared with generous permission. Emma is a resident of Wintringham, a non-religious not-for-profit housing welfare organisation that is committed to providing older people who are at risk of homelessness with a range of high-quality housing and service supports. While Emma’s story is unique, it is not uncommon.



Emma's story can be seen as an example of the 'gradual pathway' into homelessness:

"My husband and I eventually became grandparents to a beautiful girl. We did not know at the time that circumstances beyond our control would lead us to raise this girl as our own.

Our household was quite full back then. We had my mother living with us, as I was caring for her after her stroke; my brother, who at this point had become blind, was also living with us; we had our granddaughter and ourselves. It was a very busy period of our lives.

We lost my mum when she died of a stroke, aged 74.

A few years later my brother also passed away; but we continued to care for our granddaughter even until today. Now our extended family includes my three great grandchildren, they are my world.

The pressures of life, looking after so many, took its toll and my husband and I drifted apart, and divorced. That led me to become homeless when I was 58, with my teenage granddaughter.

We went to see Sasha, my support worker at the Salvation Army in Sunshine, to help us find housing. We moved around quite a bit at that time. We kept getting placed in rooming houses, but they didn't suit us at all.

We found ourselves in caravan parks and cabins. The initial weeks were paid by the Salvation Army, and that was helpful, but it still wasn't affordable for us to maintain.

In 2011 my granddaughter moved to Bendigo to live with her boyfriend, and I found myself on my own.

I found a room for rent with a family which didn't work out, meals were meant to be included in my rent, but they never fed me much. For example, dinner was two chicken wings and a small amount of vegetables. I needed to get out of there as fast as I could, which of course meant I would be homeless again.

It was 2012 and once again I had no idea where I was going to sleep, but I knew I needed to charge my mobile phone, so I went into the office of HAAG (Housing for the Aged Action Group) and asked them to charge my phone. I remember at the time, walking into Flinders Lane and sitting on the pavement crying, wondering what the hell I was going to do.

One of the support workers, April, came out and asked me where I was sleeping that night. I told her that I had no idea. She took me back into the office and rang the caravan park in Braybrook and booked and paid for a lovely cabin for a week. She even drove me there! While I was there, the team at HAAG helped me to fill in my application to Wintringham, and that's when I was placed on the waitlist. While I was living in the cabin, a place at Wintringham became available. I was shown the available apartment; it was so modern looking and very inviting. It was a done deal, I was taking it!

April organised to bring my things from storage to me, she made a welcome pack of food and goodies, and then she drove me to Wintringham where I still am today! I still remember moving in and how, for the first time in a long time, it felt like I was home.



The community opened their arms to me, and I remember many hot nights sitting outside the community room with fellow residents, enjoying a cold drink. One had a guitar and played for us. This was family.

I spend a lot of time with my great grandkids and granddaughter so for me it's a perfect mix.

The support staff at Wintringham including Heather and Nicole are always available to have a chat if you are feeling down. It makes Wintringham Delahey a delightful place to live. You never feel alone here! There are always things happening in the community room, like various activities, from board games to movies, with the added touch of popcorn or ice cream.

The Planned Activity Groups (PAG) have also allowed me to experience things that I could never do on my own, such as enjoying high tea at the Windsor Hotel! Getting tickets to the football prior to [COVID-19] enabled me to take my great grandson and enjoy some sporting moments with him. There are many, many memories that have been made at Wintringham which I truly cherish." – Emma, 2023



Figure 4.2 Emma, resident at Wintringham

A further example of a 'gradual pathway' into homeless is provided in **Figure 4.3**, which summarises Julia's experience. Many other older women experience 'gradual pathways' into homelessness characterised by decades of housing, employment and social instability and disconnection before ageing into homelessness. The experience of trauma, mental and physical disability and histories of family violence are extremely common for women in this cohort. There is a need for solutions to provide both housing and support to address the multiple and overlapping needs of people who have experiences of long-term homelessness and housing instability.

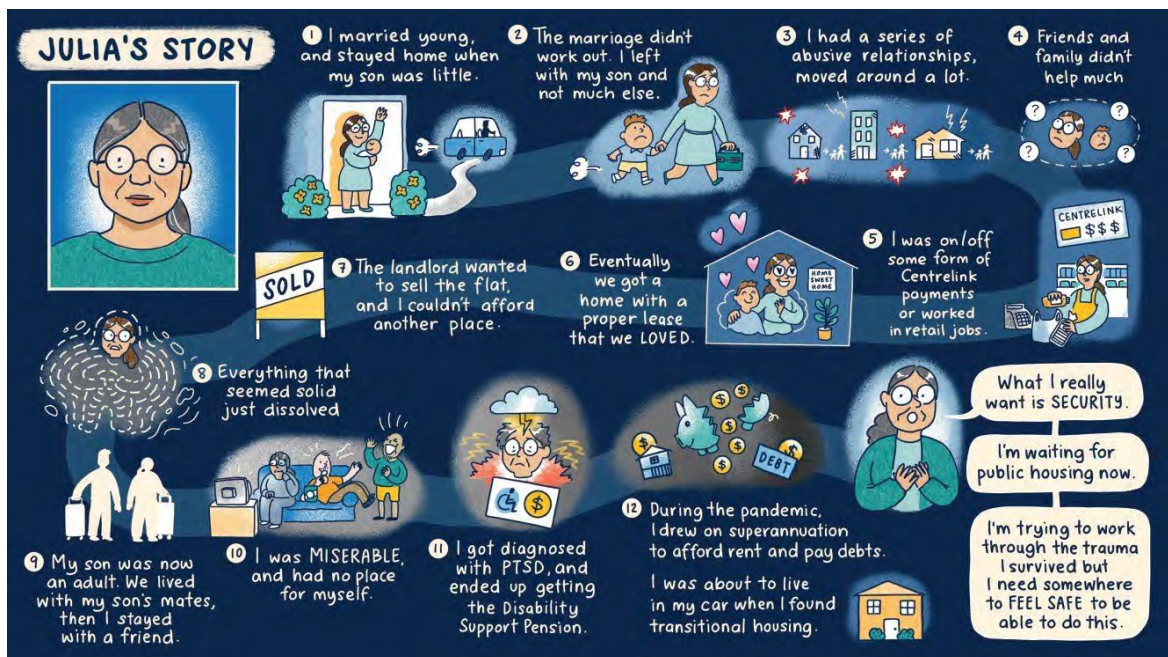


Figure 4.3 Julia's story

Source: Zahra Zainal, 2023

4.2 The Rapid Pathway

Women in this group are relatively distinct from women in the 'gradual pathway' cohort. Women with rapid pathways to homelessness in later life often have relatively stable work, housing and family lives prior to experiencing homelessness. They tend to experience an intense series of shocks in later life such as divorce, loss of a loved one, sickness or injury that precipitate housing stress and homelessness. This group often resist asking for help because of internalised concerns that reaching out to existing social networks is shameful and to be avoided. Similarly, women in this group often do not perceive of themselves as in a crisis or requiring of support until they reach crisis point. For this group, the rapid nature of transitions into homelessness means that accessing supported housing is accompanied by a sense of disbelief or confusion as the transition was experienced as jarring and difficult to comprehend (Burns & Sussman, 2019).

The following case study from a resident in the EMR is reflective of the 'rapid pathway' into homelessness. Grace's story is summarised in **Figure 4.4**.

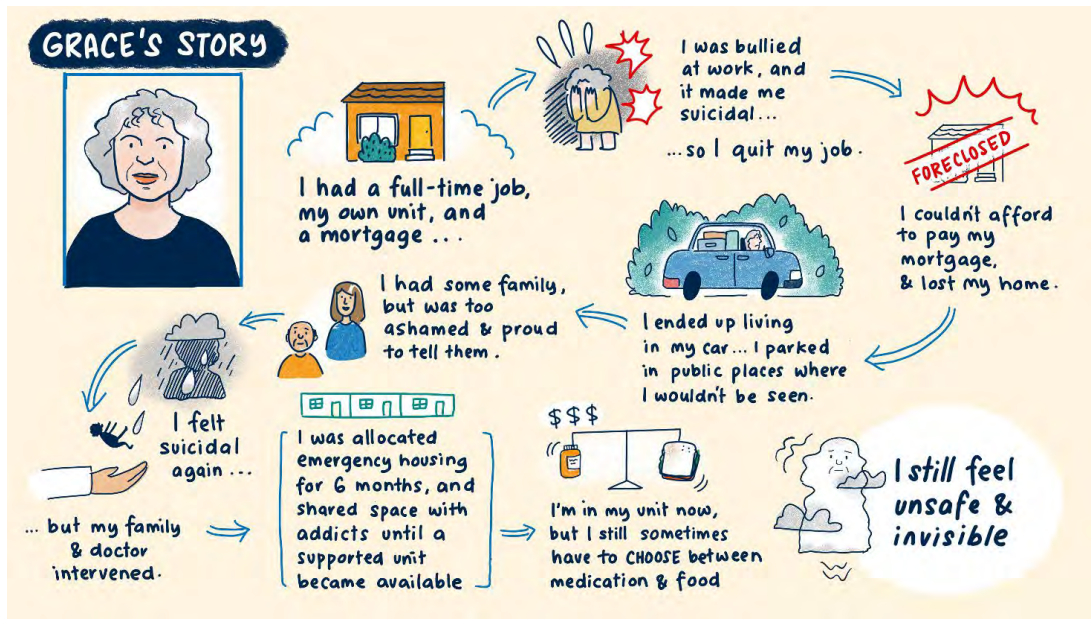


Figure 4.4 Grace's story

Source: Zahra Zainal, 2023

Grace is an example of the ways that ‘shocks’ (like job loss and mental health crises) and ‘buffering resources’ (like family support, services and social housing) contribute to pathways into, through, and out of homelessness. Grace’s story shows the power that intervention before crisis can achieve and highlights the importance of family and social networks and health systems in helping to identify vulnerable women before they reach deep crisis.

4.3 Applying a Pathways Approach to Solution Design

The stories of Grace, Julia, Emma and others, provide a framework for thinking through holistic pathways and emotional and physical experiences of older women. They force us to consider life-long journeys rather than just considering the point of crisis, and to consider broader needs than a roof over someone’s head.

The following chapters consider two key solutions with merit for women from either cohort, providing more detail on how these solutions may be delivered in the EMR.



5.0 Utilising Underutilised Homes and Buildings

This section provides an overview of considerations for using underutilised homes and buildings to house and support older women at risk of homelessness. Findings reported here are derived from a desktop review, interviews with industry experts and findings from a Round Table discussion hosted with service providers and lived experience experts (older women) in October 2023.

A key solution raised in the project was the role of utilising under-utilised homes and buildings as a key resource for housing older women at risk of homelessness. This section focuses on these resources as mechanisms for supporting older women at risk of homelessness. It draws on literature review findings and outcomes from expert interviews and Round Table discussions to provide greater insight into the potential for underutilised buildings and homes to support vulnerable older women.

The project has deliberately applied broad definitions of key terms to support further debate, discussion and refinement of this topic, utilising the following definitions for underutilised homes and buildings.

- *Underutilised homes*: refers to residential zoned homes that are currently vacant for all or most of the time or homes with more rooms than the occupant wants or requires and with the capacity to appropriately house other occupants. It could also apply to homes currently rented at market rates that could be converted to affordable rentals.
- *Underutilised buildings*: refers to buildings, or parts of buildings, that are currently unused or underutilised that could be converted from an existing use to safe, appropriate and affordable housing.

5.1 How Prevalent are Underutilised Homes and Buildings?

Vacancy rates are poorly measured in Australia. Vacancy rates often lack comprehensive and up-to-date data collection, which is why Prosper Australia Research Institute uses water usage rates as an alternative indicator for assessing property occupancy trends (Propser Australia, 2019). Prosper's report provides measures of vacancy at two thresholds: absolute vacancy at 0 litres per day (LpD) on average for 12 months; and speculative vacancy at less than 50LpD on average over 12 months. Speculative vacancies reflect underutilisation, such as dwellings that are intermittently inhabited.

Underutilised buildings:

Prosper Australia Research Institute conducts research on land and housing topics related to public policy making. Prosper Australia's Speculative Vacancies 10 report on Melbourne's vacant land and housing in 2019 revealed that approximately 64,000 properties were 'speculatively vacant' each year between 2012 and 2019, constituting a 4.0% speculative vacancy rate. These empty properties could potentially house over 185,000 people, underscoring a stark contrast with Victoria's 80,000-person public housing waiting list. Further, 38,200 properties consumed zero L of water daily over the year of 2019, meaning they were 'absolutely vacant' (Propser Australia, 2019).



Office buildings are also being considered as unoccupied spaces that have the potential to be turned into homes. A recent study conducted by the design studio Hassell and planning consultancy Ethos Urban for the Property Council of Australia identified 86 buildings in Melbourne as “really ripe for adaptive re-use” and with the potential to generate more than 10,000 new homes (Waters, 2023). The report observed that:

“If we only converted half of those, we could supply around 10,000 to 12,000 new homes, and each repurposed building would use roughly half the upfront embodied carbon compared to knocking existing buildings down and rebuilding.” - Ingrid Bakker, principal at Hassell.

Underutilised homes:

The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI), in their report titled *Effective downsizing options for older Australians*, found that the proportion of later-life households with spare bedrooms in Australia is 75%. Indeed, 66% of later-life Australians still have spare bedroom(s) after downsizing. While these findings, summarised in **Figure 5.1**, suggest there may be opportunity to encourage households with ‘surplus’ bedrooms to share their homes with others, research suggests that many households value having additional bedrooms for visitors and other uses and there is limited appetite for home sharing in older households (James, Rowley, & Stone, 2020).

Spare bedroom(s)	I/we have already downsized (%)	Have not downsized (%)	Have thought about downsizing (%)	All households (%)
Yes	66	73	87	75
No	34	27	13	25

Source: Authors’ analysis of AHA survey (2018) data, unweighted.

Figure 5.1 Proportion of later life households with spare bedrooms

Source: (James, Rowley, & Stone, 2020)

Australian Census data from 2021 revealed that across six LGAs in Victoria (Knox, Manningham, Monash, Whitehorse, Yarra Ranges and Maroondah) there were 37,236 sole residents aged 60 and above living in dwellings with two or more bedrooms. The majority (25,529 individuals) were in private dwellings with 3-4 bedrooms. Across the six LGAs, numbers of sole residents living in private dwellings with two or more bedrooms were highest in Whitehorse (13,535 sole residents) with 57% of these residents aged 60 and above (7,710 older sole residents), and lowest in Manningham (8,206 sole residents) with 62% of these residents aged 60 and above (5,087 older sole residents).

5.2 How Can We Increase Access to Affordable Housing by Tapping into Underutilised Homes and Buildings?

There are several mechanisms available for increasing access to underutilised homes and buildings. This section will provide a brief overview, with the following sub-sections providing more concrete examples. Solutions have been derived from Round Table discussions hosted by EAHA in October 2023, and are summarised in **Figure 5.2**.

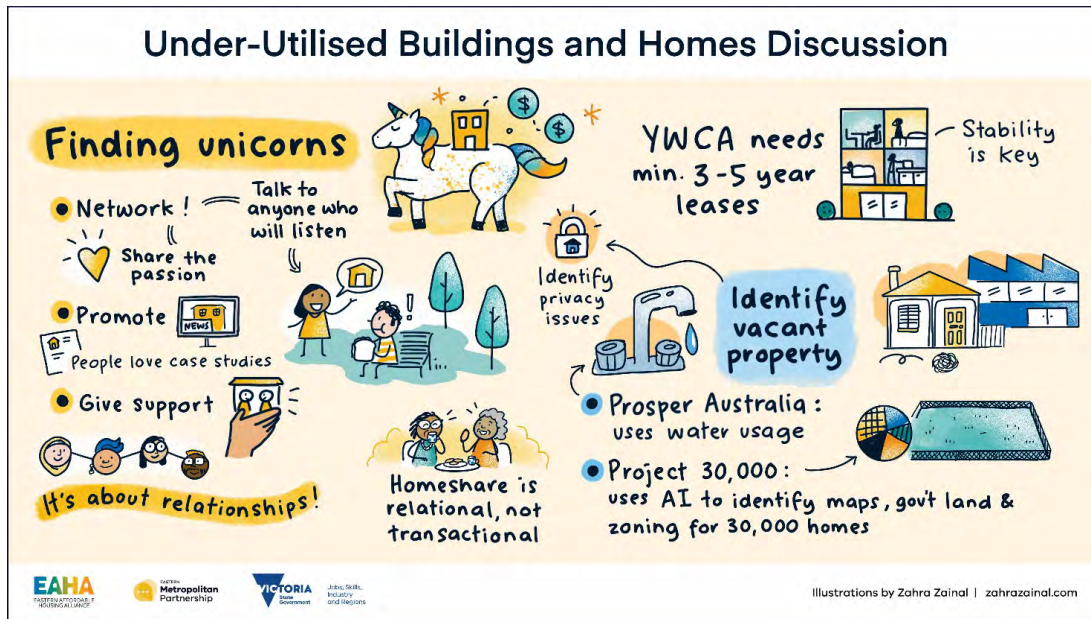


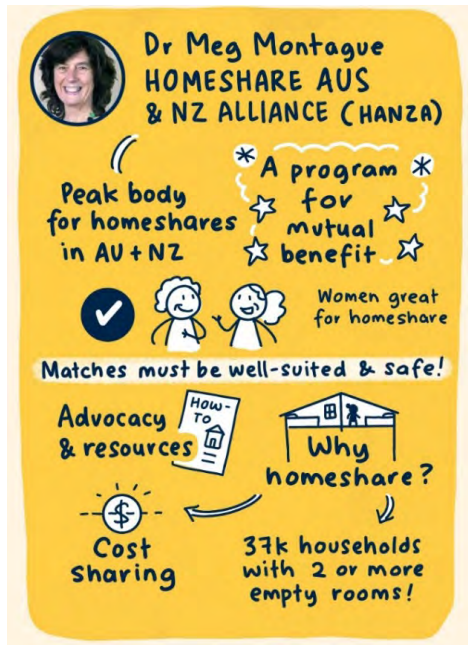
Figure 5.2 The context of under-utilised homes and buildings

Finding unicorns: Participants at Round Tables spoke of the need to ‘find unicorns’ to tap into underutilised housing or buildings. These ‘unicorns’ may be existing building owners with no immediate plans to use or redevelop their buildings, philanthropic home-owners with a desire to rent their dwellings at below market rates, or home sharers with appropriate homes and dispositions to share their homes with others. While these opportunities exist, they are rare and may result in opportunistic rather than strategic housing outcomes.

Data and identification: Central to this discussion was the difficulty of finding these people and resources (unicorns) and the importance of networking and partnerships in bringing them together. Round table participants noted the difficulty of identifying appropriate buildings that could be used temporarily or in the long-term for accommodation, while others spoke of the difficulty of identifying which households had the space and desire to share homes with others. Data, mapping and idea portals were key solutions raised to address this issue.



5.2.1 Supporting Homeshare Arrangements



Homeshare Australia and New Zealand Alliance (HANZA) is the peak body supporting organisations and individuals to deliver homeshare programs. It started as a desire to support older people and has broadened to include people with a disability or people at risk of homelessness. HANZA supports organisations to run programs by providing a consultancy service with advice, training and creation of policies and procedures for those implementing the programs. Dr Meg Montague, the Director of HANZA, provided an overview of how the business model works at the Round Table sessions, which is summarised in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3 A summary of the HANZA model presented by Dr Meg Montague, Director and Board Chair of HANZA, at the Round Table discussions in October 2023

The program matches existing homeowners (with spare bedrooms) with people looking for affordable housing in that community. It is designed to help both existing homeowners and homesharers, as it offers support for elderly people who may be lonely or isolated and unable to afford the utilities to stay in the area. The EMR is particularly appropriate for homeshare, due to the presence of large houses, and potential for large utility bill and rate payments that incentivise households to share these costs with other occupants.

Homeshare gives people the opportunity to live in different styles of accommodation and locations that they wouldn't be able to afford if they were living alone. This also keeps people in the communities that they know, which increases their sense of belonging and connectedness to existing informal support systems. This is an affordable option that can be put in place in a timely manner, in comparison to building new apartment buildings or changing existing infrastructure to suit housing.

Homeshare can be suitable for a wide range of people: elderly people – especially older women; disabled people; single people; or young people coming out of out-of-home care. However, it relies on appropriate management and relationship-building processes.

During the Round Table session, the key enabling factors for making homeshare arrangements work were identified and summarised in **Figure 5.4**.



Figure 5.4 Key factors identified from the Round Table discussions for enabling Homeshare arrangements

5.2.1.1 Risks of Homeshare Arrangements

The risks of encouraging homeshare arrangements that link households with additional bedrooms to those looking for housing include the potential for conflict between home sharers, challenges recruiting house holders willing to share, and the funding to facilitate these relationships and support change management for both the house holder and the home sharers. This is particularly relevant to older women, especially those with histories of trauma and/or overlapping vulnerabilities.

During consultation, we heard that for these matches to be made between people who will be home sharing, a skilled person needs to coordinate the matching to minimise the risk of conflict within the households. To have a coordinator with the capacity and relationship-building skills required to successfully match people, the organisation needs to be appropriately funded and have organisational commitment to this strategy. It requires funding to share information about the program and help recruit participants. A lack of funding can cause homeshare breakdowns.

"I have seen the matching fail before because the organisation has not supported it enough. It needs to be given a real go, with resources and commitment." – Industry expert

"It is important to improve communication from relevant organisations around the concept of homeshare. Women need to be made aware that this is a solution available to them." – Industry expert



Another risk includes the recruitment of homesharers, as it is difficult to recruit house holders, especially in a post-COVID world where older people are understandably concerned about health risks associated with home sharing. Similarly, taxation and income barriers exist for home-owners who fear that declaring a rental income will jeopardise their age pension. These barriers increase the likelihood or risk of informal arrangements with limited longevity or security for either party.

“Many homesharers are anxious surrounding the potentially insecure and short time frame of homeshare solutions. It is important to understand that home share isn’t necessarily the right solution for everyone.” – Industry expert

5.2.2 Supporting Property Investors to Rent Their Homes at an Affordable Rate or Support Social Housing Through Their Properties

HomeGround Real Estate provides a mechanism for homeowners to contribute to affordable housing. It is an innovative social enterprise real estate agency. All profits from the enterprise are reinvested in funding the services of Melbourne’s largest housing and homelessness support provider, Launch Housing.

Property owners can choose to have their properties managed by HomeGround Real Estate and rent their properties at market rates, with any profit from those fees then flowing to Launch Housing to address homelessness in Melbourne.

Alternatively, property owners may also choose to rent their properties at a below-market rate to generate affordable housing for tenants. The Australian Tax Office has made a class ruling that allows rental providers who list their property with HomeGround Real Estate at a discounted rate to claim the gap as a tax deduction at the end of the financial year. This is an innovative mechanism for supporting existing homeowners who would like to contribute to addressing homelessness to use their investment properties to achieve this goal.

In some cases, philanthropic property owners have chosen to partner with HomeGround Real Estate to provide whole buildings on a ‘peppercorn lease²’ of \$1 a year, allowing HomeGround Real Estate to rent properties to vulnerable and low-income households at 30% of their income. A case study for this is provided below. Samantha Gatherum-Goss, Manager at HomeGround Real Estate, provided an overview of how the business model works at the Round Table sessions, which is summarised in **Figure 5.5**.

Samantha also raised a variety of additional measures with the potential to encourage homeowners to use under-utilised homes or rooms to generate affordable housing. These included:

² A peppercorn lease is where a small nominal rental payment is made (typically \$1 per annum) that does not reflect the fair value of the property, but still satisfies the requirements of a legal contract (BDO Australia, n.d.). An owner may wish to charge a peppercorn lease if they want the property to be rent-free, but to still maintain a formal landlord/ tenant relationship.



- Victoria reconsidering how ancillary dwellings or granny flats are treated in planning.** The Victorian Government has announced that from late 2023, ‘small second homes under 60 square metres, also known as granny flats, will no longer require a planning permit on properties 300 square metres or larger where there are no flooding or environmental overlays’ and that ‘there will be no restrictions on how a small second home can be used. This means these dwellings can be used flexibly, whether it’s keeping family members closer, providing temporary housing or being rented out for additional income’ (Premier of Victoria, 2023). As previously noted in the Phase One report, granny flats represent a useful way to increase affordable rental options in Victoria. This regulation reform will align Victoria with NSW where granny flats may be built in residential zones and do not need to be occupied by a dependent person of the main household. This would also reduce the risk of informal renting arrangements that may be open to exploitation.
- Increasing incentives to utilise homes:** Tax policies are currently changing across Australia to disincentivise short-term rentals in highly impacted areas and to implement vacant land and home taxes. However, incentives in the form of insurance premium decreases or rate reductions for long-term vacant homes may also be useful in changing homeowner behaviour.



Figure 5.5 A summary of the HomeGround Real Estate model presented by Samantha Gatherum-Goss, Manager at HomeGround, at the Round Table discussions in October 2023



Illustrations by Zahra Zainal | zahrazainal.com

During the Round Table sessions, ways of expanding the real estate market to deliver more affordable housing were discussed and summarised in **Figure 5.6** and are further described in the following case study.

Figure 5.6 Key factors identified from the Round Table discussions for expanding affordable real estate arrangements.

5.2.2.1 Case Study: Peppercorn Block in Brunswick funded through philanthropy, Melbourne

A recently developed block in Brunswick can be seen as an example of how HomeGround Real Estate can support philanthropic individuals with a desire to reduce homelessness (HomeGround Real Estate, n.d.).

Andrew and Glenda renovated an apartment in Brunswick for the purpose of providing social and affordable housing and gave the property to HomeGround Real Estate to manage (HomeGround Real Estate, n.d.). The arrangement is that HomeGround will manage the property for ten years on a peppercorn lease. This equates to the couple receiving only \$1 in rent annually, but none of the costs for maintaining the property. This is modelled after federal social housing policies, where rent at the block does not exceed 30% of a tenant's income. Additionally, Andrew and Glenda were exempt from land tax and council rates due to legislation in Victoria for land used for charitable purposes.

Andrew and Glenda shared their challenges in creating social and affordable housing including obtaining insurance and responding to community perceptions. Despite these challenges, the couple were able to create a comfortable and energy-efficient space, as shown in **Figure 5.7**, and the first tenants have now settled into the property with the support of HomeGround Real Estate.



Figure 5.7 Peppercorn block in Brunswick (HomeGround Real Estate, n.d)

5.2.3 Tapping into Under-utilised Existing Buildings

A recent report by Hassell and Ethos Urban for the Property Council of Australia (PCA) identified more than 80 unoccupied or underused office buildings in Melbourne’s CBD that were built before 1990 and could potentially be converted to housing. The study focused on buildings over 10 floors and between 20 to 25m wide to allow for high quality apartment design (Hassell, 2023). This model is based on adding additional storeys to existing buildings to generate more space for housing and is unlikely to deliver affordable housing without incentives to achieve this outcome. However, it provides a useful model for thinking through how non-residential buildings could be re-purposed for temporary or long-term housing uses.

The retrofit of commercial buildings has been identified in the Victorian Housing Statement as a state government priority, with the Victorian Government stating that *“we’ll work with the PCA and the City to consider opportunities to facilitate the conversion of these offices into around 10,000-12,000 apartments and mixed-use properties”* (State of Victoria: Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2023, p. 12).

Outside of this, there is an opportunity to temporarily access buildings that are not in use. These buildings may be empty while owners seek planning approvals, as they become surplus to need, as part of a land banking strategy, or while owners seek finance to redevelop. They may be owned by private developers, not-for-profit organisations, religious groups or governments. There is a potential for these buildings to be converted into pop-up, safe shelters for three or more years, with conversion undertaken at a pro bono or lo bono rate.



During the Round Table sessions, the key enablers for making temporary housing more available to people were identified and summarised in **Figure 5.8**.



Figure 5.8 Key factors identified from the Round Table discussions for facilitating temporary housing

5.2.3.1 Risks of using under-utilised buildings

While utilising existing buildings represents a significant opportunity for delivering housing rapidly, it also comes with risks. For example, where conversions are intended as a ‘temporary use,’ the length of time the building is available needs to be long enough to justify the cost associated with adapting the building to meet occupant needs and meet building code requirements.

Further, temporary solutions that deliver crisis accommodation require well-planned and well-supported transition plans to ensure occupants are not exited, or perceived to be evicted, into future homelessness. Projects require at least six months of ‘wind down’ time to make sure that all residents have secure places to move to at the end of a project. This is both a key consideration for ensuring the temporary housing does not compound the instability and trauma of residents and is also a key reputational risk for building owners and service providers.

“What they [building owners] are really worried about is that the news is going to pick up that they are evicting vulnerable people into the street at the end of the lease, even though that isn’t what is happening. But that’s the biggest risk.” - Private sector developer



Not all buildings are appropriate for residential conversions, especially multi-storey commercial buildings with large floor plates that do not allow for sufficient light and air circulation and fire management systems that do not meet residential requirements. Similarly, not all buildings have appropriate zoning or are in areas with services and facilities that older women require. Interviewees noted a lack of information about the location, quality or ownership of potential buildings with the capacity to be converted.

Similarly, while this is a promising solution for some areas and buildings, it does not replace the need for long-term affordable and social housing.

5.2.3.2 Case Study: Queensland’s Housing opportunities portal

Queensland has recently implemented a novel approach to identifying opportunities to deliver new housing, including through the identification of land parcels and buildings that could host affordable housing. The housing opportunities portal is open to individuals as well as groups including not-for profit organisations and local government (Queensland Government, 2023). All submissions will be assessed by the Queensland Housing Department. An industry expert provided the following insights regarding this new initiative:

“In Queensland they have a portal and you can submit your properties or ideas. Last week the Queensland Government purchased hotels and motels and retirement villages to use as social housing. Government are the real leaders in this. I am a huge fan of Minister Scanlon and the work she is doing.” – Industry expert

The housing portal represents a useful response to the data and identification issues identified by stakeholders during this research project. It addresses the concern that many buildings, land parcels and opportunities exist but there are few ways to bring together the right people and organisations to support their conversion into affordable housing for vulnerable older women.

5.2.3.3 Case Study: Fire Hall adaptation in Vancouver, Canada

Vancouver, Canada offers examples of the repurposing of government assets to deliver affordable housing. In collaboration with the Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services and the not-for-profit organisation YWCA, the City of Vancouver redeveloped an ageing fire hall to incorporate affordable housing. The project comprised a new fire hall on the lower two floors of the building and affordable housing on the top four floors. The City of Vancouver owns the land and leases it to YWCA (City of Vancouver, 2018). The project created 31 two- and three-bedroom homes for low-income, woman-led households in a well-located area close to services, schools and bus routes. It was funded through a range of contributions from philanthropic organisations, provincial and federal governments and a non-profit housing provider. Significantly, the project is one of 20 sites contributed by the City of Vancouver to encourage affordable housing (City of Vancouver, 2017).

5.2.3.4 Aged Care Facility adaptation in Melbourne, Australia

The Lake House is a repurposed aged care facility in Melbourne owned by CaSPA Care providing short-term crisis or transitional accommodation for up to around 40 older women at a time. The collaboration was facilitated by Housing All Australians, a ‘for purpose’ organisation committed to bringing private sector voices and resources to addressing Australia’s housing crisis. Through collaboration with the private sector and local governments, YWCA National Housing Australia manages short-term leasing of the facility, with tenants paying ‘peppercorn’ rent of \$1 a year, to provide affordable housing for older women.



Building outgoing are recovered via below market rent paid by the women as sub-tenants. This innovative solution has garnered praise not just from tenants and community, but from the wider industry, with the presentation of the PowerHousing Australia’s Leadership and Innovation Award in August 2018.

Disused or underutilised buildings present opportunities to provide accommodation on a temporary basis while the building isn’t in use or in the long term if supported by sufficient financial support. Libby Van Der Waal, the National Team Lead of YWCA Australia, provided an overview of how the business model works at the Round Table sessions, which is summarised in **Figure 55.9**.



Illustrations by Zahra Zainal | zahrazainal.com

Figure 55.9 A summary of how the YWCA model works presented by Libby Van Der Waal, National Team Leader at YWCA Australia, at the Round Table discussions in October 2023

Key outcomes of the Lake House Project are shown in **Figure 5.10**.

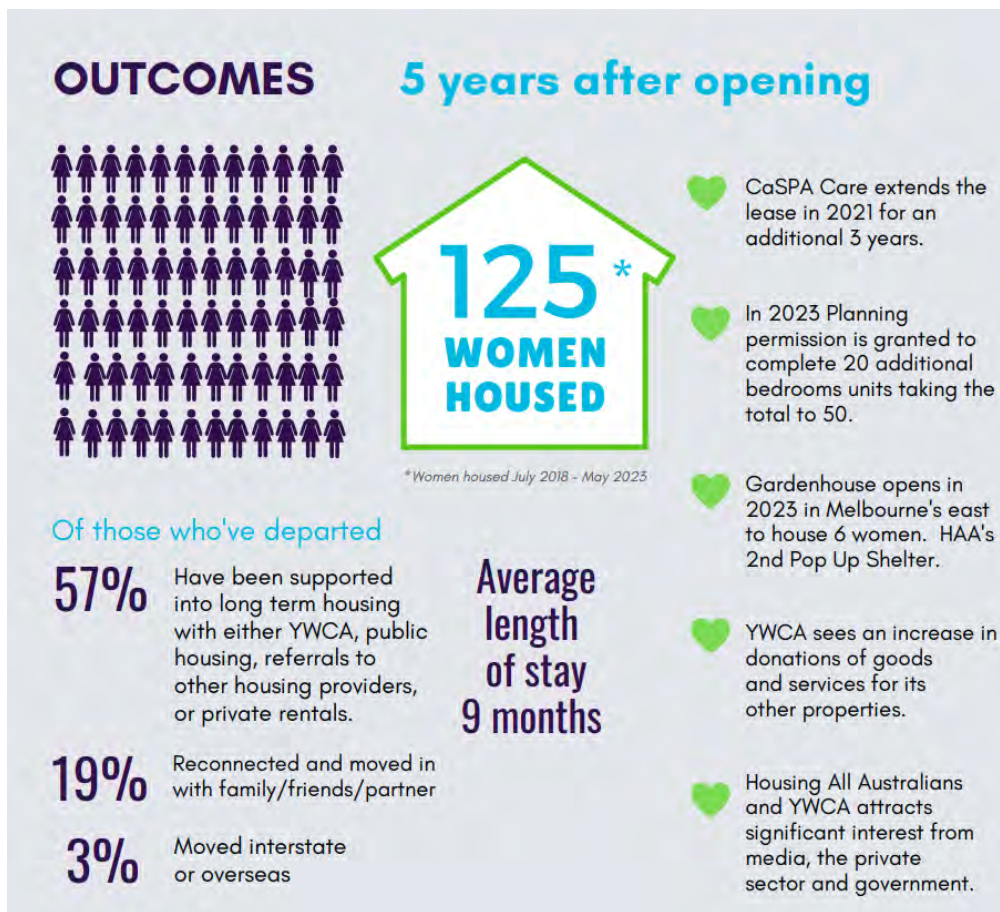


Figure 5.10 Pop Up Shelter, Lake House Victoria

Source: (YWCA & HAA, 2023)



6.0 Retirement Villages and Independent Living Units

This chapter focuses on retirement villages and Independent Living Units as mechanisms for supporting older women at risk of homelessness. It draws on literature review findings and outcomes from expert interviews and round table discussions to provide greater insight into the potential for these housing and care models to support vulnerable older women.

The project has utilised the following definitions for retirement villages and Independent Living Units (ILUs).

Retirement village: run by for-profit and not-for-profit companies and vary greatly in what they offer residents, their cost and the conditions laid out in individual contracts.

A Retirement Village is defined by law as a place where:

- a majority of residents are aged 55 years and over and retired from full-time work,
- residents receive accommodation and services, but not residential aged care services, and;
- at least one of the residents paid an 'ingoining fee'³ (Housing for the Aged Action Group , 2023).

Independent Living Unit (ILU): are generally understood to be a self-contained dwelling where an older person can live independently. For the purposes of this project, it refers to self-contained dwellings that are managed by a not-for-profit organisation, are funded via a range of sources including ingoining contributions from tenants, donations and internal sources; and are accessible to older persons with low incomes and low value assets.

6.1 How Prevalent are Retirement Villages and ILUs?

Retirement villages have maintained a small but steady market share of housing for older people in Australia and are currently home to approximately five to seven per cent of Australia's population aged 65 years and over (Tually, et al., 2022). Retirement villages are a fast-growing housing sector. Between 2006 and 2016, the number of retirement village residents increased by 78,848 people nationwide, equivalent to a 62 per cent increase. The latest data available on the Victorian Retirement Public Register states that there are 476 retirement villages in Victoria (Consumer Affairs Victoria, 2023).

6.1.1 Are they Currently Affordable?

Before the 1990s, retirement villages were mostly developed and managed by charitable institutions. Growth in this sector since then has been driven by an expansion of for-profit companies offering new products that responded to a demand from retiring baby boomers who sought modern houses and better services (Travers, et al., 2022).

³ An ingoining fee is where you pay a fee to live in a retirement village, but you do not own the unit. The fee is an interest-free loan to a retirement village in exchange for your right to live there (Retirement Village, 2019).



Retirement living caravan parks or Manufactured Housing Estates as a form of low-cost longer-term housing for older people are rapidly disappearing. Many traditional caravan parks are being redeveloped for general market housing, or as tourism-only parks, or are being converted into Land Lease communities (Faulkner, Sharam, James, Tually, & Barrie, 2023).

Figure 6.1 provides an overview of key changes occurring in the retirement living sector, including the conversion of traditional caravan parks into tourist parks and/or land lease developments and the transition of rental retirement villages or Independent Living Units into more upmarket for-purchase products. These transitions reflect a loss of previously affordable stock in this sector. Despite this, the figure also highlights new, affordable models with the potential to house lower-income women as well. For example, individual rental retirement villages are also transitioning to affordable rental villages and social impact investing is driving the development of affordable Manufactured Home Estates and shared equity models that support affordable homeownership.

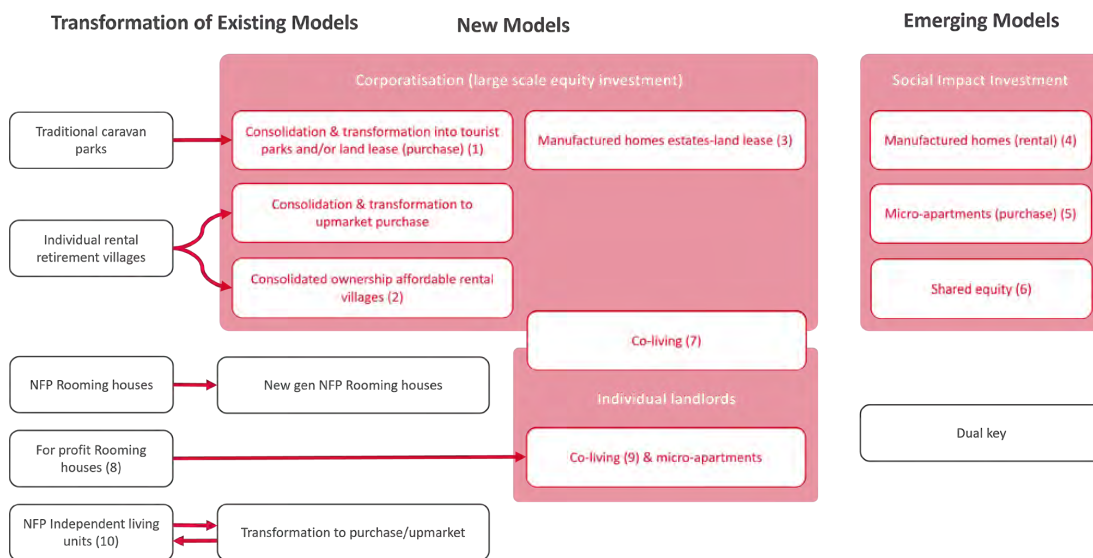


Figure 6.1 Changes in market structure

Source: (Faulkner, Sharam, James, Tually, & Barrie, 2023)

Retirement villages often provide comparatively cheaper housing than standard market-rate homes even if they aren't accessible for all households and individuals. Average prices are shown in **Figure 6.2**. In 2021 the average two-bedroom retirement village unit in Australia sold for \$484,000, which was 55% of the median house sale price across the same postcode areas (Retirement Living Council, 2022). Many people who choose to move to retirement villages do so as they represent a more affordable housing option than housing in the general market, especially when considering flexible entry fees (Travers, et al., 2022). Despite this, the financial barriers to entry into better quality developments tend to be high (Bridge, et al., 2011).



Figure 6.2 Average price for a 2-bedroom unit in villages across Australia

Source: (PWC/ Property Council of Australia, 2022)

6.1.2 How are they Structured?

In Australia, four types of tenure are typically on offer to retirement village residents:

1. A loan or license arrangement, where the resident pays an entry fee that grants them a licence to live in the property. When a resident departs the community, the entry contribution is refunded, less a delayed management fee (sometimes known as an ‘exit fee’). The license agreement is not registered with the Land Titles Offices and provides less tenure security than a leasehold or freehold title.
2. A leasehold arrangement that offers the resident a long-term lease (commonly for 99 years) in exchange for a lump sum payment. Leases are registered with the relevant Land Titles Offices, which provides security of tenure but may also attract stamp duties. Residents who leave the village and have their apartment resold are entitled to a lease termination payout based on a percentage of the selling price.
3. As part of a strata or community scheme, where the resident pays the agreed purchase price to the unit’s owner under a sale of land contract and is then considered as a ‘registered interest holder’.
4. Freehold and other tenure types (such as company titles and rental villages).

Retirement villages are governed by state and territory legislation in Australia, with state-specific regulations. The legislations govern the contracts signed between operators and residents, define the various tenure types offered by operators, fees payable, cooling off periods, and dispute resolution (Travers, et al., 2022).



6.2 What are the Risks or Barriers to Retirement Villages and Independent Living Units?

The retirement village sector has received significant consumer complaints and negative media publicity over the years. Complaints, barriers and challenges relate to legal or regulatory challenges, a lack of homelessness or trauma-informed care, affordability and eligibility concerns.

6.2.1 Legal Rights and Contractual Challenges

Consumer complaints surrounding retirement villages include excessive exit fees, excessive management fees, excessive refurbishment fees, and unfair buy-back arrangements. These problems have been partially addressed by a series of inquiries leading to strengthened regulation. However, there is still dissatisfaction and mistrust. As National Seniors Australia noted in their submission to the 2022 Review of the Retirement Villages Act 1986, *“retirement villages legislation does not adequately protect older Australians... Retirement villages have the potential to give older Australians a comfortable lifestyle option, which is more suitable as people age, but this promise has been lacking because the legislation has enabled practices that are detrimental to the financial wellbeing of seniors.”*

Contractual issues are particularly concerning given the difficulty or inertia surrounding exiting a retirement village once someone has chosen to enter. One retirement village resident explained the barriers to moving and also the risks of signing contracts in this particular housing type:

“In the retirement village, the thought of having to move is too much. The next move will be the mortician. [People think], this is the last move I’m going to make. Prospect of moving is a deterrent. We sign the contracts without understanding them at all, they are seductively opaque. They don’t understand the financial commitment they are taking on.” – Retirement village resident

6.2.2 Provision of Trauma-informed Care and Dealing with Vulnerability

There is also a question of whether traditional retirement villages are capable of appropriately supporting people with high needs or complex histories of homelessness and trauma. As industry experts explained:

“The lifestyles of women who are long-term homeless tend to age them prematurely – they may well need support before they turn 55. Women with long-term histories of homelessness are harder to house and require specialist care.” – Industry expert

“[I have] concerns about the care given to people who can’t voice their needs and opinions. If they don’t have family members to speak up for them, things go wrong.” – Industry expert

The Housing for the Aged Action Group (HAAG) works directly with older people living in retirement villages to support their needs. According to HAAG, the key issues experienced by vulnerable older people in retirement villages include:

- Experiences of bullying or poor management
- Experiences of being over-charged
- Threat of eviction or being encouraged to leave.



An industry expert explained that exit fees provided incentives for retirement villages to ‘adopt a churn policy’ or ‘turnover policy’ of trying to encourage residents to leave before ten years to maximise the amount of money generated from exit fees. According to this expert, financial incentives to generate this level of turnover can lead to residents being evicted or feeling like they are no longer welcome in a particular retirement village.

Interviewees also raised concerns about the disincentives to housing lower-income or more vulnerable residents. One explained this was predominately an issue of funding and profit:

“Retirement villages don’t want to meet their needs [older women at risk of homelessness] because they can’t pay. It’s a money-making industry.”- Industry expert

Another interviewee explained a regulatory barrier to housing higher-needs occupants. They explained that their not-for-profit organisation developed Independent Living Units using the Residential Tenancies Act, rather than Retirement Villages Act as it provided them more control around the potential to evict tenants if necessary. For them, being able to articulate the potential to evict occupants who were endangering their neighbours was an important way to ensure the ILUs were managed appropriately and safely. They explained that eviction processes were far more difficult and convoluted in a Retirement Village structure and this presented a barrier for organisations working with those with complex and long-term histories of homelessness.

6.2.3 A Lack of Affordability

There is a strong belief that retirement villages are only accessible to wealthier older people and that they are not appropriate places for women at risk of homelessness. This is related to high entrance fees and ongoing management costs. Industry experts echoed these concerns, emphasizing the profit-focused nature of the retirement village sector:

“[there are] no women in retirement villages that were on the brink on homelessness – you have to be well off to live in these places. These are places for people who can afford it, not people who are in need” – Industry expert

“It takes astronomical amounts of money to get into retirement villages – to get in and to get out.” – Industry expert

“In 2010 – retirement villages were still independently owned, now the big players are buying them up [the independent villages]. The quality of these villages have diminished – it’s a money making process.” – Industry expert

While these quotations may reflect the current nature of the retirement village sector, this has not historically been the case. Similarly, the strong perception that retirement villages are ‘only for rich retirees’ may make the needs of lower income or vulnerable occupants invisible. Indeed, research in Australia found that retirement village residents are not wealthy; across Australia more than 50% of village residents are full pensioners (Towart, 2013). Older women who are eligible for a full pension due to a lack of assets or income reflect a cohort who are at risk of homelessness if not securely housed, meaning there may be women who would otherwise be at risk of homelessness already living in retirement villages. This is especially the case in relation to rental villages or manufactured home estates.



6.3 How can we Increase Access to Affordable and Secure Housing in Retirement Villages?

There are several mechanisms available for increasing access to affordable and secure housing in retirement villages. This section will provide a brief overview with the following sub-sections providing more concrete examples. Solutions have been derived from Round Table discussions hosted by EAHA in October 2023, and summarised in Figure 6.3.



Figure 6.3 The context of retirement villages

Source: Zahra Zainal, 2023

Supporting the not-for-profit sector: As highlighted in Section 6.2, not-for-profit and government providers have historically been large contributors to affordable housing for older Australians. The not-for-profit sector continues to house vulnerable older people, with Wintringham, Uniting and Anglicare some of the providers in this area. Public and community housing that focuses on older people also provided much-needed housing for this cohort, through the provision of Independent Living Units (ILUs)

Support for affordable retirement living delivered by for-profit companies: While Round Table discussions emphasised scepticism about the ability or willingness of for-profit organisations to deliver affordable retirement villages or ILUs, new models are emerging. Research suggests that if companies can achieve sufficient economies of scale, larger rental villages may be delivered through a for-profit structure, especially in regional areas and if funded through social impact investing⁴. For some companies, delivering a portion of affordable homes is part of broader ESG goals⁵ and reputation-building activities.

⁴ Investments granted for a financial and measurable social return (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, n.d.)

⁵ ESG goals are environmental, social and governance goals. These form the three pillars for an organisational risk and opportunities management framework (Wire, 2023).



Support from local government: Round Table discussions also focused on the role of local government as effective allies in delivering affordable retirement villages or ILUs. Key local government activities/ contributions include fast-tracking of planning processes, identification of their own assets, and provision of in-home aged care services.

The following sections explore these themes in greater detail.

6.3.1 Advocate for a Return to Federal Funding for Independent Living Units

The Australian Government subsidised ILUs between 1954 and 1986 under the Commonwealth's *Aged Persons Homes Act 1954*, spurring a large growth in the not-for-profit sector (McNelis, 2004). Once these subsidies ceased, not-for-profit organisations continued to build ILUs through various funding sources, including donations, grants, bequests, and leases of land from state and local governments. Over the ensuing decades, much of this stock has been lost or is ageing and no longer fit for purpose. A return to Federal funding subsidies for not-for-profit housing aimed at older people would drastically increase the stock of housing available to this vulnerable cohort.

6.3.2 Advocate for Increased Training for Retirement Village Operators

A recent survey conducted by the Retirement Village Residents Association (RVRA) which included 120 retirement villages in NSW found that 40% of respondents experienced at least one type of abuse (Retirement Village Residents Association (RVRA), 2023). As disputes in retirement villages are not uncommon, providing support for vulnerable older people is critical. Dr Malta from the National Ageing Research Institute acknowledged the lack of regulations for training retirement village operators to manage abuse (O'Keeffe, 2016).



01 State government as a planner/regulator:

- Introduce Inclusionary Zoning and density bonuses to help facilitate local affordable housing outcomes
- Fast track and provide flexibility in affordable and social housing planning applications
- Provide a cohesive, strategic and long-term policy environment and planning environment to increase certainty, transparency and cross-sectoral integration in housing and service delivery for older women



02 State government as a networker and central information hub:

- Establish a housing portal to identify ideas, buildings and opportunities for affordable housing delivery
- Establish a data dashboard with shared modelling of affordable housing supply, underutilised buildings and land information and affordability metrics
- Support the sharing of findings from this project



03 State government as a funder:

- Provide additional funding and low cost loans through the Big Housing Build and on-going social housing funding to build affordable housing for older women.
- Fund a pilot program to trial home sharing in the Eastern Metropolitan Region
- Identify and purchase ageing retirement villages at risk of conversion into more expensive housing, and retain this housing as social or affordable housing
- Establish a building retrofit fund and manual to encourage building owners to permanently or temporarily convert existing buildings into social and affordable housing



04 State government as a land and/or asset owner:

- Sell, gift or lease government-owned land at subsidised rates to community housing providers delivering affordable retirement housing
- Audit under-utilised government-owned properties and partner with other actors to permanently or temporarily convert these buildings into housing for older women at risk of homelessness



05 State government as an advocate and thought leader:

- Advocate to Federal Government to retain and expand the Housing Australia Future Fund overtime and continue to prioritise older women at risk of homelessness
- Support on-going research projects such as this one, with a particular emphasis on projects that embed insights from people with lived experience
- Support broader community education campaigns about homelessness, ageism, sexism and ableism

Shane McGrath from the Housing for the Aged Action Group (HAAG) shared some examples of areas for improvement with retirement village management at the Round Table sessions, as summarised in **Figure 6.4.**



Illustrations by Zahra Zainal | zahrazainal.com

Figure 6.4 A summary of common issues retirement village residents face presented by Shane McGrath, retirement housing worker at HAAG, at the Round Table discussions in October 2023

The NSW Ageing and Disability Commission recently released a guide to support retirement village operators responding to abuse of older people in retirement villages, including training and resources (NSW Ageing and Disability Commission, 2023). These guidelines will hopefully contribute to vulnerable people in retirement villages receiving the support they require.

6.3.3 Provide Local Government or State Land for Retirement Village and Independent Living Unit Developments

There is a long history of state and local government donating or selling land for use in retirement villages and ILUs, with examples including :

- Lionswood Village in Ringwood is a retirement village built on land donated by the then City of Ringwood (now City of Maroondah) in the early 1960s
- Rushall Park village in North Fitzroy was built on land gifted by the Government of Victoria.



6.3.3.1 Case study: Use of local government land to support social housing for older people in Lancefield, Macedon Ranges

Macedon Ranges Shire Council received a significant investment from Homes Victoria’s “Big Housing Build” initiative announced in November 2020 (Macedon Ranges Shire Council , n.d.). The Council partnered with Wintringham Housing Limited to apply for funding a social housing upgrade in Lancefield under this initiative (Macedon Ranges Shire Council , 2023). Funding was deemed successful in late 2022. The project will see 12 units built across two Council-owned blocks in Lancefield, Victoria. This will result in five existing older units being demolished and existing tenants supported with interim accommodation.

Council advertised a Notice of Intention to Lease the site to Wintringham and welcomed public feedback on this initial proposal by February 2023. Nine submissions were received and reviewed during the April Council meeting. During this meeting it was agreed that the Council would enter a 20-year lease with Wintringham Housing to manage the units on behalf of the Council, with the term commencing on 1 May 2023 with an annual fee of \$1 (Macedon Ranges Shire Council, 2023).

Council will continue to work with Wintringham and the Lions Senior Citizens Villages of Lancefield Romsey Inc on the ongoing management of this site.

Tanya Atkinson, Manager at Wintringham, provided an overview of how the business model works at the Round Table sessions, which is summarised in **Figure 6.5**.



Figure 6.5 A summary of the Wintringham model presented by Tanya Atkinson, Manager at Wintringham, at the Round Table discussions in October 2023



6.3.4 Address Planning Regulations to Encourage More Supply of Affordable Rental Homes in Retirement Villages

Scale is a critical issue to achieve efficiencies in the provision of retirement villages and ILUs. Intensification could provide an opportunity for affordable housing in well located areas. This could be achieved if planning regulations allowed for either on or offsite density increases in return for the provision of affordable units on a particular site. Affordable Housing negotiations in Victoria, delivered through Section 173 Agreements or a new State-level planning mechanism to coordinate supply across the state over time, are both potential mechanisms to encourage affordable retirement housing supply through planning approaches (Faulkner, Sharam, James, Tually, & Barrie, 2023).

6.3.5 Greater Industry Innovation in Business Models

There is opportunity for greater innovation in retirement village business models. For example, a retirement village in Queensland called 'Seasons Living' is beginning to offer alternatives to traditional leasehold or freehold agreements. They offer some of their housing with partial subsidies to price the rent far below market value for eligible residents. They also have much shorter lease terms (6 or 12 months) which they state gives residents more freedom to continually renew if they choose, or to leave without incurring hidden exit costs which persist in other retirement homes.

Similarly, recent research by AHURI (Faulkner, Sharam, James, Tually, & Barrie, 2023) has identified the potential for social impact investing to support the scaling of affordable rental retirement villages. There is evidence that some property industry sectors are prioritising affordable housing over financial return, for example focusing on providing housing to pension-reliant clients.

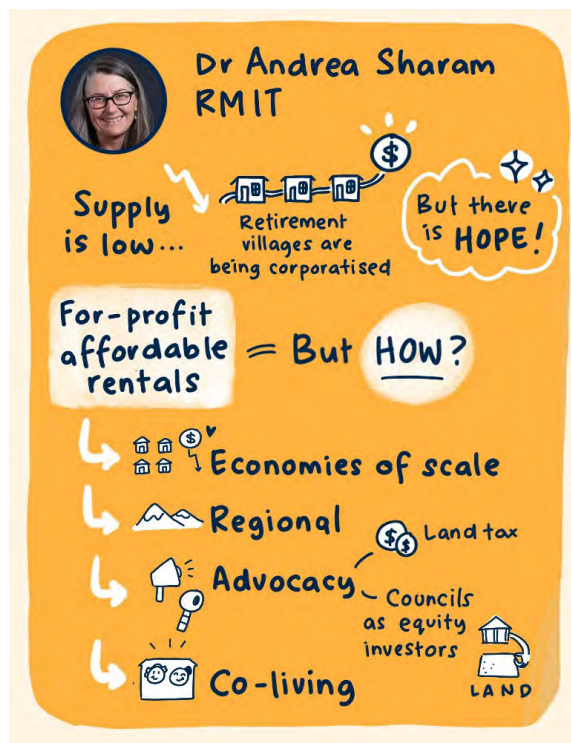


Figure 6.6 A summary of ways retirement villages could deliver affordable housing presented by Dr Andrea Sharam, Senior Lecturer at RMIT, at the Round Table discussions in October 2023

6.3.6 Supporting Socially-integrated Villages for Older People

6.3.6.1 Case Study: Deakin Micro Village for Older People, Geelong

In 2019, researchers from Deakin University conducted a community housing project to explore innovative strategies for affordable housing that maintain a sense of community in the form of micro villages for older people in Geelong, Victoria (Deakin University, n.d.). This project was led by the Deakin HOME Research Hub - an interdisciplinary group of researchers who work with local communities to co-design solutions to complex problems including affordable housing, homelessness and social inclusion (Deakin University, n.d.).

The project received funding from the Geelong Community Foundation (GCF) and the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation. HOME Research Hub partnered with Geelong Sustainability during the community consultation phase to develop a best practice model used to design a prototype micro-village.

The primary barrier identified from this research project were regulatory barriers, as tiny or compact homes are often considered an undesirable planning outcome in current planning regimes in Australia. Other barriers identified also include financial, accessibility and community integration.

Some recommendations from this project include the need for nationwide and local planning reforms, the need to educate stakeholders to change negative perceptions of compact homes, and to conduct research to understand the demand for compact homes in Australia (Tucker, et al., 2021).



The next step will be to create a “living village model”. HOME Research Hub has partnered with MicroVillage Geelong to provide guidance on establishing a place-based micro village that houses 6 - 12 residents in the Geelong region.



Figure 6.7 Geelong Microvillage Project, Victoria
Source: (Tucker, et al., 2021)



7.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

This section focuses on recommendations and next steps, with an emphasis on the identification of implementable solutions for members of the EAHA.

7.1 The Role of Local Government in Addressing Homelessness

While the current project has emphasised the role of cross-sectoral involvement in housing solutions, it is important to acknowledge the range of roles local government play in supporting solutions for older women at risk of homelessness. This section acknowledges the role that Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA) councils could, or should, play in addressing homelessness, providing a lens for prioritising the solutions outlined in **Table 7.1**.

Feedback from Phase Two of the project on the role of local government is summarised in **Figure 7.1**.

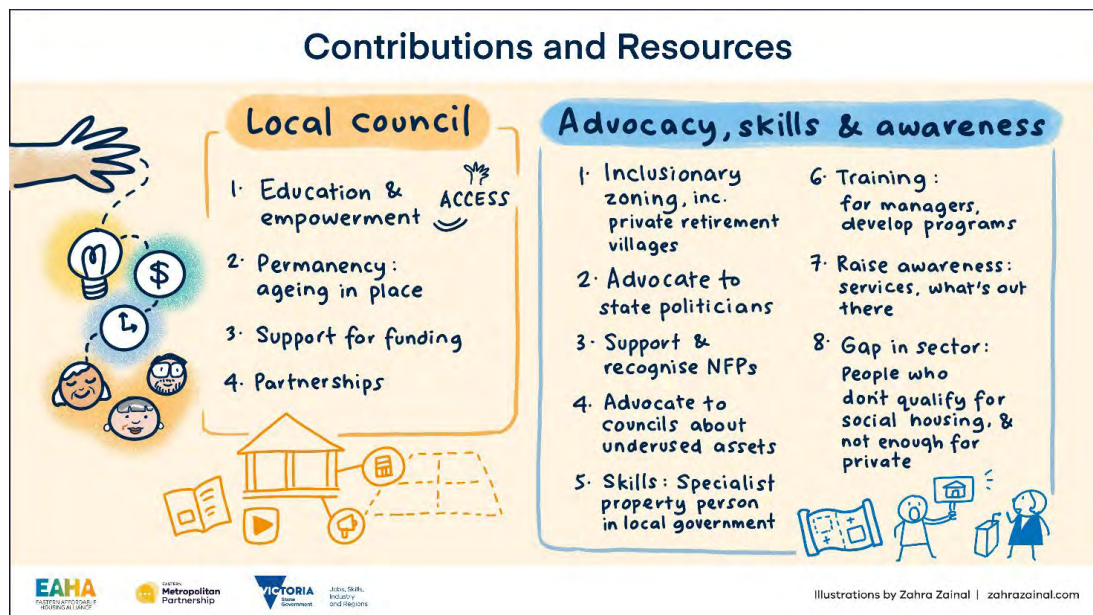


Figure 7.1 Contributions and Resources to support affordable housing for older women at risk of homelessness



These recommendations align with broader research into the role of local government in addressing homelessness. The below dot points are derived from a report by Leanne Mitchell, undertaken as part of a Churchill Fellowship, with additional detail provided for the context of older women's homelessness (Mitchell, 2019):

- **Make homelessness everyone's business:** Use local government's ability to connect across the community, recognising that no one group working in isolation can solve a complex problem like homelessness, instead a collective approach is required and will bring better results. This includes bringing together homelessness, family violence, mental health, NDIS, aged care and social isolation perspectives.
- **Focus on homelessness beyond rough sleeping:** While street sleeping is the most visible and vulnerable experience of homelessness, local government is equipped to handle the broader experience of homelessness. Indeed, older women are far more likely to 'couch surf,' sleep in their cars or move precariously between family members and friends than be rough sleepers, meaning their homelessness is often invisible.
- **Recognise what you can do to prevent homelessness:** Local government can take the time required to understand the factors that will lead to homelessness in their communities and identify the customer service points where people at risk of homelessness might be and connect with them before they hit crisis. GPs, hospitals, churches and other religious groups and Centrelink have been identified in this research as key connection points, especially for women in the 'rapid pathway' with no previous experience with homelessness services.
- **Educate and change the narrative:** Local government is in the position to help get the facts straight on homelessness and use their close ties to the communities to educate people on the causes and impacts of homelessness on their communities. Addressing stigma around homelessness and ageism are central to this activity.
- **Take your seat at the table:** Local governments should lobby Commonwealth and state governments' unique ability to offer responses to help end homelessness. Victoria's Big Housing Build and ongoing funding for social housing is a key mechanism for advocating for, and supporting, the delivery of additional affordable housing for older women.

The report also highlights the following steps that local government can take:

- **Know the local homelessness situation:** collect local data; listen to your local community; establish a shared definition of homelessness
- **Lead the narrative and drive collaboration:** nurture community alliances; embrace lived experiences; involve all parts of government; collaborate to address welfare, safety and amenity
- **Organise your approach and your workforce:** build a collaborative strategy; lead good-giving initiatives; structure your team for success
- **Act to prevent and end homelessness:** know what you can do to influence housing; refocus prevention; bring in your libraries and other customer service staff; know what you can offer in crisis response.



In addition, the current project has also identified the following roles that local government can take, in acting as an ally for older women at risk of homelessness, and in developing appropriate and effective housing and homelessness solutions. These roles are further outlined in **Figure 7.2**.



Figure 7.2 Local government’s role in addressing homelessness in older women

Source: Umwelt, 2023

7.2 The role of State Government in Addressing Homelessness

State government also plays a central role in addressing homelessness, with different levers, strengths and weaknesses to local government. State government has access to substantially larger budgets than local government and also has the capacity to analyse, regulate and address issues at a broader geographical scale. The solutions identified in this report will struggle to be trialled, scaled or maintained without direct involvement from state government. The roles state government can and should take are outlined in **Figure 7.3**.



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04 State government as a land and/or asset owner:

- Sell, gift or lease government-owned land at subsidised rates to community housing providers delivering affordable retirement housing
- Audit under-utilised government-owned properties and partner with other actors to permanently or temporarily convert these buildings into housing for older women at risk of homelessness



05 State government as an advocate and thought leader:

- Advocate to Federal Government to retain and expand the Housing Australia Future Fund overtime and continue to prioritise older women at risk of homelessness
- Support on-going research projects such as this one, with a particular emphasis on projects that embed insights from people with lived experience
- Support broader community education campaigns about homelessness, ageism, sexism and ableism

Figure 7.3 State government’s role in addressing homelessness in older women

Source: Umwelt, 2023



7.3 Recommendations, Solutions and Next Steps

Table 7.1 summarises the recommendations and solutions gathered over the course of the research project, drawing on interviews, Round Table discussions, extensive literature and emerging models of housing and aged care delivery.

Table 7.1 Recommendations, solutions and next steps

Solution	Stakeholders	Example of where it has worked
Tapping into under-utilised homes and buildings		
<p>Work as a connector to ensure recent changes to increase flexibility around secondary dwellings (or granny flats) result in increased affordable housing options for older women at risk of homelessness. Build familiarity within the EMR about the role of social enterprise property managers like HomeGround Real Estate to link property owners with potential tenants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State government funding • Service provider: Local government or an existing community group such as Shared Lives • Advisory: HANZA • Home sharers: Older people in the EMR, either homeowners looking to share or home sharers seeking a home 	<p>Shared Lives is a Victorian social enterprise supporting home sharing in Victoria. Their home share program matches seniors who need a little help to live independently at home (home provider) with a carefully selected, compatible companion who needs housing (home sharer).</p> <p>In return for low-cost accommodation, the home sharer provides 10 hours of support per week to the home provider. Unlike other house share schemes in Australia, the Shared Lives home help program is specifically designed for seniors.</p> <p>Shared Lives currently operates in Melbourne's inner suburbs. (Shared Lives Australia, 2023)</p>
<p>Support building owners with temporarily unused buildings to generate 'meanwhile use' temporary accommodation for older women at risk of homelessness. This could be undertaken in collaboration with Housing All Australians, with funding from private industry, state government or philanthropy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networker/ linkage: Local government to ascertain developer appetite for this model and link them with relevant stakeholders • Planning authority: Local government • Building provider: Existing building owner • Retrofit partner: Developers willing to undertake building retrofit at lo-bono or pro-bono rates • Building manager: Not-for-profit provider such as YWCA • Advisory: Housing All Australians • Funding/advice: State and Federal Governments 	<p>The Lake House is a repurposed aged care facility in Melbourne providing short-term crisis or transitional accommodation for up to around 40 older women at a time. Through collaboration with the private sector and local governments, YWCA National Housing Australia manages short-term leasing of the facility, with tenants paying 'peppercorn' rent of \$1 a year, to provide affordable housing for older women.</p>



Solution	Stakeholders	Example of where it has worked
<p>Advocate for or allocate funding to pilot a program (with Homeshare Australia and New Zealand Alliance (HANZA) or another provider) to support for homesharing for older people in the EMR (and then extend if successful).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding: State government • Networker/ linkage: EAHA • Tenancy manager: Real Estate Agents or HomeGround Real Estate 	<p>The NSW planning system includes provisions to enable low-cost market housing— particularly accessory dwellings (granny flats) and boarding houses in residential areas, irrespective of local planning controls. These provisions have seen significant take up (over 13,000 dwellings and rooms since 2009), equating to nearly 5 per cent of total housing output in the Sydney metropolitan region.</p>
<p>Establish a Housing Portal where anyone can upload ideas about solutions, land parcels, buildings or services relevant to delivering affordable housing. The Queensland State Government provides an example of how this can be a successful mechanism in crowd-sourcing ideas and resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portal host: Victorian Government • Contributors: EAHA and other local government collaborations 	<p>Queensland Government has recently launched a housing portal to gather ideas and concepts for delivering affordable housing. This is supporting the government’s activities in actively purchasing and converting existing underutilised buildings to generate more affordable housing in Queensland.</p>
Retirement Villages and Independent Living Units		
<p>Identify existing state/local government-owned land or buildings with the capacity to host affordable retirement village-style housing for older women, partnering with a not-for-profit housing provider and tapping into state government for funds to deliver housing for vulnerable older people in the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR). The Big Housing Build and Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF) provide relevant mechanisms for accessing funds with initiatives to deliver homes to women and children escaping family violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land owner: Local government or state government • Developer: Not-for-profit housing association • Key funder: State or federal government or philanthropy • Mechanism: cross-sectoral partnerships 	<p>Lancefield Housing Units are currently under construction with the intention to build 12 social housing units on Council-owned land in Lancefield, Victoria (Wintringham Housing Limited, n.d.).</p>



Solution	Stakeholders	Example of where it has worked
<p>Negotiating for affordable retirement homes within retirement villages and Manufactured Home Estates at the planning application stage. Victoria’s Section 173 agreements provide a mechanism for this.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning authority: Local government • Developer: For-profit retirement village developers • Mechanism: Section 173 Planning Agreements 	<p>Affordable housing negotiations are happening to a modest degree in Victoria. For example, Women’s Housing Limited bought seven units for low-income women at a discounted rate in Box Hill due to a Section 173 agreement. In Glen Eira the provision of land for affordable housing was a key factor in a planning scheme amendment for East Village. (Raynor, Warren-Myers, & Palm, 2020)</p>
<p>Identifying where existing ageing retirement villages may be disused, underutilised or at risk of being purchased and converted into more expensive retirement villages. Work with state government to purchase these developments and ensure they are retained as affordable ILUs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land owner: existing retirement village operator • Developer: Not-for-profit housing association • Key funder: State or federal government or philanthropy • Mechanism: cross-sectoral partnerships 	<p>A Toowoomba former retirement village has been turned into social homes, comprising of 58 self-contained units. The property was purchased by the Palaszczuk Government, Queensland as an innovative solution to support Queenslanders finding safe and stable housing (Cruz, 2023).</p>

This research project has identified a range of opportunities and mechanisms for the Victorian Government and members of the EAHA to progress the delivery of additional housing and care services for older women at risk of homelessness. Local government can work as an advocate, service provider, land owner, developer, approver or networker to progress these solutions. The Victorian Government can support as a planner/ regulator, funder, land and/or asset owner, networker, and central information hub.

The current research project has been designed to develop implementable solutions and to build the networks and levels of familiarity required to deliver them. The value of outputs lies not only in the written findings but also in the formal and informal connections between participants, the advice from lived experience advocates, the awareness-raising aspects of the project and the development of mailing lists, partnerships and idea sharing that emerges from Participatory Action Research. Next phases of research and action may focus on funding and piloting a single idea from the above list to progress outcomes.



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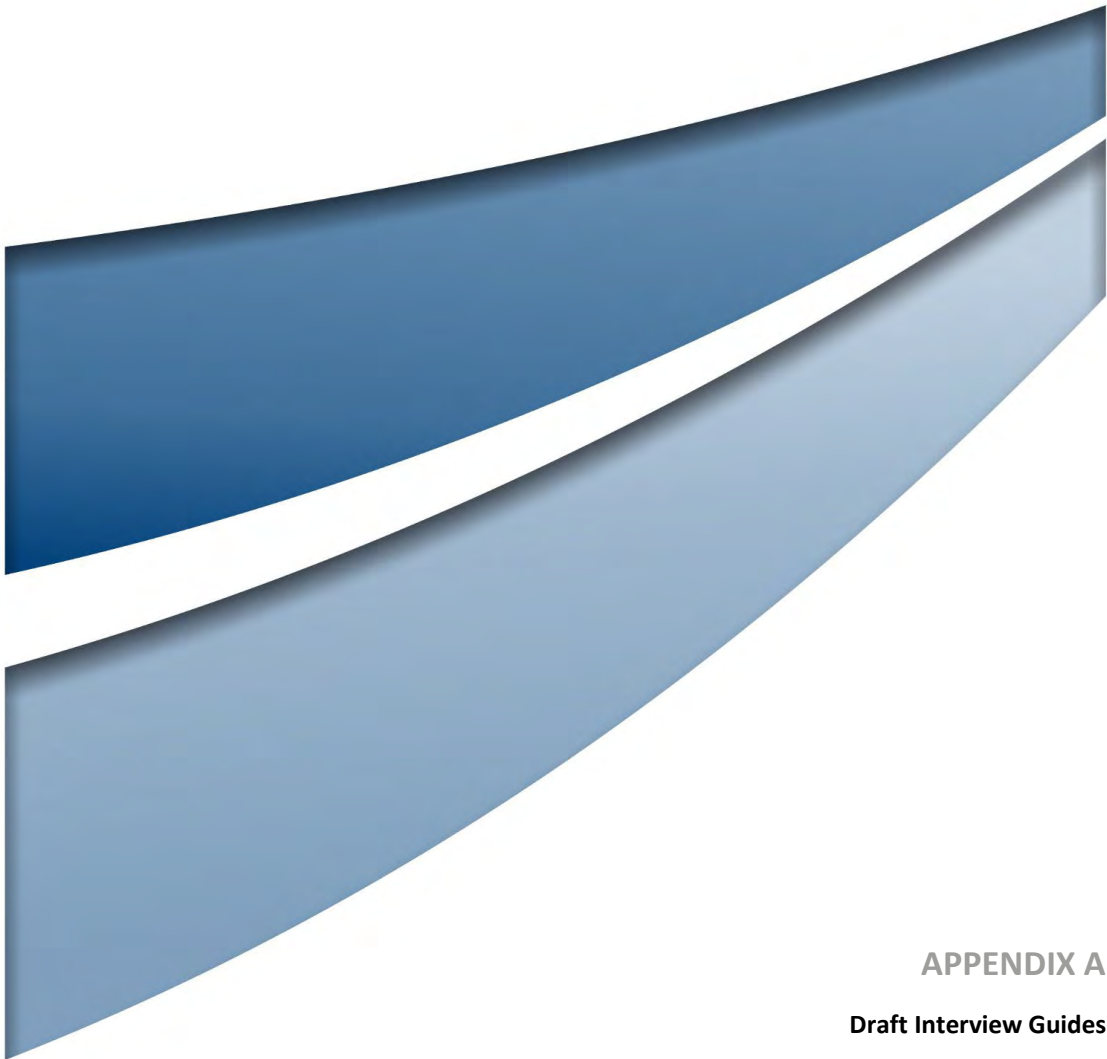
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APPENDIX A
Draft Interview Guides



Unoccupied homes interview guide

The Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA) is a formal collaboration of six Councils to address the housing affordability crisis in Melbourne's eastern LGAs. (Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Whitehorse, Yarra Ranges).

The aim of our project is to build understanding of homelessness among women over 55 in the Eastern Metropolitan Region and develop a range of recommendations for place-based solutions.

The EAHA is interested in understanding how currently unoccupied homes, rooms or buildings could contribute to the stock of housing available to older women at risk of homelessness.

Our focus is towards delving deeper into underutilised spaces, such as rooms, residences, and even commercial structures, aiming to uncover opportunities for repurposing and harnessing their potential.

1. Can you tell me a little bit your organisation? What services do you provide and for whom?
2. Are you working in the Eastern Metropolitan Region? (Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Whitehorse, Yarra Ranges, Other please specify)
3. What is the nature of your involvement in the previously selected region/s?
4. Is your organisation currently housing or caring for older women at risk of homelessness or housing insecurity?
5. Is your organisation working on ways to better support this cohort? In what way?
6. In your opinion what are the biggest strengths and weaknesses of tapping into unoccupied homes, rooms or buildings in meeting the needs of older women at risk of homelessness or housing insecurity?
7. Who would you need to partner with or what resources would you require to increase the amount of older women you support or the quality of service you provide to them?
8. Is there any way EAHA or the local governments of the Eastern Metro Region could support your organisation to better serve older women at risk of homelessness?
9. Are there any good examples (either from your organisation or from anywhere else) that we should be looking into? What are the key learnings to be taken from that example?
10. Is there anyone else you recommend we speak to?



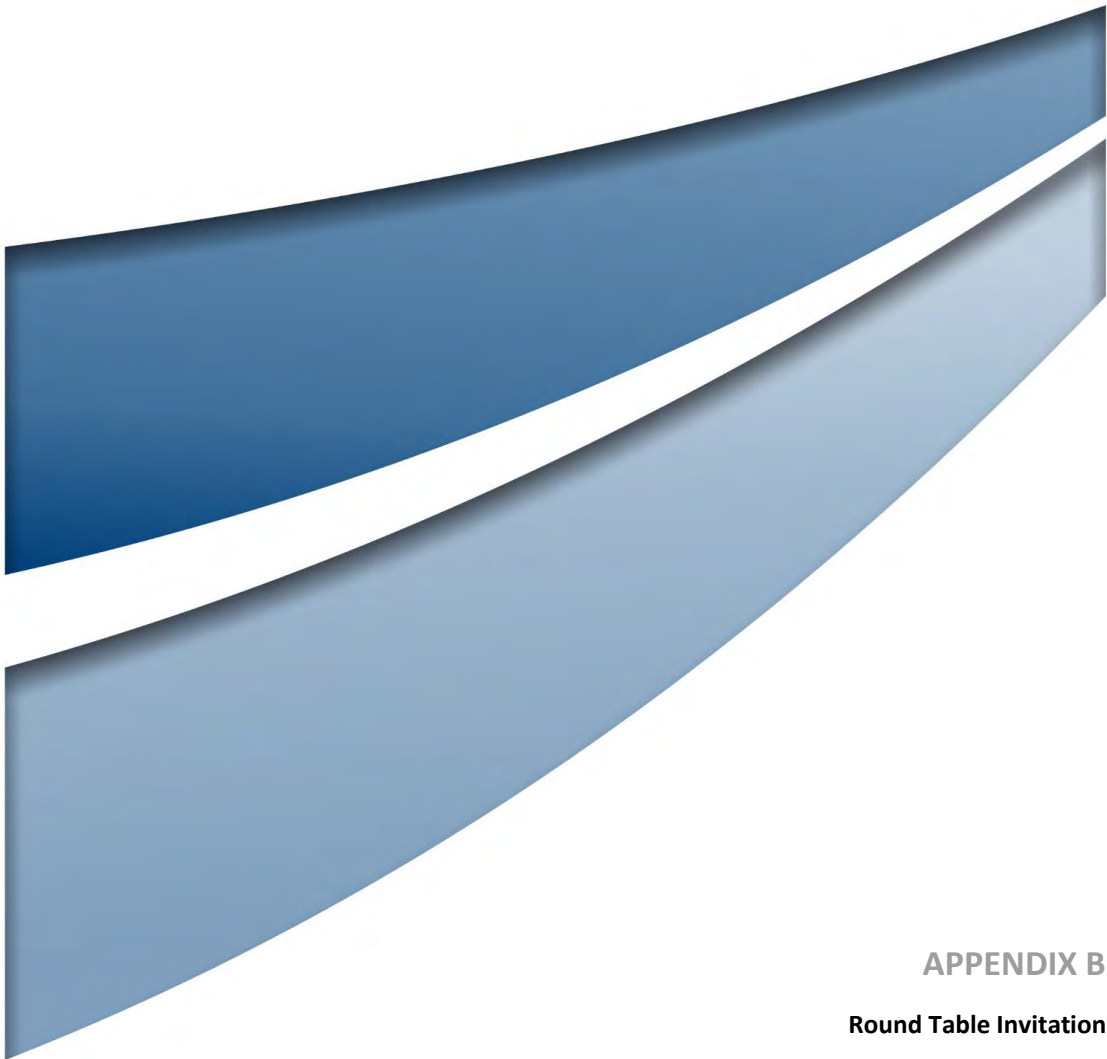
Retirement Village Interview Guide

The Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA) is a formal collaboration of six Councils to address the housing affordability crisis in Melbourne's eastern LGAs. (Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Whitehorse, Yarra Ranges). The aim of our project is to build understanding of homelessness among women over 55 in the Eastern Metropolitan Region and develop a range of recommendations for place-based solutions.

The EAHA is interested in understanding how retirement villages or Independent Living Units could contribute to the stock of housing available to older women at risk of homelessness.

In Phase 1, numerous older women and service providers conveyed that they or their acquaintances were residing in underoccupied retirement villages. This prompted us to question the reasons behind this phenomenon and contemplate ways to optimise housing resources for older individuals in need. While we acknowledge ongoing efforts by the private sector to explore cost-effective retirement living options and housing solutions, our focus is on understanding how these initiatives can be further expanded and/or enhanced.

1. Can you tell me a little bit your involvement with retirement villages in the EMR?
2. Are you working in the Eastern Metropolitan Region? (Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Whitehorse, Yarra Ranges, Other please specify)
3. What is the nature of your involvement in the previously selected region/s?
4. In your experience for visiting retirement villages in this region, how would you categorise the stock that is the stock?
5. In your experience, are retirement villages currently servicing the type of women who would be vulnerable to homelessness otherwise?
6. In your opinion what are the biggest strengths and weaknesses of retirement villages and/or Independent Living Units in meeting the needs of older women at risk of homelessness or housing insecurity?
7. Do you have any ideas of how retirement could increase the amount of lower income older women they support?
8. Is there any way EAHA or the local governments of the Eastern Metro Region could support organisations to better serve older women at risk of homelessness through changing the way they interact with retirement villages or independent living units?
9. Are there any good examples (either from your organisation or from anywhere else) that we should be looking into? What are the key learnings to be taken from that example?
10. We are organising a round table on this topic in October. Would you be interested in attending or speaking at that round table? Or could you recommend someone else who you think would be a good fit?
11. Is there anyone else you recommend we speak to?
12. Who are the biggest retirement village providers in the region, for profit and NFP?



APPENDIX B
Round Table Invitation



PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS AMONG OLDER WOMEN –TANGIBLE SOLUTIONS TO A GROWING CRISIS



Join us for an optimistic and engaging discussion about solutions to older women’s homelessness in Melbourne’s eastern region.

We’ll be hosting two sessions discussing key solutions:

- Whether retirement villages and Independent Living Units can support older women at risk of homelessness
- How we can tap into under-utilised buildings and homes to unlock much-needed housing supply

The goal of these sessions is to share information, spark new ideas and build a knowledge base for the Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance and our partners.

DATE: Wednesday 25 October

Retirement Villages Round Table: 10.00am-12.30pm

Under-utilised buildings and homes Round Table: 1.30pm-4.00pm

AT: Maroondah Federation Estate (Room 2) 32 Greenwood Ave, Ringwood

Morning tea and afternoon tea provided.

Opt in for lunch from 12.30-1.30pm

CONFIRMED SPEAKERS:



Retirement Villages

- Tanya Atkinson, Wintringham
- Housing for the Aged Action Group



Under-utilised buildings and dwellings

- Dr Gillian Armstrong, Climate Works Centre
- Meg Montague, Home Share
- Samantha Gatherum-Goss, HomeGround Real Estate

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Expert panelists provide their perspectives and big ideas on each topic
- A ‘world café’ style conversation where smaller groups can speak directly with each panelist to ask follow up questions, provide feedback or network over shared passions
- Invitees include women with lived experience of homelessness, community organisations, local and state government, property and private sector representatives
- Facilitated by lead researcher, Dr Kate Raynor, Umwelt Environmental & Social Consultants
- Come prepared to contribute to much-needed solutions!

REGISTER

Register your attendance by Monday 16 October at one or both of these sessions at this link and QR code



ABOUT THE PROJECT:

The Preventing Homelessness Among Older Women Research Project is commissioned by the Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA), delivered through funding from the Victorian Government’s Metropolitan Partnerships Development Fund, and with support from Knox City Council. This two-phase research project aims to understand the context of older women’s homelessness in Melbourne’s Eastern Metropolitan Region (Phase One) and develop solutions to address this issue (Phase Two). You can see the outputs from Phase One here <https://eaha.org.au/phow-research-project>

In Phase Two we turn our attention to tangible solutions to a growing crisis. We’ve spoken to industry experts across the retirement and aged care sector, real estate agents, retirement village residents, building conversion experts and home share agencies to gather insights on what works when housing older women at risk of homelessness.

Please contact Camille Bowles at Knox City Council for more information: camille.bowles@knox.vic.gov.au or 0439 882 682.





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4.3 Councillor Expenses and Support Policy

Final Report Destination:	Council
Paper Type:	For decision
Authors	Manager Governance and Risk, Andrew Dowling and Head of Governance, Saskia Weerheim
Executive:	Director Customer and Performance, Greg Curcio

SUMMARY

The Local Government Act 2020 requires Council to establish and maintain an expenses policy for reimbursing out-of-pocket expenses incurred by Councillors and delegated committee members. The current Councillor Expenses and Support Policy, adopted in August 2020, has undergone a thorough review, taking into account Councillor feedback and alignment with best governance practices.

Presented for Council's consideration is a revised draft policy, inclusive of proposed changes across various categories including travel; ICT equipment; professional development, training, seminars, conferences, and other representation; attendance at the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly; and other Councillor support expenses. These adjustments aim to enhance clarity, accountability, and efficiency in the management of Councillor expenses.

Upon Council resolution, the draft policy will undergo community engagement to gather public input before final consideration by Council. This process ensures transparency and inclusivity in shaping policies that govern public resources and uphold Council accountability to the community.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the draft Councillor Expenses and Support Policy as set out in Attachment 2 of the officer's report for the purpose of community engagement.

1. DISCUSSION

The Local Government Act 2020 provides that Council must adopt and maintain an expenses policy in relation to the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for Councillors and members of delegated committees. The current Councillor Expenses and Support Policy was adopted in August 2020. A review of the current Policy has been completed with consideration given to feedback and best governance practices.

A revised draft policy is attached for Council consideration (see Attachment 1 – marked up version and Attachment 2 – clean draft version) and endorsement for community engagement purposes. An overview of the proposed changes is set out below.

1.1 Travel and Transport

Interstate and overseas travel was featured in the previous iteration of this policy but based on Councillor feedback, under the revised policy interstate or overseas travel expenses must be applied for, *and approved by Council resolution*, in advance of the travel occurring – see 6.2. Attendance at ALGA in accordance with the policy is excluded from this requirement.

1.2 Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

Feedback has been sought from Councillors about their ICT needs and proposed changes have been made regarding:

- Availability of monitors as part of the suite of equipment available to Councillors at the commencement of their term – this has been incorporated into Section 6.3.1.
- Potential to make multi-function printers available on request instead of provisioned as standard equipment – this has been incorporated into Section 6.3.1.
- Availability of headphones.

A change has also been made to reflect that outgoing Councillors may request to retain their Council provided mobile phone number at the conclusion of their term.

1.3 Professional Development, Training, Seminars, Conferences and Other Representation

The current policy position is, in summary:

1. Councillors have access to a corporate offering of professional development training that Councillors. An allocation for these expenses is made, subject to consideration and approval in an annual corporate budget. Inclusions in this corporate offering are explicitly detailed in the policy and include team building and interpersonal skills training, MAV/VLGA Councillor Development Programs, meeting procedure training, and governance training including the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) course.
2. Access to discretionary training and professional activities nominated by each Councillor according to their individual needs. This training sits outside the corporate offering and is funded separately as an expense from individual Councillor training and development entitlements (currently an annual amount of \$10,000 for the Mayor; and \$5,000 each for the Deputy Mayor and Councillors).

Officers have considered Councillor feedback over time about the management of professional development entitlements and the challenges in differentiating whether some activities should be classified as professional development or representation expenses under the current Policy. Officers have taken this feedback onboard and proposed an alternative policy position.

In the revised draft – section 6.4, officers have proposed to build upon the entitlement for professional development expenses, broadening the scope of the entitlement and giving Councillors flexibility to manage expenses for professional development, as well as other training, conferences, seminars and broader representation costs, all within an increased prescribed total annual limit.

These proposed changes would empower Councillors to apply their entitlements in a way that is responsive to their individual needs and preferences, and to the different demands placed upon them in discharging their roles in the community. Councillors would still be accountable for ensuring expenditure falls within the bounds of the policy, and within the prescribed budget limits. The more flexible approach however, addresses some of the challenges and uncertainty that comes from requiring officers and Councillors to distinguish between professional development and representation expenses.

It is proposed that the overall entitlement be increased by \$4,000 per annum for the Mayor and \$2,000 per annum each for the Deputy Mayor and Councillors.

Provision	Maximum Entitlement per mayoral year
For conferences, seminars, training, professional development and broader representation – Mayor	\$14,000
For conferences, seminars, training, professional development and broader representation – Eight Councillors (\$7,000 per Councillor)	\$ 56,000
Total	\$70,000

It is anticipated that except as specifically provided for in the policy, the above entitlements would be exclusive of travel costs associated with attendance at seminars, conference and other representation.

While the table above represents the maximum entitlement per Mayoral year, officers will continue to budget each year for the anticipated costs of reimbursing or meeting Councillor entitlements under the policy. Budget provisions are typically less than the maximum possible entitlement that could be claimed under the policy as past experience indicates not all Councillors fully spend their entitlements each year.

Actual expenditure will vary according to individual Councillors' needs and the demands for representation in any given year and would continue to be reported to the community and monitored by Council through quarterly and annual financial reports, in addition to monitoring by Council's Audit and Risk Committee.

Based on Councillor feedback, the revised Policy also includes a requirement for Councillors to provide a brief synopsis of the conference, seminar, training or professional development they have attended, as part of their monthly ward report. This is not intended to be onerous but reflects a desire for transparency and accountability for the use of public resources.

1.4 Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly

ALGA is the peak body for local government nationally, representing councils across the country. ALGA operates in structure as a federation of state and territory local government associations, with the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) being the relevant Victorian body.

The NGA is convened by ALGA each year in Canberra and is the peak annual event for local government in Australia. The NGA provides the opportunity for representatives from Australia's 537 local governments to come together to meet with and hear from high profile and engaging speakers and Federal Government representatives, advocate on specific issues directly with Federal Ministers and Members, share learnings and industry best practice, and shape the national local government policy and advocacy agenda.

At its meeting in October 2023, in response to a Notice of Motion from Councillor Pearce, Council resolved:

That in relation to the annual Australian Local Government Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly (NGA), Council resolve to refer the decision regarding Council delegates and costs associated with attendance to Councillor Expenses and Support

Policy which is currently under review, including particularly consideration of the following protocols:

- 1. To amend the Councillor Expenses and Support Policy to provide that attendance at the ALGA NGA is not considered reasonably necessary for a Councillor or member of a delegated committee to perform their role, and that consequently expenses associated with attendance will not be reimbursed in the absence of a prior resolution of Council to the contrary.*
- 2. That Council should not be represented by staff members at the ALGA NGA.*

Officers consider that Councillor representation at the NGA is an opportunity to discuss and advocate on key local issues, as well as matters of national importance to local government, which contributes to the effective leadership in Knox, and in the broader local government sector. It also provides an opportunity to network with colleagues and Federal members of Parliament.

While representation can be achieved by sending one Councillor voting delegate to the NGA, past feedback from Councillors has indicated there are benefits to providing additional Councillors the opportunity to attend the NGA, including for example:

- Colleagues are able to provide counsel and support to the voting delegate, whether in their general capacity as a Councillor and /or arising from past experience representing Council at the NGA.
- Supporting Councillors can contribute to Council's advocacy endeavours; while gaining experience that may equip them to more effectively represent Council at future NGAs, should they have the opportunity.

The Local Government Inspectorate offers best practice guidance to Councils through its review process, including in the area of Councillor expenses, and shares some sample policies. One sample policy, from Hobsons Bay Council, includes a specific clause around ALGA as follows:

"The Mayor and up to three other Councillors may be authorised to attend the Annual National General Assembly of the Australian Local Government Association, which provides Councils with the opportunity to more fully participate and engage in discussion on matters of national importance to local government. Where, apart from the Mayor, the number of Councillors wishing to nominate for this Assembly exceeds three, determination of attendance will be by a resolution of the Council ..."

Given the increased community scrutiny in local government operations, in combination with budget constraints, it is proposed that Council adopt a similar clause in the Knox policy.

Officers are of the view that Councillor representation at the NGA is an opportunity to demonstrate and contribute to leadership in Knox, and the Local Government sector through discussion and advocacy on key local issues, as well as matters of national importance to local government. Consequently, the officer recommendation is to include provision within the policy to ensure that Council can be represented at the NGA.

Council delegations to the NGA are often supported by an officer (typically quite senior) in order to provide advice and support to Councillors throughout the conference. This can provide an

additional benefit as officers can also support Council's advocacy by engaging with their officer counterparts at the conference.

Council recently resolved to send three Councillors to the 2024 NGA (26 February 2024 Council meeting).

The officer recommendation is to limit attendance to the Mayor and three additional Councillors, plus a Council officer, if desired, to support the attending Councillors. The draft policy (section 6.5) also notes the method of prioritisation where more Councillors wish to attend than the policy allows.

1.5 Other Support

Amendments have been made in the policy to reflect support provided to Councillors when attending events on behalf of Council – see Section 6.7 Other Support. Such support includes:

- Administrative support managing invitations and RSVPs provided by the Executive Assistant to the Mayor and Councillors.
- Provision of talking points for the Mayor (or delegate), for events where a formal invitation is received to attend and speak.
- Providing background information for Councillors attending other events if requested.
- Support associated with the wearing (and security of) of the Mayoral Robes and Chain for events where formal attire is considered necessary and appropriate. li
- Taking photos of Councillors (using Councillor's devices) at events on request, provided such requests are incidental to, and not disruptive to, the officer's role at the event.

1.6 Other Changes

Other relatively minor changes have been made as follows:

- In section 6.6.2 (regarding GST Liability for spouses/partners).
- To the formatting and structure of Section 6.15 (Other Expenditure Not Specified) to clarify the procedural steps associated with resolving any uncertainty or disagreement regarding entitlements; or where there is any failure to comply with the policy.
- Minor administrative changes have been made to numbering, cross-referencing, position titles and spelling mistakes.

2. ENGAGEMENT

Subject to Council resolution, the draft policy will be made available for community consultation, before being brought to Council for final consideration.

3. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Transparent governance is a cornerstone of a healthy and thriving society. It plays a vital role in promoting accountability and trust for our community. Ensuring that decision-making processes and policies are accessible, clear, and open to public scrutiny, supports transparency and public accountability; while building community confidence in the governance standards of Council.

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

Nil.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Changes to the Councillor Expenses and Support Policy may have a direct impact on the Council's budget. The extent of those impacts will depend on the scope of Councillor entitlements, and any limitations imposed on those entitlements; as well as the extent to which Councillors seek Council funding, or reimbursement of their expenses under the approved policy.

Suggested amendments in the revised draft (particularly in relation to attendance at the ALGA NGA, and the entitlement for seminars, conferences, and representation expenses) are intended to provide greater clarity regarding entitlements.

7. RISKS

This Policy serves as a robust mechanism for mitigating both financial and reputational risks, offering a thorough framework designed to instill confidence and provide assurance for both Council and the broader community regarding the integrity of Council's management of Councillor expenses and support.

By providing a framework to manage Councillor expenses and support, the revised Policy not only provides Councillors with clearer guidance and greater certainty regarding entitlements, it also ensures transparency, accountability, and fairness of our processes in the allocation of Council resources.

8. KNOX COMMUNITY AND COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025

Civic Engagement & Integrity

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

This report is compatible with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, as it does not raise any human rights issues.

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 - Councillor Expenses and Support V5 Marked up [4.3.1 - 31 pages]
2. Attachment 2 - Councillor Expenses and Support V5 Clean [4.3.2 - 25 pages]

Councillor Expenses and Support

Policy Number:	2003/21	Directorate:	<u>City Development – Finance & Governance</u> <u>Customer and Performance</u>
Approval by:	Council	Responsible Officer:	Manager Governance <u>and Risk</u>
Approval Date:	<u>24 August 2020</u> TBC	Version Number:	<u>54</u>
Review Date:	<u>August 2023</u> years <u>from date of approval</u>		

1. Purpose

This document assists Councillors, members of dDelegated cCommittees, Council staff and the community to understand the entitlements of the Mayor, Councillors and members of Delegated Committees by outlining:

- entitlements for reimbursement of reasonable bona fide out-of-pocket expenses incurred while performing the duties of a Councillor or a member of a delegated committee.
- entitlements to have reasonable bona fide expenses associated with performing the duties of a Councillor or a member of a delegated committee paid on their behalf.
- Councillors' entitlements to professional development support and resources.
- The facilities, resources and support considered necessary and appropriate for Councillors to perform their duties in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act).

This document also sets out:

- The process and standards for claiming expenses.
- The process and standards for reporting and accountability.

2. Context

Part 2, Division 6 of the Act provides for the payment of allowances; the reimbursement of expenses; and the provision of resources and facilities to the Mayor, Councillors and members of delegated committees for the purpose of supporting them perform their duties.

Councillors and members of delegated committees are entitled, under section 40 of the Act, to reimbursement of expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their duties.

This policy ensures that the reimbursement of these expenses is in accordance with the Act and meets the Act's principles of public transparency; achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community; and ensuring the ongoing financial viability of the council.

Section 41 of the Act requires Council to adopt and maintain an expenses policy in relation to the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for Councillors and members of delegated committees.



3. Scope

This Policy applies to the Knox City Council Mayor, Councillors and delegated committee members and specifically addresses a broad range of expenses including:

- Transport and travel;
- Information and Communications Technology
- Conference, seminars, training and professional development;
- Meals and refreshments; and
- Carer Support

This policy is not intended to prescribe for every possible situation that may arise. Any situation that is not adequately covered by this policy will be determined in accordance with section 06-14 or referred to Council for determination by resolution.

Any cost or expense (or portion thereof) which should reasonably be borne by another entity, or for which another entity is reasonably liable, is outside the scope of this policy and shall not be paid or reimbursed by Council.

The payment of allowances for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors is outside of the scope of this policy and will be determined according to the requirements of section 39 of the Act.

4. References

4.1 Community Plan 2021-2031

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4.2 Council Plan 2021-2025

Key Direction 5: Civic engagement and integrity

Ensure our processes are transparent and decisions are accountable.

~~4.1 Knox Community and Council Plan~~

- ~~Goal 8 – We have confidence in decision-making~~
- ~~Strategy 8.1 – Build, strengthen and promote good governance practices across government and community organisations~~

4.24.3 Relevant Legislation

- Local Government Act 2020
- Carers Recognition Act 2012

4.34.4 Charter of Human Rights

This policy has been assessed against and complies with the Charter of Human Rights. ~~— This policy is not inconsistent with the Charter of Human Rights.~~

4.44.5 Related Council Policies



- Governance ~~R~~ules
- ~~P~~ublic ~~T~~ransparency ~~p~~Policy
- ~~C~~ouncillor Media Policy
- ~~E~~lection Period Policy
- ~~G~~overnance framework
- Email, Internet & Web Browsing Policy
- Information Management Security Policy
- Password Policy ~~2018~~

Related Council Procedures

- ~~N~~il

5. Definitions

the Act	Means the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> as amended.
Bona fide	Means honest; genuine; actual; authentic; acting without the intention of defrauding.
Carer	Mean a carer as defined under section 4 of the Carers Recognition Act 2012.
Civic function	A ceremonial or celebratory Council event (including reception or ball).
Council	Means Knox City Council, being a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> .
Delegated Committee	Means a Delegated Committee established under section 63 of the Act.



Duties as a Councillor	<p>Means duties performed by a Councillor that are necessary or appropriate for the purposes of achieving the objectives of a Council having regard to any relevant Act, regulations, Ministerial guidelines or Council policies.</p> <p>Such duties include, but are not limited to, attendance at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Meetings, Delegated Committee Meetings, or other committee meetings; • Briefing sessions, workshops, or other meetings with Council staff; • Training sessions, professional development opportunities and conferences (as an attendee and / or speaker) which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Are consistent with Council’s objectives; – Will cover or present material with application / importance / relevance to current or future issues faced by the Council; and – Are within the General, or Councillor’s annual budget allocations. • Conferences or other meetings as Council’s nominated representative or delegate. • Civic or ceremonial functions convened or scheduled by the Council, Mayor or Chief Executive Officer; • Meetings with individual community members, organisations and community groups; • Other meetings, inspections or events attended by a Councillor in an official capacity relevant to their duties.
Duties as a Delegated Committee Member	<p>Means duties performed by a member of a Delegated Committee who is not a Councillor, that is necessary or appropriate for the purposes of achieving the objectives of the Committee having regard to any relevant Act, regulations, Ministerial guidelines Instrument of Delegation or Council policy.</p>
Expenses	<p>Means expenses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • initially incurred by a Mayor, Councillor or member of a delegated committee for which a claim is subsequently made for reimbursement; and • expenses incurred by Council for or on behalf of a Mayor, Councillor or member of a delegated committee.
Fair and reasonable (in relation to expenses, support and resources)	<p>Means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An amount, level or type that is consistent with what a reasonable person would pay or accept, if they were not a Councillor or member of a delegated committee, in the same or similar circumstances for the same or similar item. • An amount that represents value for money and minimises waste or extravagance
Material cost	<p>Means a cost greater than 10% of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • total once-off expense incurred; or • monthly expense incurred.



Professional development	Means the process of improving and increasing the capabilities, knowledge, mindset or skillset of councillors through access to education and training opportunities, whether through outside organisations or in the workplace.
Reasonable personal use	Means personal use that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is infrequent and brief, and/or does not have a cost to Council, or a material cost to Council in the context of the expense in question. • does not interfere with the operation of Council. • does not unreasonably interfere with another councillor's use of Council's resources and facilities. • does not compromise the security of the Council's systems or assets. • does not impact on Council's electronic storage capacity. • does not decrease Council's network performance, or consume bandwidth or data in a manner that could interfere with the service provided to others (e.g. large email attachments can decrease system performance and potentially cause system outages; streaming content can consume large amounts of bandwidth on Council's network, or data from Council's mobile plan). • corresponds to Council's procedures for email maintenance and archiving documents. • is not an unacceptable use, as defined.
<u>Representing Council</u>	<u>Representing Council means external-facing responsibilities focused on promoting Council's interests and position; or where Council receives an official invitation seeking Council representation at an event</u>
Term of office	In accordance with Section 29 of the Local Government Act 2020, the term of office of a Councillor elected at a general election commences on the day that the Councillor takes the Oath or affirmation of Office and expires at 6.00am on the day appointed for the next general election. In terms of this policy, the term of office for any Councillor elected as a result of an extraordinary vacancy expires at 6.00am on the day appointed for the next general election.
Tools of trade	Includes the following items of information and communications technology equipment provided to conduct business as a Councillor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laptop and or Tablet Computer • Printer/Copier/Facsimile/Scanner • Mobile Communication Device (eg Smartphone)



Unacceptable use	Means use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create or exchange messages that are offensive, harassing, obscene or threatening. • To visit web sites containing objectionable (including pornographic) or criminal material. • To store publish or transmit material that is offensive, obscene, abusive, defamatory or unlawful. • That exchanges any confidential or sensitive information contrary to law. • That infringes intellectual property laws. • That transmits files or viruses that cause a negative impact on Council's computer system. • Of software that is unauthorised. • That is for electioneering purposes or any other purpose prohibited by law.
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6. Council Policy

6.1.1. Policy Principles

The following principles represent the foundation of Council's Policy on payment or the reimbursement of expenses for the Mayor, Councillors and delegated committee members. The following principles also represent the foundation of Council's Policy on the provision of resources and facilities to support the Mayor and Councillors:

- Public resources will be used prudently and solely in the public interest, in accordance with the Councillor Conduct principles as prescribed in the Act.
- Public resources will be allocated in a fair and equitable manner taking into account individual needs and circumstances, to facilitate the full participation of all Councillors.
- The provision of support and resources, and the reimbursement of expenses must be accountable and transparent to the community.
- Expenses must be:
 - Fair, reasonable and bona fide;
 - actually incurred in the performance and discharge of a Councillor's or delegated committee member's duties;
 - adequately substantiated; and
 - in accordance with statutory requirements and community expectations.
- Support and resources provided must be:
 - fair and reasonable;
 - reasonably necessary to meet the legitimate needs of Councillors when performing their duties; and
 - in accordance with statutory requirements and community expectations.
- Councillors must reimburse Council for any costs incurred which relate to personal use which is not specifically authorised in this Policy.



- Council will provide reasonable additional support, facilities and/ or equipment for any Councillor with a disability to enable them to perform their duties.

6.2. Transport and travel

6.2.1. General Provisions

The following general provisions shall apply when determining any expenses to be met or reimbursed by Council:

- [Subject to section 6.5.1](#), interstate or overseas travel expenses must be applied for, and approved [by Council resolution](#), in advance of the travel occurring.
- Expenses will only be met or reimbursed by Council where undertaking the duties of a Councillor is the primary and predominate purpose of travel.
- Travel shall be by the most practical mode and route possible, and be reasonable in the circumstances taking into account factors such as duration and total cost of travel.
- Costs should be minimised by sharing travel arrangements where reasonable and practicable.
- The amount paid or reimbursed by Council for air travel shall not exceed the cost of economy class air travel to the relevant destination.
- Where private travel is undertaken in conjunction with travel related to the duties of a Councillor:
 - All costs incurred for private purposes must be clearly delineated and documented pre-departure.
 - Council will not directly pay for or reimburse any costs related to private travel.
- The quantum of expenses met or reimbursed by Council will generally be on the basis of the actual cost incurred and the form of transport used. However, Council may reimburse an amount less than the amount claimed, where the actual expense incurred is considered unreasonable, taking into account for example, the alternative models of travel available.
- Council will not reimburse expenses for travel to Council or Delegated Committee meetings, meetings of Council committees, formal briefing sessions and civic and ceremonial functions.

6.2.2. ~~Mayoral Vehicle~~

A fully maintained motor vehicle will be made available to the Mayor for the duration of their term, including for reasonable personal use.

The make and model of vehicle will be determined in accordance with Council Policy or at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer.

Reserved parking will be provided for the Mayoral Vehicle at the Civic Centre.

6.2.3. Private Vehicle Use

Councillors and members of a delegated committee using their own private vehicles to carry out their duties as a Councillor or a delegated committee member may be reimbursed travel expenses. Reimbursement shall be on a per-kilometre basis at the rate prescribed for deductions for work-related car expenses by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) using the cents per kilometre method.



Where a Councillor or delegated committee member uses a car for interstate travel in accordance with this policy, the amount paid or reimbursed by Council to undertake the interstate travel (inclusive of tolls, car parking and additional accommodation costs) shall not exceed the cost of economy class air travel and transfers to the relevant destination.

Parking will be provided for Councillors' private vehicles at the Civic Centre.

6.2.4. Council Vehicle Use

In exceptional circumstances, where practicable and by prior arrangement through the Chief Executive Officer, a Council pool vehicle may be made available for use by a Councillor where use of a private vehicle or other means of transport is not available or convenient.

All use of Council pool vehicles must be reasonably necessary to discharge the duties of a Councillor and pool vehicles may not be used for personal use.

Council does not have an allocated pool vehicle for use by Councillors and availability of vehicles is subject to operational demands upon the fleet.

Any Councillor use of Council pool vehicles is subject to relevant Council policies and procedures.

6.2.5. Tolls and Car Parking Costs

Councillors and delegated committee members may be reimbursed for the cost of:

- Car parking for the reasonable duration required to perform their duties.
- Fees for use of toll roads (EastLink and CityLink) incurred in attending to their duties.

The most value for money parking options should be sought. Where premium, valet or personalised parking services are used, the amount paid or reimbursed by Council shall not exceed the cost of standard parking facilities available in reasonable proximity.

6.2.6. Public Transport

Councillors and delegated committee members may be reimbursed for the cost of using public transport incurred in attending to their duties as a Councillor.

6.2.7. Taxi Costs (including ride share and other fare based services)

Where it is not practicable or cost effective to use public transport, a Council or private motor vehicle, Councillors and delegated committee members may be reimbursed for taxi costs incurred in attending to their duties.

Where a Councillor or a delegated committee member uses a ride share service or other service providing a vehicle and driver, the amount paid or reimbursed by Council shall not exceed the cost of an equivalent taxi service.

Councillors may request a "Cab-Charge" voucher from Council for the payment of taxi services.

6.2.8. Overseas Travel

Overseas travel expenses will only be incurred or reimbursed in accordance with a specific Council resolution made prior to the travel being undertaken.

Expenses relating to overseas travel, accommodation, meals and reasonable entertainment will be met or reimbursed by Council in accordance with the resolution.



6.2.9. Exclusions

Council will not directly pay for, or reimburse, the costs of any infringements incurred, including:

- For road, traffic or parking offences.
- For public transport offences.

6.2.10. Travel Expenses not covered by the foregoing.

Where travel expenses are proposed to be incurred outside this section or there is doubt as to the application of this section to expenses incurred, then the provisions of section 0 of this Policy can be applied.

6.3. Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

6.3.1. Selection and Provision of Councillors' ICT Equipment

The following tools of trade will be made available to each Councillor to assist them perform their duties as a Councillor:

- one mobile telephone: Wi-Fi and mobile data (ie 3G, 4G, or 5G) enabled with a voice mail or voice to text service.
- one mobile tablet or laptop computer: Wi-Fi and mobile data (ie 3G, 4G, or 5G) enabled.
- one multi-function copier/printer/scanner – if requested.
- monitor with a second monitor available on request.
- headphones suitable for tablet / laptop based MS Teams and Zoom meetings.

The capital costs of Councillors' tools of trade are not an expense for the purposes of this policy.

Council will directly pay for the expenses associated with providing a mobile data plan for tools of trade through plans established periodically according to Council's usual procurement processes.

The make, model, and functionality of Councillors' tools of trade will be subject to consultation with Councillors, but will otherwise:

- Be selected in accordance with Council's ICT strategy and the usual standards and processes applied across Council for its business activities;
- Not exceed, nor be less than, the standard or specifications of equipment available to staff (including Directors and the Chief Executive Officer);
- Be consistent across the Councillor group to enable more efficient training, support and asset management;
- Be reviewed at the commencement of each electoral term; and
- Be upgraded at the end of their useful life or otherwise in accordance with Council's ICT strategy and the usual standards and processes applied across Council for its business activities.

Where a reasonable mobile data (ie 3G, 4G, 5G) connection cannot be accessed at a Councillor's normal place of residence, expenses for an alternative solution can be considered in accordance with section 06-14 of this Policy.





6.3.2. Selection and Installation of ICT Software

Councillors' tools of trade will be equipped with a range of approved software. Software selected will be subject to consultation with Councillors, but will otherwise be selected and upgraded in accordance with Council's ICT strategy and the usual standards, processes and security safeguards applied across Council's network.

The installation of additional software on Councillor tools of trade is subject to consultation with the IT Department.

Councillors must not load pirated, suspect or illegal software or content onto any Council provided device. Council has the right to audit a tool of trade, including applications and information, to ensure compliance with the law and this policy. The Chief Executive Officer has the authority to delete any inappropriate information or unauthorised software from a Council provided tool of trade.

The cost of approved software selected and made available to all Councillors is not considered an expense for the purposes of this policy.

6.3.3. Use of ICT Equipment

Councillors must maintain the integrity and the configuration of the tools of trade provided, protect and generally ensure the safe custody and operation of such equipment and the information they contain.

Councillors' tools of trade are to be used for their duties as a Councillor, however reasonable personal use (as defined) of Councillors' tools of trade is permissible. Councillors' tools of trade must not be used to conduct personal business or other unacceptable uses.

Councillors should take all reasonable steps to ensure that Council provided tools of trade are not used in breach of this policy by third parties.

Councillors will be provided an opportunity to review the costs associated with their tools of trade at regular intervals, in order to identify and reimburse Council for private usage which is beyond reasonable personal use.

6.3.4. International Roaming

Councillors travelling overseas travel in accordance with section 6.2.8 may have international roaming provisioned on their tools of trade for the duration of the trip in accordance with Council's resolution.

International use of tools of trade in all other circumstances requires approval of the Chief Executive Officer prior to departure and the quantum of expense to be met or reimbursed by Council shall be limited to \$100 per Councillor per 4 week period.



6.3.5. User Accounts and Data

Councillors will be provided a user account enabling access to:

- Their tools of trade and any associated local, network, or cloud based storage.
- An email account on Council's @Knox.vic.gov.au domain.
- Software provided in accordance with section 0.
- Other data and resources relevant to their duties as a Councillors.

Councillors' use of the accounts and data provided via their tools of trade (or any other method) are subject to the various codes, policies and procedures set out Section 4.

Council will typically provide personalised user accounts and avoid generic (ie ward based) accounts to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of Councillors' data following the end of a Councillor's term of office.

6.3.6. Damage, Loss or Theft of Equipment

Any damage sustained to Councillors' tools of trade will be repaired at Council's expense. Device covers are highly recommended and may be supplied by Council.

Where a mobile device is damaged, lost or stolen a Councillor must:

- report the damage, loss or theft to the ~~Manager Information Management~~Information Technology Team as soon as practicable; and
- where requested, provide a Statutory Declaration including the details of the device and the circumstances of the damage, loss or theft.

All stolen or lost tools of trade will be subject to a remote wipe by Council.

6.3.7. Return of Councillor Equipment

All Councillor equipment must be returned to Council:

- upon request; and or
- at the conclusion of a Councillors' term of office.

Council staff will take appropriate steps to remove / destroy any data stored on Councillor equipment that is returned, before it is disposed of or re-deployed.

6.3.8. Disposal of Redundant Councillor Equipment

Councillors will be provided with an opportunity to purchase (at market value) the tools of trade that have been provided to, and used by them, if they are determined by the Director ~~Corporate Services~~Customer and Performance to be redundant or additional to Council's needs.

Any equipment purchased must be returned to Council beforehand, to enable corporate software and personal information to be removed, in accordance with section 6.3.7.

Tools of trade are not considered redundant or surplus to Council's needs if they:

- are of a type and specification still being procured or deployed for use by Council; and/or
- are of a type and specification that are appropriate to retain for redeployment to other Councillors or staff members, Council programs or activities.

Equipment that remains relevant and useful to Council's needs will not be made available to Councillors for purchase.



The market value of any tools of trade to be sold in accordance with this section will be determined by the Director ~~Corporate Services~~Customer and Performance; having regard to contemporary market rates for the sale or trade-in value of such equipment. Records of how the market value(s) was determined will be maintained by the Director ~~Corporate Services~~Customer and Performance.

Once notified of the opportunity to purchase the equipment and the market value, a Councillor must inform Council of their intent to purchase or not within 7 days.

Any equipment not purchased must be returned to Council promptly in accordance with a notification from the Director ~~Corporate Services~~Customer and Performance.

6.3.9. Transfer of mobile telephone number

A Councillor wanting to retain their Council owned mobile telephone number at the conclusion of may request the number be transferred to them.

Any associated costs in the transfer and any fees or charges incurred at this time and after will be met by the Councillor wanting to transfer the number.

6.4. Conferences, Seminars, Training and Professional Development

6.4.1. General Provisions

Council recognises the need for Councillors to attend training, conferences, seminars and professional development ~~and professional development~~ activities in order to be kept informed on relevant local government matters and to assist them performing their roles as Councillors. Generally, and as defined in this Policy, professional development means the process of improving and increasing the capabilities, knowledge, mindset or skillset of Councillors.

Annual budget provisions for conferences, seminars, training and professional development are addressed in Section 6.4.2--

Prior approval to attend the training and development activity must have been obtained from either the Chief Executive Officer or resolution of Council for expenses to be paid or reimbursed to Councillors.

The expenses paid or reimbursed to Councillors may include:

- 6.4.1.1 registration fees.
- 6.4.1.2 accommodation costs other than in the metropolitan area.
- 6.4.1.3 reasonable cost of meals and refreshments.

Where appropriate, Councillors will present a short synopsis of the event (written or verbal) ~~verbal report of their learnings~~ at the next practicable Council meeting as part of their monthly Councillor report, following attendance at a conference, seminar, training or professional development. ~~held either interstate or overseas.~~

Conferences, training or professional development conducted or delivered by Council staff are not considered expenses for the purposes of this policy, (including the cost of ancillary meals and refreshments including in accordance with Section ~~06.7~~).

A delegated committee member may have training and professional development expenses paid or reimbursed by Council in accordance with a specific Council resolution made prior to the training or activity being undertaken.



Expenses relating to registration fees, accommodation and meals will be met or reimbursed by Council in accordance with the resolution.

6.4.2. Annual Budget Allocation for Conferences, Seminars, Training, Professional Development and Representation

Subject to consideration and approval of the annual Council budget, an allocation for Conferences, Seminars, Training, Professional Development and Representation of:

- \$7,000 will be made in respect of each Councillor; and
- \$14,000 for the Mayor;

for use within a given mayoral year at the discretion of the individual Councillor. Allocations are not cumulative as between mayoral years.

Accommodation and Meals at Conferences, Seminars, Training and Professional Development

Where it is understood that a Councillor training and development activity involves related costs, such as accommodation or meals, these should be identified prior to registration.

If not included in the cost of the registration, the cost of meals and beverages (within reasonable limits) for the duration of the training and development activity may be reimbursed to Councillors and delegated committee members.

Appropriate accommodation, as selected by the Chief Executive Officer or delegate, for the duration of the training and development activity may be paid by Council. Accommodation expenses within the metropolitan Melbourne area will not be paid or reimbursed to Councillors or delegated committee members.

Accommodation and meal expenses should be consistent with Table 3 in the annual determinations of the Australian Taxation Office regarding reasonable accommodation and meal expenses (See for example Taxation Determination TD 2023/305 included at Appendix 1, or subsequent determinations as circulated to Councillors from time to time.)

Councillor Induction and sector training

A mandatory induction and training program will be conducted for all Councillors at the commencement of each electoral term. Periodically throughout the Councillors' terms of office, Councillors will also have access to program of training and professional development opportunities including:

6.4.3.1.1—Meeting procedures

6.4.3.1

6.4.3.2—Chairing of meetings

6.4.3.2

6.4.3.3—Media training

6.4.3.3

6.4.3.4—Governance training (for example, Australian Institute of Company Directors course)

6.4.3.4

6.4.3.5—Financial training

6.4.3.5

6.4.3.6—Information Technology usage



6.4.3.6

6.4.3.7 — Team Building and interpersonal skills

6.4.3.7

6.4.3.8 — MAV/VLGA Councillor Development Programs

6.4.3.8

6.4.3.9 — Cranlana Colloquium

An allocation for these expenses will be made, subject to consideration and approval in the annual Council budget.

Additional training and professional activities outside of the above program must be funded separately as an expense from individual Councillor ~~training and development budgets~~ budget allocations in accordance with Section 6.4.2.

A Councillor who is not entitled (or seeking) to be reimbursed for attending the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly (NGA) in accordance with Section 6.5.1, may fund their attendance at the NGA from their individual Councillor training and development budgets. (For the purposes of this section, the costs of attending the NGA shall include all registration, travel, meals, accommodation and incidental expenses).

Subject to consideration and approval of the annual Council budget, an allocation of \$5,000 will be made in respect of each Councillor and \$10,000 for the Mayor for that financial year. Allocations are not cumulative as between financial years.

6.5. Representing Council

Where Council receives an official invitation seeking Council representation at an event, Councillors shall be entitled to have paid by Council, or reimbursed, reasonable bona fide costs associated with representing Council at the event if Council, or the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Mayor, have determined that official representation is considered necessary or appropriate to support the business or representational needs of Council.

6.5.1. Attendance at the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly (NGA)

The Mayor and up to three additional Councillors are entitled under this section to have met or reimbursed, the costs for attending and representing Council at the Annual National General Assembly of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), which provides Councils with the opportunity to participate and engage in advocacy and discussion on matters of national importance to local government.

Where more than three Councillors, other than the Mayor, wish to claim an entitlement under this section, the Mayor shall consult with Councillors seeking to reduce the number of Councillor delegates to four. Priority will be given to Councillors who have not previously attended the NGA in the current term of Council. Where, following consultation with the Mayor, more than four Councillors wish to claim an entitlement under this section, the matter shall be referred to Council for determination.

The total cost for attending the NGA (excluding meals and transport costs) under this section shall not be deducted from individual Councillors' Conference, Seminar and Representation Expenses entitlement.



At the request of the Mayor, and subject to available budget provisions, the Councillor delegation to the NGA may be supported (at Council's expense) by the Chief Executive Officer or another member of the Executive Leadership Team.

Attendance at Fundraising and Charitable Events

Council will directly pay for or reimburse the cost of ticketed events for Councillors invited, in their role as a Councillor, by written invitation to attend Fundraising or Charitable Events:

- a) Conducted by a neighbouring municipality, or municipality in the Municipal Association of Victoria's Metropolitan East Region; or
- b) Where prior approval has been given by Council, or the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Mayor (or in the case of Mayoral expenses, the Deputy Mayor), and the event benefits the Knox Community.

Appointments to External Organisations

Each year, and from time to time, Council resolves to appoint Councillors to represent it on a number of external organisations.

For these organisations the nominated Councillors or their substitute are to be Council representatives at regular meetings of these organisations and any special events, with partners where appropriate.

Councillors are entitled to have paid by Council, or reimbursed, reasonable bona fide costs associated with representing Council on such organisations subject to expenditure in excess of \$500 per annum per delegate (including substitute nominees) per organisation being approved in advance by Council.

6.6. Attendance by a Councillor's Spouse or Partner

6.6.1. Attendance at Functions of Victorian Councils

Where there is a mutual expectation of partners attending, Council will directly pay for or reimburse the reasonable costs of a Councillor's spouse or partner attending functions:

- a) held by Knox City Council; or
- b) held by other Victorian municipalities

A mutual expectation of partners attending would arise for example where:

- A spouse / partner is specified on the invitation; and
- The event is a dance, ball, or gala, to which a partner would typically be invited; or
- The event is of a nature where other attendees will be accompanied by partners.

6.6.2. Attendance at other seminars, conferences or civic functions

Attendance at any seminar, conference or civic function by a councillor's spouse / partner shall be at the expense of the councillor except where:

- a) Prior approval has been given by Council or the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Mayor (or in the case of Mayoral expenses, the Deputy Mayor); and



- b) Attendance by a councillor's spouse / partner is considered to be necessary or appropriate to support the business or representational needs of Council; and
- c) Sufficient provision exists in the approved annual budget for conferences and seminars.

In order to effectively manage GST liability – all arrangements for a Councillor's spouse or partner's attendance may be requested to be paid for by the Councillor, with reimbursement provided by Council.



6.7. Other Support

Where a Councillor attends an event on behalf of Council, the following support can be provided when required and as follows:

- Administrative support managing invitations and RSVPs provided by the Executive Assistant to the Mayor and Councillors.
- Provision of talking points for the Mayor (or delegate), for events where a formal invitation is received to attend and speak.
- Providing background information for Councillors attending other events if requested.
- Support associated with the wearing (and security of) of the Mayoral Robes and Chain for events where formal attire is considered necessary and appropriate.
- Taking photos of Councillors (using Councillor's devices) at events on request, provided such requests are incidental to, and not disruptive to the officer's role at the event.

Meals and Refreshment

6.6.3-6.7.1. General Provisions

Council will provide reasonable meals (typically either a buffet style meal or plated meal) during evenings of Council meetings, Delegated Committee meetings, Issues Briefings and other key meetings as determined by the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Mayor.

Reasonable meals may also be provided when other Council events or meetings are held at times that immediately follow or extend through normal ~~meal times~~ meal times.

Council will provide reasonable refreshments for Councillors' in their office and meeting space.

6.6.4-6.7.2. Alcohol

The Chief Executive Officer may approve the provision of alcoholic beverages at Council events, or reimbursement of expenses for alcoholic beverages at other events, having regard to:

- Community expectations and the policy principles set out in section 6.1.1
- The impact alcohol can have on the safe, competent and professional performance of the duties of a Councillor.

Carer Support

Council will directly pay for, or reimburse fair and reasonable childcare / family care expenses incurred by Councillors whilst discharging their duties as a councillor. The total expense paid for, or reimbursed, by Council must exclude any applicable rebates or subsidies.

Council will directly pay for, or reimburse fair and reasonable childcare / family care expenses incurred by a delegated committee member whilst discharging their duties as a member of a delegated committee. The total expense paid for, or reimbursed, by Council must exclude any applicable rebates or subsidies.

Family care relates to care provided to any immediate family member who is either a child or a sick, elderly, or disabled person. A child is defined as a person up to, but not including, 16 years of age.



Council may also make reasonable adjustments, and directly pay for or reimburse fair and reasonable additional expenses incurred by a Councillor who is breastfeeding.

Eligible care does not include care performed by a direct relative (spouse, domestic partner, son, daughter, mother, father, brother or sister of the Councillor or their spouse or partner).

Council will provide reimbursement of costs where the provision of carer services is reasonably required when a councillor or delegated committee member who is a carer incurs reasonable expenses in the performance of their duties.

Each claim must be substantiated by a receipt from the caregiver showing the dates and times care was provided and a written statement identifying the duty performed by the Councillor.

-Professional Memberships

Council will directly pay for, or reimburse the cost of the following memberships:

- Australian Institute of Company Directors
- The Victorian Local Government Association
- The Australian Local Government Women's Association

Other memberships, which are considered demonstrably beneficial to Council or the performance of the duties of a Councillor, may be considered in accordance with section [06.14](#) of this Policy.



Subscriptions

Council will directly pay for, or reimburse the cost of the following subscriptions:

- The Age newspaper
- The Herald Sun newspaper.

Other subscriptions may be considered in accordance with section 06.14 of this Policy.

Miscellaneous Support and Expenses

All Councillors will be provided with:

- Standard stationery and office consumables held or obtained generally for the organisations requirements.
- Personalised business cards.
- Names badges, including for a spouse or partner.
- A page on Council's website including, but not limited to, a photo, contact details, term dates and committees. Additional information may be included at the request of individual Councillors, subject to approval by the Chief Executive Officer.
- Any safety equipment required for a Councillor's duties. This equipment is to be returned to the organisation promptly upon the completion of the activity/duty for which the articles were required.
- Council business papers, personal mail and other Council information will be couriered to Councillors' place of residence weekly or as required.

The Chief Executive Officer shall also provide an appropriate level of secretarial/administrative support for the Mayor and Councillors.

6.6.5-6.7.3. Donations and/or sponsorship

Donations and/or sponsorship made by a Councillor will be made on their own behalf and not on behalf of Council, except in accordance with a prior resolution of Council.

Councillor donations and/or sponsorship not in accordance with a prior resolution of Council will not be reimbursed by Council.

6.6.6-6.7.4. Insurance Policies

Councillors and delegated committee members are covered under the following Council insurance policies while discharging, in good faith, the duties of civic office including attendance at meetings of external bodies as Council representatives:

- Public Liability Insurance;
- Professional indemnity Insurance;
- Councillors and Officers liability Insurance;
- Personal Accident (accompanying partners are also covered) Insurance;
- Travel Insurance; and
- Work Cover (as a deemed employee).

The insurance does not cover criminal or willful acts.



The Council will pay the insurance policy excess in respect of any claim made against a Councillor or member of a delegated committee arising from Council business where any claim is accepted by Council's insurers, whether defended or not.

6.6.7.6.7.5. Legal Expenses

Other than by specific Council resolution, any legal expenses incurred by a Councillor shall be the responsibility of that Councillor.

6.6.8.6.7.6. People Assist Program

Council provides a People Assist Program to staff which is also available for use by Councillors. The program provides professional and confidential support services for personal or work related issues for Councillors and their immediate family at no cost.

Councillors can access the People Assist Program for up to four free hours, per issue.

Office and Meeting Space

At the Civic Centre there shall be provided:

- A Mayoral Office
- A separate, shared office space provided for use by Councillors
- A Councillors' Room.

All spaces will be determined by the Chief Executive (in consultation with Councillors) and suitably equipped for computer use, photocopying, reading, research and meetings.

Councillors will be provided with 24 hour security access to the Councillors' Room and shared office space. The Mayor shall have 24 hour security access to the Mayoral Office.

Subject to availability, other Council meeting/function rooms owned and controlled by Council may be booked by Councillors for use free of charge for meetings and other functions, provided the Councillor is in attendance and the use is necessary or appropriate for performing the duties of a Councillor or the conduct of Council business.

Ward Meetings

An annual budget provision will be made (and reviewed annually as part of the Council budget process) for the reasonable costs associated with holding one Ward Meeting per calendar year.

6.6.9.6.7.7. General Provisions

Ward Meetings are conducted as an informal feedback session for the benefit of Councillors. It is not intended that detailed information be provided by staff on the progress of projects or upcoming projects.

Ward meetings are held at the discretion of individual Councillors who are responsible for setting the agenda, preparing relevant content and conducting their Ward meetings.

Councillors are requested to indicate their intention to hold Ward Meetings at the commencement of each calendar year.

Ward meetings may be held at the Civic Offices, or at a convenient location within the Ward as selected by the Councillor.



Refreshments provided shall be limited to tea, coffee and biscuits.

Ward meetings will not be held during an election period.

~~6.6.10-6.7.8.~~ 6.7.8. Staff Attendance

Council staff typically do not participate in Ward Meetings.

At the request of the Ward Councillor, a staff member may attend to act as a note taker.

Councillors may request the attendance of a specific Council Officer to discuss a specific item. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for determining the attendance and role of Council officers at Ward Meetings.

~~6.6.11-6.7.9.~~ 6.7.9. Advertising

Advertising will be conducted via Council's website and social media channels, and signage at Council's Civic Centre and local libraries.

Additional advertising may be considered in accordance with section ~~06.14~~ of this Policy.

Other Expenditure Not Specified

Where any expense sought to be paid for, or reimbursed to, a Councillor is not covered by this Policy or exceeds the budgetary limits in section ~~6.4.26-4.3~~ the following process shall apply:

- The Councillor shall make application prior to incurring any expense.
- For expenses \$300 or less and generally within the terms of section 75 of the Act and in compliance with this Policy:
 - The Chief Executive Officer shall confer on the matter with the Mayor (or in the case of Mayoral expenses, the Deputy Mayor).
 - The Chief Executive Officer may then determine the matter and inform the Councillor, providing reasons for their decision.
- For expenses greater than \$300 the matter will be referred to Council for consideration and determination.

Where there is any uncertainty or disagreement as to an entitlement; or where there is any failure to comply with this Policy, the following process shall apply:-

- ~~1.~~ 1. The Chief Executive Officer shall confer on the matter with the Mayor (or in the case of Mayoral expenses, the Deputy Mayor).
- ~~2.~~ 2. The Chief Executive Officer may then determine the matter, or a proposed course of action to resolve the disagreement / uncertainty or the non-compliance, and inform the Councillor, providing reasons for their decision.
- ~~3.~~ 3. If the matter remains unresolved it will be referred to Council for consideration.

If the Chief Executive Officer and Mayor have been party to the decision which is the subject of the uncertainty / disagreement:

- ~~1.~~ 1. The Chief Executive Officer shall refer the matter to the Director ~~Corporate Services~~ Customer and Performance for independent review.

~~1.~~ 1.



2.—The Director ~~Corporate Services~~Customer and Performance shall confer with the Manager Governance and Risk and determine the matter, or agree a proposed course of action to resolve the disagreement / uncertainty or the non-compliance.

3.2.

3. The Director ~~Corporate Services~~Customer and Performance will inform the affected Councillor of the proposed course of action to resolve the disagreement / uncertainty or the non-compliance.

4.—If the matter remains unresolved it will be referred to Council for consideration.

4.



Claims and records

~~6.6.12-6.7.10.~~ 6.7.10. Form of claims

All claims must be made on the form provided and be complete as to all specified detail.

Councillors and delegated committee members may also be periodically requested to certify details of expenses incurred on their behalf.

The following substantiation rules apply to all expense claims.

- A claim for reimbursement must be supported by written evidence, being a receipt, tax invoice or similar document that sets out the relevant particulars. This means a document from the supplier of the goods or services the expense is for, setting out:
 - the name or business name of the supplier; and
 - the amount of the expense, expressed in the currency in which it was incurred; and detailing any GST paid, and
 - the nature of the goods or services; and
 - the date the expense was incurred; and
 - the date the document was made.
- Where this documentation is not available a statutory declaration must be submitted to support the claim.

Incomplete claims or claims which are outside this Policy will be initially referred to the claimant Councillor for further advice.

Claims which are not in accordance with this Policy will be considered under section ~~06.14.~~

~~6.6.13-6.7.11.~~ 6.7.11. Timeframe for submission of claims

Councillors and delegated committee members are required to submit claims in a timely manner to ensure transparency and timely accountability.

Claims for reimbursement of expenses in the September, December and March quarters must be submitted by the close of business of the following month.

Claims for reimbursement of expenses in the June quarter must be submitted within 7 working days of the end of financial year.

Claims for reimbursement which are not in accordance with the above timeframes will not be processed unless Council resolves to accept the claim.



~~6.6.14.6.7.12.~~ Assessment of claims

The Chief Executive Officer will oversee the processing of all claims by the Governance Department.

Where a claim appears incomplete or outside this Policy it will be initially referred to the claimant Councillor for further discussion. Unresolved issues will be managed in accordance with Section ~~06.14.~~

Accountability

Council is committed to accountability and transparency for reimbursement of expenses and the provision of resources and facilities to Councillors. This Policy will be posted on Council's website.

Quarterly reports of all councillor and delegated committee member expenses will be provided to council, and the council's Audit and Risk Committee.

The report will include:

- expenses incurred on behalf of councillors and delegated committee members during the quarter;
- reimbursement claims made by councillors and delegated committee members during the quarter; and
- reimbursements made by councillors and delegated committee members during the quarter.

In accordance ~~with~~ Council's Public Transparency Policy, Council maintains a public register which includes details of overseas or interstate travel (other than interstate travel by land for less than 3 days) undertaken in an official capacity by any Councillor in the previous 12 months, including—

- the name of the Councillor;
- the dates on which the travel began and ended; and
- the destination of the travel; and
- the purpose of the travel; and
- the total cost to the Council of the travel, including accommodation costs.

Council's annual report shall include information regarding all Mayoral and Councillor expenses (whether paid directly by Council or reimbursed to the Councillor) broken down into categories as required by the Act:

- Transport and Travel
- Communications Equipment
- Conferences, Seminars, Training and Professional Development
- ~~Professional Memberships~~
- ~~_____~~
- ~~Care Support~~
- ~~_____~~



- Other Expenses
- Other Expenses



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 on approval of the Chief Executive Officer. 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.



Appendix 1 Extract from Taxation Determination TD 2023~~0~~/~~30~~5 - Income tax: what are the reasonable travel and overtime meal allowance expense amounts for the 2023~~0~~-2~~4~~1 income year?

Table 3: Employee's annual salary – \$225,981 and above				
Place	Accomm. (\$)	Food and drink (\$) breakfast 36.80 lunch 52.20 dinner 73.10	Incidentals (\$)	Daily total (\$)
Adelaide	209	as above	29.20	400.30
Brisbane	257	as above	29.20	448.30
Canberra	246	as above	29.20	437.30
Darwin	293	as above	29.20	484.30
Hobart	196	as above	29.20	387.30
Melbourne	265	as above	29.20	456.30
Perth	265	as above	29.20	456.30
Sydney	265	as above	29.20	456.30
All country centres	\$195, or the relevant amount in Table 4 if higher	as above	29.20	variable

Table 3: Reasonable amounts for domestic travel expenses – employee's annual salary \$247,021 or more

Place	Accomm. (\$)	Food and drink (\$) breakfast 38.90 lunch 55.00 dinner 77.00	Incidentals (\$)	Daily total (\$)
Adelaide	211	as above	32.90	414.80
Brisbane	257	as above	32.90	460.80
Canberra	246	as above	32.90	449.80
Darwin	293	as above	32.90	496.80
Hobart	235	as above	32.90	438.80
Melbourne	265	as above	32.90	468.80
Perth	265	as above	32.90	468.80
Sydney	265	as above	32.90	468.80
All country centres	\$195 or the relevant amount in Table 4 if higher	as above	32.90	variable

<https://www.ato.gov.au/law/view/pdf/pbr/td2023-003.pdf>



ALLOCATION NO:

Claim Form – Carer Costs



Application for Payment or Reimbursement of Carer Costs

Councillor Name:		
Date(s) claimed for:		
Councillor or Delegated Committee Duties undertaken whilst carer support is provided		
Names of person or organisation providing care		
Costs	Hours	
	Hourly Rate	\$
Declaration:	<p>I declare that the above claim is submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Councillor Support Policy and Procedure and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is net of any rebates or subsidies; <input type="checkbox"/> Is not for care provided by a direct relative (as defined); <input type="checkbox"/> the expenses claimed are fair, reasonable, bona fide and reasonably necessary to enable me to perform my duties as a Councillor; and <input type="checkbox"/> I have included appropriate supporting documentation_in including a receipt from the caregiver. 	
Councillor Signature		Date:
CEO Signature:		Date:



ALLOCATION NO:


Claim Form – Travel Expenses




Application for Payment or Reimbursement of Travel Expenses

Councillor Name:		
Description of Expenses claimed:		
Councillor Duties or Delegated Committee undertaken necessitating travel		
Value of expenses claimed	Travel	\$
	Accommodation	\$
	Attendance/ Registration	\$
	Meals/Drinks	\$
	Other Costs, specify	\$
	Total	\$
Declaration:	<p>I declare that the above claim is submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Councillor Support Policy and Procedure and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> That undertaking the duties of a Councillor was the primary and predominate purpose of travel; <input type="checkbox"/> the expenses claimed are fair, reasonable, bona fide; and <input type="checkbox"/> I have included appropriate supporting documentation. <p>I further understand that details of this travel will be disclosed publicly in accordance with Section 222 of the Local Government Act.</p>	
Councillor Signature		Date:
CEO Signature:		Date:

ALLOCATION NO:



Claim Form – General Expenses



Application for Payment or Reimbursement of General Expenses

Councillor Name:		
Description of Expenses claimed:		
Councillor Duties or Delegated Committee undertaken relevant to expenses incurred		
Value of expenses claimed	Type of expenses	Value
		\$
		\$
		\$
		\$
		\$
	Total	\$
Declaration:	<p>I declare that the above claim is submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Councillor Support Policy and Procedure and:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> the expenses claimed are fair, reasonable, bona fide; and</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have included appropriate supporting documentation.</p>	
Councillor Signature		Date:
CEO Signature:		Date:

Councillor Expenses and Support

Policy Number:	2003/21	Directorate:	Customer and Performance
Approval by:	Council	Responsible Officer:	Manager Governance and Risk
Approval Date:	TBC	Version Number:	5
Review Date:	3 years from date of approval		

1. Purpose

This document assists Councillors, members of delegated committees, Council staff and the community to understand the entitlements of the Mayor, Councillors and members of Delegated Committees by outlining:

- entitlements for reimbursement of reasonable bona fide out-of-pocket expenses incurred while performing the duties of a Councillor or a member of a delegated committee.
- entitlements to have reasonable bona fide expenses associated with performing the duties of a Councillor or a member of a delegated committee paid on their behalf.
- Councillors' entitlements to professional development support and resources.
- The facilities, resources and support considered necessary and appropriate for Councillors to perform their duties in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act).

This document also sets out:

- The process and standards for claiming expenses.
- The process and standards for reporting and accountability.

2. Context

Part 2, Division 6 of the Act provides for the payment of allowances; the reimbursement of expenses; and the provision of resources and facilities to the Mayor, Councillors and members of delegated committees for the purpose of supporting them perform their duties.

Councillors and members of delegated committees are entitled, under section 40 of the Act, to reimbursement of expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their duties.

This policy ensures that the reimbursement of these expenses is in accordance with the Act and meets the Act's principles of public transparency; achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community; and ensuring the ongoing financial viability of the council.

Section 41 of the Act requires Council to adopt and maintain an expenses policy in relation to the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for Councillors and members of delegated committees.



3. Scope

This Policy applies to the Knox City Council Mayor, Councillors and delegated committee members and specifically addresses a broad range of expenses including:

- Transport and travel;
- Information and Communications Technology
- Conference, seminars, training and professional development;
- Meals and refreshments; and
- Carer Support

This policy is not intended to prescribe for every possible situation that may arise. Any situation that is not adequately covered by this policy will be determined in accordance with section 6.15 or referred to Council for determination by resolution.

Any cost or expense (or portion thereof) which should reasonably be borne by another entity, or for which another entity is reasonably liable, is outside the scope of this policy and shall not be paid or reimbursed by Council.

The payment of allowances for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors is outside of the scope of this policy and will be determined according to the requirements of section 39 of the Act.

4. References

4.1 Community Plan 2021-2031

4.2 Council Plan 2021-2025

Key Direction 5: Civic engagement and integrity

Ensure our processes are transparent and decisions are accountable.

4.3 Relevant Legislation

- Local Government Act 2020
- Carers Recognition Act 2012

4.4 Charter of Human Rights

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

4.5 Related Council Policies

- Governance Rules
- Public Transparency Policy
- Councillor Media Policy
- Election Period Policy
- Email, Internet & Web Browsing Policy
- Information Management Security Policy
- Password Policy



5. Definitions

the Act	Means the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> as amended.
Bona fide	Means honest; genuine; actual; authentic; acting without the intention of defrauding.
Carer	Mean a carer as defined under section 4 of the Carers Recognition Act 2012.
Civic function	A ceremonial or celebratory Council event (including reception or ball).
Council	Means Knox City Council, being a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> .
Delegated Committee	Means a Delegated Committee established under section 63 of the Act.
Duties as a Councillor	<p>Means duties performed by a Councillor that are necessary or appropriate for the purposes of achieving the objectives of a Council having regard to any relevant Act, regulations, Ministerial guidelines or Council policies.</p> <p>Such duties include, but not are not limited to, attendance at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Meetings, Delegated Committee Meetings, or other committee meetings; • Briefing sessions, workshops, or other meetings with Council staff; • Training sessions, professional development opportunities and conferences (as an attendee and / or speaker) which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Are consistent with Council’s objectives; – Will cover or present material with application / importance / relevance to current or future issues faced by the Council; and – Are within the General, or Councillor’s annual budget allocations. • Conferences or other meetings as Council’s nominated representative or delegate. • Civic or ceremonial functions convened or scheduled by the Council, Mayor or Chief Executive Officer; • Meetings with individual community members, organisations and community groups; • Other meetings, inspections or events attended by a Councillor in an official capacity relevant to their duties.
Duties as a Delegated Committee Member	Means duties performed by a member of a Delegated Committee who is not a Councillor, that is necessary or appropriate for the purposes of achieving the objectives of the Committee having regard to any relevant Act, regulations, Ministerial guidelines Instrument of Delegation or Council policy.



Expenses	<p>Means expenses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> initially incurred by a Mayor, Councillor or member of a delegated committee for which a claim is subsequently made for reimbursement; and expenses incurred by Council for or on behalf of a Mayor, Councillor or member of a delegated committee.
Fair and reasonable (in relation to expenses, support and resources)	<p>Means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An amount, level or type that is consistent with what a reasonable person would pay or accept, if they were not a Councillor or member of a delegated committee, in the same or similar circumstances for the same or similar item. An amount that represents value for money and minimises waste or extravagance
Material cost	<p>Means a cost greater than 10% of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> total once-off expense incurred; or monthly expense incurred.
Professional development	<p>Means the process of improving and increasing the capabilities, knowledge, mindset or skillset of councillors through access to education and training opportunities, whether through outside organisations or in the workplace.</p>
Reasonable personal use	<p>Means personal use that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is infrequent and brief, and/or does not have a cost to Council, or a material cost to Council in the context of the expense in question. does not interfere with the operation of Council. does not unreasonably interfere with another councillor's use of Council's resources and facilities. does not compromise the security of the Council's systems or assets. does not impact on Council's electronic storage capacity. does not decrease Council's network performance, or consume bandwidth or data in a manner that could interfere with the service provided to others (e.g. large email attachments can decrease system performance and potentially cause system outages; streaming content can consume large amounts of bandwidth on Council's network, or data from Council's mobile plan). corresponds to Council's procedures for email maintenance and archiving documents. is not an unacceptable use, as defined.
Representing Council	<p>Representing Council means external-facing responsibilities focused on promoting Council's interests and position; or where Council receives an official invitation seeking Council representation at an event</p>



Term of office	<p>In accordance with Section 29 of the Local Government Act 2020, the term of office of a Councillor elected at a general election commences on the day that the Councillor takes the Oath or affirmation of Office and expires at 6.00am on the day appointed for the next general election.</p> <p>In terms of this policy, the term of office for any Councillor elected as a result of an extraordinary vacancy expires at 6.00am on the day appointed for the next general election.</p>
Tools of trade	<p>Includes the following items of information and communications technology equipment provided to conduct business as a Councillor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laptop and or Tablet Computer • Printer/Copier/Facsimile/Scanner • Mobile Communication Device (eg Smartphone)
Unacceptable use	<p>Means use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create or exchange messages that are offensive, harassing, obscene or threatening. • To visit web sites containing objectionable (including pornographic) or criminal material. • To store publish or transmit material that is offensive, obscene, abusive, defamatory or unlawful. • That exchanges any confidential or sensitive information contrary to law. • That infringes intellectual property laws. • That transmits files or viruses that cause a negative impact on Council's computer system. • Of software that is unauthorised. • That is for electioneering purposes or any other purpose prohibited by law.

6. Council Policy

6.1.1. Policy Principles

The following principles represent the foundation of Council's Policy on payment or the reimbursement of expenses for the Mayor, Councillors and delegated committee members. The following principles also represent the foundation of Council's Policy on the provision of resources and facilities to support the Mayor and Councillors:

- Public resources will be used prudently and solely in the public interest, in accordance with the Councillor Conduct principles as prescribed in the Act.
- Public resources will be allocated in a fair and equitable manner taking into account individual needs and circumstances, to facilitate the full participation of all Councillors.
- The provision of support and resources, and the reimbursement of expenses must be accountable and transparent to the community.
- Expenses must be:
 - Fair, reasonable and bona fide;



- actually incurred in the performance and discharge of a Councillor's or delegated committee member's duties;
- adequately substantiated; and
- in accordance with statutory requirements and community expectations.
- Support and resources provided must be:
 - fair and reasonable;
 - reasonably necessary to meet the legitimate needs of Councillors when performing their duties; and
 - in accordance with statutory requirements and community expectations.
- Councillors must reimburse Council for any costs incurred which relate to personal use which is not specifically authorised in this Policy.
- Council will provide reasonable additional support, facilities and/ or equipment for any Councillor with a disability to enable them to perform their duties.

6.2. Transport and travel

6.2.1. General Provisions

The following general provisions shall apply when determining any expenses to be met or reimbursed by Council:

- Subject to section 6.5.1 interstate or overseas travel expenses must be applied for, and approved by Council resolution, in advance of the travel occurring.
- Expenses will only be met or reimbursed by Council where undertaking the duties of a Councillor is the primary and predominate purpose of travel.
- Travel shall be by the most practical mode and route possible, and be reasonable in the circumstances taking into account factors such as duration and total cost of travel.
- Costs should be minimised by sharing travel arrangements where reasonable and practicable.
- The amount paid or reimbursed by Council for air travel shall not exceed the cost of economy class air travel to the relevant destination.
- Where private travel is undertaken in conjunction with travel related to the duties of a Councillor:
 - All costs incurred for private purposes must be clearly delineated and documented pre-departure.
 - Council will not directly pay for or reimburse any costs related to private travel.
- The quantum of expenses met or reimbursed by Council will generally be on the basis of the actual cost incurred and the form of transport used. However, Council may reimburse an amount less than the amount claimed, where the actual expense incurred is considered unreasonable, taking into account for example, the alternative models of travel available.



- Council will not reimburse expenses for travel to Council or Delegated Committee meetings, meetings of Council committees, formal briefing sessions and civic and ceremonial functions.

6.2.2. Mayoral Vehicle

A fully maintained motor vehicle will be made available to the Mayor for the duration of their term, including for reasonable personal use.

The make and model of vehicle will be determined in accordance with Council Policy or at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer.

Reserved parking will be provided for the Mayoral Vehicle at the Civic Centre.

6.2.3. Private Vehicle Use

Councillors and members of a delegated committee using their own private vehicles to carry out their duties as a Councillor or a delegated committee member may be reimbursed travel expenses. Reimbursement shall be on a per-kilometre basis at the rate prescribed for deductions for work-related car expenses by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) using the cents per kilometre method.

Where a Councillor or delegated committee member uses a car for interstate travel in accordance with this policy, the amount paid or reimbursed by Council to undertake the interstate travel (inclusive of tolls, car parking and additional accommodation costs) shall not exceed the cost of economy class air travel and transfers to the relevant destination.

Parking will be provided for Councillors' private vehicles at the Civic Centre.

6.2.4. Council Vehicle Use

In exceptional circumstances, where practicable and by prior arrangement through the Chief Executive Officer, a Council pool vehicle may be made available for use by a Councillor where use of a private vehicle or other means of transport is not available or convenient.

All use of Council pool vehicles must be reasonably necessary to discharge the duties of a Councillor and pool vehicles may not be used for personal use.

Council does not have an allocated pool vehicle for use by Councillors and availability of vehicles is subject to operational demands upon the fleet.

Any Councillor use of Council pool vehicles is subject to relevant Council policies and procedures.

6.2.5. Tolls and Car Parking Costs

Councillors and delegated committee members may be reimbursed for the cost of:

- Car parking for the reasonable duration required to perform their duties.
- Fees for use of toll roads (EastLink and CityLink) incurred in attending to their duties.

The most value for money parking options should be sought. Where premium, valet or personalised parking services are used, the amount paid or reimbursed by Council shall not exceed the cost of standard parking facilities available in reasonable proximity.

6.2.6. Public Transport

Councillors and delegated committee members may be reimbursed for the cost of using public transport incurred in attending to their duties as a Councillor.



6.2.7. Taxi Costs (including ride share and other fare based services)

Where it is not practicable or cost effective to use public transport, a Council or private motor vehicle, Councillors and delegated committee members may be reimbursed for taxi costs incurred in attending to their duties.

Where a Councillor or a delegated committee member uses a ride share service or other service providing a vehicle and driver, the amount paid or reimbursed by Council shall not exceed the cost of an equivalent taxi service.

Councillors may request a "Cab-Charge" voucher from Council for the payment of taxi services.

6.2.8. Overseas Travel

Overseas travel expenses will only be incurred or reimbursed in accordance with a specific Council resolution made prior to the travel being undertaken.

Expenses relating to overseas travel, accommodation, meals and reasonable entertainment will be met or reimbursed by Council in accordance with the resolution.

6.2.9. Exclusions

Council will not directly pay for, or reimburse, the costs of any infringements incurred, including:

- For road, traffic or parking offences.
- For public transport offences.

6.2.10. Travel Expenses not covered by the foregoing.

Where travel expenses are proposed to be incurred outside this section or there is doubt as to the application of this section to expenses incurred, then the provisions of section 6.15 of this Policy can be applied.

6.3. Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

6.3.1. Selection and Provision of Councillors' ICT Equipment

The following tools of trade will be made available to each Councillor to assist them perform their duties as a Councillor:

- one mobile telephone: Wi-Fi and mobile data (ie 3G, 4G, or 5G) enabled with a voice mail or voice to text service.
- one mobile tablet or laptop computer: Wi-Fi and mobile data (ie 3G, 4G, or 5G) enabled.
- one multi-function copier/printer/scanner – if requested.
- monitor with a second monitor available on request.
- headphones suitable for tablet / laptop based MS Teams and Zoom meetings.

The capital costs of Councillors' tools of trade are not an expense for the purposes of this policy.



Council will directly pay for the expenses associated with providing a mobile data plan for tools of trade through plans established periodically according to Council's usual procurement processes.

The make, model, and functionality of Councillors' tools of trade will be subject to consultation with Councillors, but will otherwise:

- Be selected in accordance with Council's ICT strategy and the usual standards and processes applied across Council for its business activities;
- Not exceed, nor be less than, the standard or specifications of equipment available to staff (including Directors and the Chief Executive Officer);
- Be consistent across the Councillor group to enable more efficient training, support and asset management;
- Be reviewed at the commencement of each electoral term; and
- Be upgraded at the end of their useful life or otherwise in accordance with Council's ICT strategy and the usual standards and processes applied across Council for its business activities.

Where a reasonable mobile data (ie 3G, 4G, 5G) connection cannot be accessed at a Councillor's normal place of residence, expenses for an alternative solution can be considered in accordance with section 6.15 of this Policy.

6.3.2. Selection and Installation of ICT Software

Councillors' tools of trade will be equipped with a range of approved software. Software selected will be subject to consultation with Councillors, but will otherwise be selected and upgraded in accordance with Council's ICT strategy and the usual standards, processes and security safeguards applied across Council's network.

The installation of additional software on Councillor tools of trade is subject to consultation with the IT Department.

Councillors must not load pirated, suspect or illegal software or content onto any Council provided device. Council has the right to audit a tool of trade, including applications and information, to ensure compliance with the law and this policy. The Chief Executive Officer has the authority to delete any inappropriate information or unauthorised software from a Council provided tool of trade.

The cost of approved software selected and made available to all Councillors is not considered an expense for the purposes of this policy.

6.3.3. Use of ICT Equipment

Councillors must maintain the integrity and the configuration of the tools of trade provided, protect and generally ensure the safe custody and operation of such equipment and the information they contain.

Councillors' tools of trade are to be used for their duties as a Councillor, however reasonable personal use (as defined) of Councillors' tools of trade is permissible. Councillors' tools of trade must not be used to conduct personal business or other unacceptable uses.

Councillors should take all reasonable steps to ensure that Council provided tools of trade are not used in breach of this policy by third parties.



Councillors will be provided an opportunity to review the costs associated with their tools of trade at regular intervals, in order to identify and reimburse Council for private usage which is beyond reasonable personal use.

6.3.4. International Roaming

Councillors travelling overseas travel in accordance with section 6.2.8 may have international roaming provisioned on their tools of trade for the duration of the trip in accordance with Council's resolution.

International use of tools of trade in all other circumstances requires approval of the Chief Executive Officer prior to departure and the quantum of expense to be met or reimbursed by Council shall be limited to \$100 per Councillor per 4 week period.

6.3.5. User Accounts and Data

Councillors will be provided a user account enabling access to:

- Their tools of trade and any associated local, network, or cloud based storage.
- An email account on Council's @Knox.vic.gov.au domain.
- Software provided in accordance with section 0.
- Other data and resources relevant to their duties as a Councillors.

Councillors' use of the accounts and data provided via their tools of trade (or any other method) are subject to the various codes, policies and procedures set out Section 4.

Council will typically provide personalised user accounts and avoid generic (ie ward based) accounts to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of Councillors' data following the end of a Councillor's term of office.

6.3.6. Damage, Loss or Theft of Equipment

Any damage sustained to Councillors' tools of trade will be repaired at Council's expense. Device covers are highly recommended and may be supplied by Council.

Where a mobile device is damaged, lost or stolen a Councillor must:

- report the damage, loss or theft to the Information Technology Team as soon as practicable; and
- where requested, provide a Statutory Declaration including the details of the device and the circumstances of the damage, loss or theft.

All stolen or lost tools of trade will be subject to a remote wipe by Council.

6.3.7. Return of Councillor Equipment

All Councillor equipment must be returned to Council:

- upon request; and or
- at the conclusion of a Councillors' term of office.

Council staff will take appropriate steps to remove / destroy any data stored on Councillor equipment that is returned, before it is disposed of or re-deployed.



6.3.8. Disposal of Redundant Councillor Equipment

Councillors will be provided with an opportunity to purchase (at market value) the tools of trade that have been provided to, and used by them, if they are determined by the Director Customer and Performance to be redundant or additional to Council's needs.

Any equipment purchased must be returned to Council beforehand, to enable corporate software and personal information to be removed, in accordance with section 6.3.7.

Tools of trade are not considered redundant or surplus to Council's needs if they:

- are of a type and specification still being procured or deployed for use by Council; and/or
- are of a type and specification that are appropriate to retain for redeployment to other Councillors or staff members, Council programs or activities.

Equipment that remains relevant and useful to Council's needs will not be made available to Councillors for purchase.

The market value of any tools of trade to be sold in accordance with this section will be determined by the Director Customer and Performance; having regard to contemporary market rates for the sale or trade-in value of such equipment. Records of how the market value(s) was determined will be maintained by the Director Customer and Performance.

Once notified of the opportunity to purchase the equipment and the market value, a Councillor must inform Council of their intent to purchase or not within 7 days.

Any equipment not purchased must be returned to Council promptly in accordance with a notification from the Director Customer and Performance.

6.3.9. Transfer of mobile telephone number

A Councillor wanting to retain their Council owned mobile telephone number at the conclusion of may request the number be transferred to them.

Any associated costs in the transfer and any fees or charges incurred at this time and after will be met by the Councillor wanting to transfer the number.

6.4. Conferences, Seminars, Training and Professional Development

6.4.1. General Provisions

Council recognises the need for Councillors to attend training, conferences, seminars and professional development activities in order to be kept informed on relevant local government matters and to assist them performing their roles as Councillors. Generally, and as defined in this Policy, professional development means the process of improving and increasing the capabilities, knowledge, mindset or skillset of Councillors.

Annual budget provisions for conferences, seminars, training and professional development are addressed in Section 6.4.2.

Prior approval to attend the training and development activity must have been obtained from either the Chief Executive Officer or resolution of Council for expenses to be paid or reimbursed to Councillors.

The expenses paid or reimbursed to Councillors may include:

- 6.4.1.1 registration fees.



6.4.1.2 accommodation costs other than in the metropolitan area.

6.4.1.3 reasonable cost of meals and refreshments.

Where appropriate, Councillors will present a short synopsis of the event (written or verbal) at the next practicable Council meeting as part of their monthly Councillor report, following attendance at a conference, seminar, training or professional development.

Conferences, training or professional development conducted or delivered by Council staff are not considered expenses for the purposes of this policy, (including the cost of ancillary meals and refreshments including in accordance with Section 6.8).

A delegated committee member may have training and professional development expenses paid or reimbursed by Council in accordance with a specific Council resolution made prior to the training or activity being undertaken.

Expenses relating to registration fees, accommodation and meals will be met or reimbursed by Council in accordance with the resolution.

6.4.2. Annual Budget Allocation for Conferences, Seminars, Training, Professional Development and Representation

Subject to consideration and approval of the annual Council budget, an allocation for Conferences, Seminars, Training, Professional Development and Representation of:

- \$7,000 will be made in respect of each Councillor; and
- \$14,000 for the Mayor;

for use within a given mayoral year at the discretion of the individual Councillor. Allocations are not cumulative as between mayoral years.

6.4.3. Accommodation and Meals at Conferences, Seminars, Training and Professional Development

Where it is understood that a Councillor training and development activity involves related costs, such as accommodation or meals, these should be identified prior to registration.

If not included in the cost of the registration, the cost of meals and beverages (within reasonable limits) for the duration of the training and development activity may be reimbursed to Councillors and delegated committee members.

Appropriate accommodation, as selected by the Chief Executive Officer or delegate, for the duration of the training and development activity may be paid by Council. Accommodation expenses within the metropolitan Melbourne area will not be paid or reimbursed to Councillors or delegated committee members.

Accommodation and meal expenses should be consistent with Table 3 in the annual determinations of the Australian Taxation Office regarding reasonable accommodation and meal expenses (See for example Taxation Determination TD 2023/3 included at Appendix 1, or subsequent determinations as circulated to Councillors from time to time.)

6.4.4. Councillor Induction and sector training

A mandatory induction and training program will be conducted for all Councillors at the commencement of each electoral term. Periodically throughout the Councillors' terms of office, Councillors will also have access to program of training and professional development opportunities including:

6.4.3.1 Meeting procedures



- 6.4.3.2 Chairing of meetings
- 6.4.3.3 Media training
- 6.4.3.4 Governance training (for example, Australian Institute of Company Directors course)
- 6.4.3.5 Financial training
- 6.4.3.6 Information Technology usage
- 6.4.3.7 Team Building and interpersonal skills
- 6.4.3.8 MAV/VLGA Councillor Development Programs
- 6.4.3.9 Cranlana Colloquium

An allocation for these expenses will be made, subject to consideration and approval in the annual Council budget.

Additional training and professional activities outside of the above program must be funded separately as an expense from individual Councillor budget allocations in accordance with Section 6.4.2.

A Councillor who is not entitled (or seeking) to be reimbursed for attending the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly (NGA) in accordance with Section 6.5.1, may fund their attendance at the NGA from their individual Councillor training and development budgets. (For the purposes of this section, the costs of attending the NGA shall include all registration, travel, meals, accommodation and incidental expenses).

6.5. Representing Council

6.5.1. Attendance at the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly (NGA)

The Mayor and up to three additional Councillors are entitled under this section to have met or reimbursed, the costs for attending and representing Council at the Annual National General Assembly of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), which provides Councils with the opportunity to participate and engage in advocacy and discussion on matters of national importance to local government.

Where more than three Councillors, other than the Mayor, wish to claim an entitlement under this section, the Mayor shall consult with Councillors seeking to reduce the number of Councillor delegates to four. Priority will be given to Councillors who have not previously attended the NGA in the current term of Council. Where, following consultation with the Mayor, more than four Councillors wish to claim an entitlement under this section, the matter shall be referred to Council for determination.

The total cost for attending the NGA (excluding meals and transport costs) under this section shall not be deducted from individual Councillors' Conference, Seminar and Representation Expenses entitlement.

At the request of the Mayor, and subject to available budget provisions, the Councillor delegation to the NGA may be supported (at Council's expense) by the Chief Executive Officer or another member of the Executive Leadership Team.



6.5.2. Attendance at Fundraising and Charitable Events

Council will directly pay for or reimburse the cost of ticketed events for Councillors invited, in their role as a Councillor, by written invitation to attend Fundraising or Charitable Events:

- a) Conducted by a neighbouring municipality, or municipality in the Municipal Association of Victoria's Metropolitan East Region; or
- b) Where prior approval has been given by Council, or the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Mayor (or in the case of Mayoral expenses, the Deputy Mayor), and the event benefits the Knox Community.

6.5.3. Appointments to External Organisations

Each year, and from time to time, Council resolves to appoint Councillors to represent it on a number of external organisations.

For these organisations the nominated Councillors or their substitute are to be Council representatives at regular meetings of these organisations and any special events, with partners where appropriate.

Councillors are entitled to have paid by Council, or reimbursed, reasonable bona fide costs associated with representing Council on such organisations subject to expenditure in excess of \$500 per annum per delegate (including substitute nominees) per organisation being approved in advance by Council.

6.6. Attendance by a Councillor's Spouse or Partner

6.6.1. Attendance at Functions of Victorian Councils

Where there is a mutual expectation of partners attending, Council will directly pay for or reimburse the reasonable costs of a Councillor's spouse or partner attending functions:

- a) held by Knox City Council; or
- b) held by other Victorian municipalities

A mutual expectation of partners attending would arise for example where:

- A spouse / partner is specified on the invitation; and
- The event is a dance, ball, or gala, to which a partner would typically be invited; or
- The event is of a nature where other attendees will be accompanied by partners.

6.6.2. Attendance at other seminars, conferences or civic functions

Attendance at any seminar, conference or civic function by a councillor's spouse / partner shall be at the expense of the councillor except where:

- a) Prior approval has been given by Council or the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Mayor (or in the case of Mayoral expenses, the Deputy Mayor); and
- b) Attendance by a councillor's spouse / partner is considered to be necessary or appropriate to support the business or representational needs of Council; and
- c) Sufficient provision exists in the approved annual budget for conferences and seminars.



In order to effectively manage GST liability – all arrangements for a Councillor’s spouse or partner’s attendance may be requested to be paid for by the Councillor, with reimbursement provided by Council.

6.7. Other Support

Where a Councillor attends an event on behalf of Council, the following support can be provided when required and as follows:

- Administrative support managing invitations and RSVPs provided by the Executive Assistant to the Mayor and Councillors.
- Provision of talking points for the Mayor (or delegate), for events where a formal invitation is received to attend and speak.
- Providing background information for Councillors attending other events if requested.
- Support associated with the wearing (and security of) of the Mayoral Robes and Chain for events where formal attire is considered necessary and appropriate.
- Taking photos of Councillors (using Councillor’s devices) at events on request, provided such requests are incidental to, and not disruptive to the officer’s role at the event.

6.8. Meals and Refreshment

6.8.1. General Provisions

Council will provide reasonable meals (typically either a buffet style meal or plated meal) during evenings of Council meetings, Delegated Committee meetings, Issues Briefings and other key meetings as determined by the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Mayor.

Reasonable meals may also be provided when other Council events or meetings are held at times that immediately follow or extend through normal mealtimes.

Council will provide reasonable refreshments for Councillors’ in their office and meeting space.

6.8.2. Alcohol

The Chief Executive Officer may approve the provision of alcoholic beverages at Council events, or reimbursement of expenses for alcoholic beverages at other events, having regard to:

- Community expectations and the policy principles set out in section 6.1.1
- The impact alcohol can have on the safe, competent and professional performance of the duties of a Councillor.



6.9. Carer Support

Council will directly pay for, or reimburse fair and reasonable childcare / family care expenses incurred by Councillors whilst discharging their duties as a councillor. The total expense paid for, or reimbursed, by Council must exclude any applicable rebates or subsidies.

Council will directly pay for, or reimburse fair and reasonable childcare / family care expenses incurred by a delegated committee member whilst discharging their duties as a member of a delegated committee. The total expense paid for, or reimbursed, by Council must exclude any applicable rebates or subsidies.

Family care relates to care provided to any immediate family member who is either a child or a sick, elderly, or disabled person. A child is defined as a person up to, but not including, 16 years of age.

Council may also make reasonable adjustments, and directly pay for or reimburse fair and reasonable additional expenses incurred by a Councillor who is breastfeeding.

Eligible care does not include care performed by a direct relative (spouse, domestic partner, son, daughter, mother, father, brother or sister of the Councillor or their spouse or partner).

Council will provide reimbursement of costs where the provision of carer services is reasonably required when a councillor or delegated committee member who is a carer incurs reasonable expenses in the performance of their duties.

Each claim must be substantiated by a receipt from the caregiver showing the dates and times care was provided and a written statement identifying the duty performed by the Councillor.

6.10. Professional Memberships

Council will directly pay for, or reimburse the cost of the following memberships:

- Australian Institute of Company Directors
- The Victorian Local Government Association
- The Australian Local Government Women's Association

Other memberships, which are considered demonstrably beneficial to Council or the performance of the duties of a Councillor, may be considered in accordance with section 6.15 of this Policy.

6.11. Subscriptions

Council will directly pay for, or reimburse the cost of the following subscriptions:

- The Age newspaper
- The Herald Sun newspaper.

Other subscriptions may be considered in accordance with section 6.15 of this Policy.

6.12. Miscellaneous Support and Expenses

All Councillors will be provided with:

- Standard stationery and office consumables held or obtained generally for the organisations requirements.
- Personalised business cards.



- Names badges, including for a spouse or partner.
- A page on Council's website including, but not limited to, a photo, contact details, term dates and committees. Additional information may be included at the request of individual Councillors, subject to approval by the Chief Executive Officer.
- Any safety equipment required for a Councillor's duties. This equipment is to be returned to the organisation promptly upon the completion of the activity/duty for which the articles were required.
- Council business papers, personal mail and other Council information will be couriered to Councillors' place of residence weekly or as required.

The Chief Executive Officer shall also provide an appropriate level of secretarial/administrative support for the Mayor and Councillors.

6.12.1. Donations and/or sponsorship

Donations and/or sponsorship made by a Councillor will be made on their own behalf and not on behalf of Council, except in accordance with a prior resolution of Council.

Councillor donations and/or sponsorship not in accordance with a prior resolution of Council will not be reimbursed by Council.

6.12.2. Insurance Policies

Councillors and delegated committee members are covered under the following Council insurance policies while discharging, in good faith, the duties of civic office including attendance at meetings of external bodies as Council representatives:

- Public Liability Insurance;
- Professional indemnity Insurance;
- Councillors and Officers liability Insurance;
- Personal Accident (accompanying partners are also covered) Insurance;
- Travel Insurance; and
- Work Cover (as a deemed employee).

The insurance does not cover criminal or willful acts.

The Council will pay the insurance policy excess in respect of any claim made against a Councillor or member of a delegated committee arising from Council business where any claim is accepted by Council's insurers, whether defended or not.

6.12.3. Legal Expenses

Other than by specific Council resolution, any legal expenses incurred by a Councillor shall be the responsibility of that Councillor.

6.12.4. People Assist Program

Council provides a People Assist Program to staff which is also available for use by Councillors. The program provides professional and confidential support services for personal or work related issues for Councillors and their immediate family at no cost.

Councillors can access the People Assist Program for up to four free hours, per issue.



6.13. Office and Meeting Space

At the Civic Centre there shall be provided:

- A Mayoral Office
- A separate, shared office space provided for use by Councillors
- A Councillors' Room.

All spaces will be determined by the Chief Executive (in consultation with Councillors) and suitably equipped for computer use, photocopying, reading, research and meetings.

Councillors will be provided with 24 hour security access to the Councillors' Room and shared office space. The Mayor shall have 24 hour security access to the Mayoral Office.

Subject to availability, other Council meeting/function rooms owned and controlled by Council may be booked by Councillors for use free of charge for meetings and other functions, provided the Councillor is in attendance and the use is necessary or appropriate for performing the duties of a Councillor or the conduct of Council business.

6.14. Ward Meetings

An annual budget provision will be made (and reviewed annually as part of the Council budget process) for the reasonable costs associated with holding one Ward Meeting per calendar year.

6.14.1. General Provisions

Ward Meetings are conducted as an informal feedback session for the benefit of Councillors. It is not intended that detailed information be provided by staff on the progress of projects or upcoming projects.

Ward meetings are held at the discretion of individual Councillors who are responsible for setting the agenda, preparing relevant content and conducting their Ward meetings.

Councillors are requested to indicate their intention to hold Ward Meetings at the commencement of each calendar year.

Ward meetings may be held at the Civic Offices, or at a convenient location within the Ward as selected by the Councillor.

Refreshments provided shall be limited to tea, coffee and biscuits.

Ward meetings will not be held during an election period.

6.14.2. Staff Attendance

Council staff typically do not participate in Ward Meetings.

At the request of the Ward Councillor, a staff member may attend to act as a note taker.

Councillors may request the attendance of a specific Council Officer to discuss a specific item. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for determining the attendance and role of Council officers at Ward Meetings.



6.14.3. Advertising

Advertising will be conducted via Council's website and social media channels, and signage at Council's Civic Centre and local libraries.

Additional advertising may be considered in accordance with section 6.15 of this Policy.

6.15. Other Expenditure Not Specified

Where any expense sought to be paid for, or reimbursed to, a Councillor is not covered by this Policy or exceeds the budgetary limits in section 6.4.2 the following process shall apply:

- The Councillor shall make application prior to incurring any expense.
- For expenses \$300 or less and generally within the terms of section 75 of the Act and in compliance with this Policy:
 - The Chief Executive Officer shall confer on the matter with the Mayor (or in the case of Mayoral expenses, the Deputy Mayor).
 - The Chief Executive Officer may then determine the matter and inform the Councillor, providing reasons for their decision.
- For expenses greater than \$300 the matter will be referred to Council for consideration and determination.

Where there is any uncertainty or disagreement as to an entitlement; or where there is any failure to comply with this Policy, the following process shall apply:

1. The Chief Executive Officer shall confer on the matter with the Mayor (or in the case of Mayoral expenses, the Deputy Mayor).
2. The Chief Executive Officer may then determine the matter, or a proposed course of action to resolve the disagreement / uncertainty or the non-compliance, and inform the Councillor, providing reasons for their decision.
3. If the matter remains unresolved it will be referred to Council for consideration.

If the Chief Executive Officer and Mayor have been party to the decision which is the subject of the uncertainty / disagreement:

1. The Chief Executive Officer shall refer the matter to the Director Customer and Performance for independent review.
2. The Director Customer and Performance shall confer with the Manager Governance and Risk and determine the matter, or agree a proposed course of action to resolve the disagreement / uncertainty or the non-compliance.
3. The Director Customer and Performance will inform the affected Councillor of the proposed course of action to resolve the disagreement / uncertainty or the non-compliance.
4. If the matter remains unresolved it will be referred to Council for consideration.

6.16. Claims and records

6.16.1. Form of claims

All claims must be made on the form provided and be complete as to all specified detail.



Councillors and delegated committee members may also be periodically requested to certify details of expenses incurred on their behalf.

The following substantiation rules apply to all expense claims.

- A claim for reimbursement must be supported by written evidence, being a receipt, tax invoice or similar document that sets out the relevant particulars. This means a document from the supplier of the goods or services the expense is for, setting out:
 - the name or business name of the supplier; and
 - the amount of the expense, expressed in the currency in which it was incurred; and detailing any GST paid, and
 - the nature of the goods or services; and
 - the date the expense was incurred; and
 - the date the document was made.
- Where this documentation is not available a statutory declaration must be submitted to support the claim.

Incomplete claims or claims which are outside this Policy will be initially referred to the claimant Councillor for further advice.

Claims which are not in accordance with this Policy will be considered under section 6.15.

6.16.2. Timeframe for submission of claims

Councillors and delegated committee members are required to submit claims in a timely manner to ensure transparency and timely accountability.

Claims for reimbursement of expenses in the September, December and March quarters must be submitted by the close of business of the following month.

Claims for reimbursement of expenses in the June quarter must be submitted within 7 working days of the end of financial year.

Claims for reimbursement which are not in accordance with the above timeframes will not be processed unless Council resolves to accept the claim.

6.16.3. Assessment of claims

The Chief Executive Officer will oversee the processing of all claims by the Governance Department.

Where a claim appears incomplete or outside this Policy it will be initially referred to the claimant Councillor for further discussion. Unresolved issues will be managed in accordance with Section 6.15

6.17. Accountability

Council is committed to accountability and transparency for reimbursement of expenses and the provision of resources and facilities to Councillors. This Policy will be posted on Council's website.

Quarterly reports of all councillor and delegated committee member expenses will be provided to council, and the council's Audit and Risk Committee.



The report will include:

- expenses incurred on behalf of councillors and delegated committee members during the quarter;
- reimbursement claims made by councillors and delegated committee members during the quarter; and
- reimbursements made by councillors and delegated committee members during the quarter.

In accordance with Council's Public Transparency Policy, Council maintains a public register which includes details of overseas or interstate travel (other than interstate travel by land for less than 3 days) undertaken in an official capacity by any Councillor in the previous 12 months, including—

- the name of the Councillor;
- the dates on which the travel began and ended; and
- the destination of the travel; and
- the purpose of the travel; and
- the total cost to the Council of the travel, including accommodation costs.

Council's annual report shall include information regarding all Mayoral and Councillor expenses (whether paid directly by Council or reimbursed to the Councillor) broken down into categories as required by the Act:

- Transport and Travel
- Communications Equipment
- Conferences, Seminars, Training and Professional Development
- Professional Memberships
- Carer Support
- Other Expenses

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 on approval of the Chief Executive Officer. 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.



Appendix 1 Extract from Taxation Determination TD 2023/3 - Income tax: what are the reasonable travel and overtime meal allowance expense amounts for the 2023-24 income year?

Table 3: Reasonable amounts for domestic travel expenses – employee's annual salary \$247,021 or more

Place	Accomm. (\$)	Food and drink (\$) breakfast 38.90 lunch 55.00 dinner 77.00	Incidentals (\$)	Daily total (\$)
Adelaide	211	as above	32.90	414.80
Brisbane	257	as above	32.90	460.80
Canberra	246	as above	32.90	449.80
Darwin	293	as above	32.90	496.80
Hobart	235	as above	32.90	438.80
Melbourne	265	as above	32.90	468.80
Perth	265	as above	32.90	468.80
Sydney	265	as above	32.90	468.80
All country centres	\$195 or the relevant amount in Table 4 if higher	as above	32.90	variable

<https://www.ato.gov.au/law/view/pdf/pbr/td2023-003.pdf>

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ALLOCATION NO:



Claim Form – Carer Costs

Application for Payment or Reimbursement of Carer Costs

Councillor Name:		
Date(s) claimed for:		
Councillor or Delegated Committee Duties undertaken whilst carer support is provided	DRAFT	
Names of person or organisation providing care		
Costs	Hours	
	Hourly Rate	\$
Declaration:	<p>I declare that the above claim is submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Councillor Support Policy and Procedure and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is net of any rebates or subsidies; <input type="checkbox"/> Is not for care provided by a direct relative (as defined); <input type="checkbox"/> the expenses claimed are fair, reasonable, bona fide and reasonably necessary to enable me to perform my duties as a Councillor; and <input type="checkbox"/> I have included appropriate supporting documentation in including a receipt from the caregiver. 	
Councillor Signature		Date:
CEO Signature:		Date:

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ALLOCATION NO:


Claim Form – Travel Expenses




Application for Payment or Reimbursement of Travel Expenses

Councillor Name:		
Description of Expenses claimed:		
Councillor Duties or Delegated Committee undertaken necessitating travel		
Value of expenses claimed	Travel	\$
	Accommodation	\$
	Attendance/ Registration	\$
	Meals/Drinks	\$
	Other Costs, specify	\$
	Total	\$
Declaration:	<p>I declare that the above claim is submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Councillor Support Policy and Procedure and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> That undertaking the duties of a Councillor was the primary and predominate purpose of travel; <input type="checkbox"/> the expenses claimed are fair, reasonable, bona fide; and <input type="checkbox"/> I have included appropriate supporting documentation. <p>I further understand that details of this travel will be disclosed publicly in accordance with Section 222 of the Local Government Act.</p>	
Councillor Signature		Date:
CEO Signature:		Date:

ALLOCATION NO:



Claim Form – General Expenses



Application for Payment or Reimbursement of General Expenses

Councillor Name:		
Description of Expenses claimed:		
Councillor Duties or Delegated Committee undertaken relevant to expenses incurred		
Value of expenses claimed	Type of expenses	Value
		\$
		\$
		\$
		\$
		\$
	Total	\$
Declaration:	<p>I declare that the above claim is submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Councillor Support Policy and Procedure and:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> the expenses claimed are fair, reasonable, bona fide; and</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have included appropriate supporting documentation.</p>	
Councillor Signature		Date:
CEO Signature:		Date:

5 Motions for Which Notice has Previously Been Given

5.1 Notice of Rescission Motion No. 144 - Waste Collection Frequency

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26 March 2024

Notice of Rescission Motion No.144

Waste Collection Frequency

We hereby give notice that it is our intention to move the following motion at the Council Meeting on 8 April 2024:

That Council resolve:

A. That the following resolutions of the Council Meeting on 25 March 2024 in relation to Item 8.3 Kerbside Reform Update be rescinded:

That Council resolve to:

1. *Note the Kerbside Reform Update report including broad implications of any potential change to the rubbish collection frequency.*
2. *Note Contract 3149: Kerbside Bin Based Collection Services is scheduled to commence on 1 July 2024 which was tendered and awarded based on the current collection frequencies:*
 - a) *General waste (yellow lid) fortnightly collection*
 - b) *Recycle waste (blue lid) fortnightly collection*
 - c) *Organic waste (green lid) weekly collection*
3. *Express its strategic intention to change the waste collection frequency to:*
 - a) *General waste (yellow lid) change to weekly collection*
 - b) *Recycle waste (blue lid) remains as fortnightly collection*
 - c) *Organic waste (green lid) remains as a weekly collection,**noting that a future report to Council will be required in order for Council to make a final decision on the matter.*
4. *Note officers will need to undertake work including but not limited to the following matters in order to inform a future report to Council regarding a waste collection frequency change:*
 - a. *Understand any probity issues associated with varying Contract 3149 to assess the integrity of the procurement process given the proposed frequency change. This includes ensuring transparency and fairness of the process.*
 - b. *Obtain legal advice to inform any variations to Contract 3149 in a manner which delivers best value to Council and complies with Council's procurement obligations under the Local Government Act 2020.*
 - c. *Having regard to points 4a and 4b, commence negotiations regarding a possible variation to Contract 3149 including understanding applicable contract variation costs, changes to bin lift rates, route planning, fleet composition and the timelines associated with the contractor implementing any change to the delivery frequency.*

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- d. Calculate the increase to the Residential Garbage Charges that would be required to fully recover the additional costs associated with varying Contract 3149 and consider the process for this being determined through a future Council Budget or Revised Budget.*
 - e. Consider the timeline and process for the implementation of any change to the collection frequency, including community engagement and a communications program prior to implementation.*
 - f. Further assess the environmental impact of the proposed change including changes in greenhouse gas emissions due to increased collection frequency, landfill emissions and landfill capacity.*
 - g. Assess the resources required to implement the proposed change to the frequency of collection, including within the waste, communications, customer services and rates teams, and the impact this will have on other planned actions including the planned change of bin lids in the 2024/25 financial year.*
5. *Note that implementing point 4 of this resolution will impact on existing priorities currently planned within the impacted teams, requiring other actions and projects to be delayed.*
6. *Given the level of work involved, note a subsequent report covering the matters in point 4 of this resolution, along with any other matters deemed relevant, will be presented to Council in the first six months of 2025, in order for Council to make a final decision on any rubbish collection frequency change.*

B. To note the Kerbside Reform Update report as presented to the Council Meeting on 25 March 2024.

C. Receive a further report to Council no later than April 2025 regarding the progress of the Kerbside reforms and service outcomes delivered to the community.

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Cr Susan Laukens

Date: 26/3/2024 | 16:06:24 AEDT

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Cr Marcia Timmers-Leitch

Date: 26/3/2024 | 16:36:50 AEDT

6 Supplementary Items

7 Urgent Business

8 Confidential Items