

Summary report on community engagement

Local Law Review 2026 | Phase 1

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Engagement period: 9 February to 9 March 2026

At a glance

139

people had their say

85

valid survey responses

50pop-up and online
participants**4**

written submissions

This report summarises what we heard from the community during the first phase of engagement on the review of Knox City Council's Local Law.

About the project

Knox City Council is reviewing its Amenity Local Law 2020. The Local Law sets out everyday rules that help keep neighbourhoods safe, protect amenity and the environment, and support a clean and welcoming city. It covers areas such as Council-managed land, buildings and roads, the appearance of private property, construction sites, and the responsible management of animals across Knox.

The review is taking place so the Local Law can better align with current legislation, meet community needs, and balance public interests with individual freedoms. Council asked the community for feedback on the current Local Law and proposed areas for improvement. This Phase 1 engagement will help inform a draft Local Law, which will be tested with the community again before it is presented to Council for endorsement.

How we shared information

We shared information about the project and ways to participate through a mix of online, printed and direct communication channels:

Have Your Say page: project information, the online survey, a printable survey, key dates, contact details and common questions.

Council communications: media releases, an article on Council's website, social media posts, digital and printed signage, and printed collateral.

Direct updates: emails to stakeholder groups and Have Your Say subscribers, and a Knox eNews article sent to 10,087 subscribers.

Printed and in-person options: hard copy surveys available on request, and information distributed through Knox libraries and customer service.

During the consultation period, the social media campaign reached 2,644 people. The Knox Have Your Say page received 372 visits, and the related Council website news story received 203 views.

How people participated

Community members could have their say online, in person, by email, by phone or in writing. Council also engaged directly with advisory and representative committees, internal Council teams and Councillors.

Activity	When	Participation
Online survey and printable survey	9 February to 9 March 2026	85 valid survey responses
Written submissions, including email and mail	9 February to 9 March 2026	4 written submissions
Community pop-up: Knox Library-Ngarrgoo, Westfield Knox	18 February 2026, 11am-1pm	
Online community drop-in session	25 February 2026, 11am-12pm	

Community pop-up: Knox Fest, Wally Tew Reserve	28 February 2026, 10am-4pm	50 pop-up and online participants
Community pop-up: Knox Civic Centre	5 March 2026, 5pm-7pm	
Total participation	Phase 1 engagement	139 people had their say

Participation figures are based on survey responses, written submissions, pop-up engagement and the online drop-in session.

These methods were chosen to make it easier for different parts of the community to participate, including people who preferred online, written or in-person options.

Who we heard from

In total, 139 people had their say. Demographic information was collected through the survey, so the following snapshot relates to survey respondents only.

- **Connection to Knox:** 88.2% of the 85 survey respondents said they live in Knox.
- **Suburb:** 41.2% of survey respondents reported they were from Ferntree Gully, and 14.1% from Rowville.
- **Age:** 43.2% of survey respondents were aged 35 to 54 years, and 48.2% were aged over 55 years.
- **Stakeholders:** feedback was sought from residents, property owners, businesses, environmental and community groups, heritage interest groups, registered pet owners, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people with disability, Council advisory committees and other stakeholders.

The engagement also included discussions with the Early Years Advisory Committee, Active Ageing Advisory Committee and Disability Advisory Committee, as well as internal Council departments and Councillors.

What we asked and what you said

We asked for feedback on the current Local Law and proposed areas for improvement. These included:

- **Private land and neighbourhood amenity:** unsightly or dangerous land, burn-offs in Bushfire Management Overlay areas, and outdoor lighting nuisance.
- **Animal management:** animal number limits, secure housing and fencing, and measures to manage dog attacks.
- **Council-managed land and roads:** clearer rules for behaviour and activities on Council land and managing election signage.
- **Council assets, trees and building sites:** protecting Council assets, keeping roads and drains clear, and construction noise times.

Key themes and results

Overall, community feedback showed broad support for changes that improve neighbourhood amenity, safety and environmental protection. At the same time, many people raised concerns about fairness, affordability, overregulation and the need for clearer, more consistent enforcement of existing rules.

Area	Level of support	What we heard
Private land and neighbourhood amenity	Strong support for stronger rules for unsightly or dangerous land and outdoor lighting nuisance controls. Views were mixed on allowing burn-offs without a permit in Bushfire Management Overlay areas.	People supported action on overgrown vegetation, litter, graffiti, hard rubbish, unfinished building works and light impacts on neighbours and wildlife. Concerns about burn-offs focused on smoke, air quality, safety, oversight and practical enforcement.
Animal management	Mixed views on applying animal number limits to all properties, stronger housing and fencing rules, and dog attack measures.	People supported responsible pet ownership and public safety, but many opposed blanket limits and raised concerns about animal welfare, larger properties, renters, vulnerable residents, affordability and practical enforcement.
Council-managed land and roads	General support for clearer rules to improve safety and amenity on Council land. Views were mixed on election signage controls.	People supported safe and tidy public spaces, but some were concerned about democratic expression, enforcement and whether signage controls would be practical.
Council assets, trees and building sites	Strong support for protecting Council assets and broad support for construction noise times that align with Environment Protection Act standards.	People supported accountability for keeping roads, drains and stormwater systems clear and reducing construction noise. Feedback also called for Council to maintain streets, drains, parkland, trees and paths effectively.

Support levels summarise feedback from surveys, written submissions, community pop-ups and the online session.

Main messages from the community

- **Environmental protection:** strong concern about tree removal, wildlife impacts and lighting effects, with expectations for stronger environmental safeguards.
- **Amenity and liveability:** high importance placed on clean and well-maintained properties, reducing nuisance impacts, managing noise and addressing graffiti, waste and dumped rubbish.
- **Animal welfare and management:** support for responsible ownership and safety, alongside opposition to blanket animal limits and a preference for welfare-based approaches that consider care conditions and property context.
- **Resistance to overregulation:** concern that too many rules could be unfair, impractical or reduce community goodwill and compliance.
- **Financial and equity impacts:** recognition that cost-of-living pressures, fencing costs and permit requirements may disproportionately affect some residents.
- **Enforcement and trust:** consistent feedback that existing laws need clearer, more visible and more consistent enforcement.

- **Safety and risk management:** support for measures that improve safety, including dog attack management and construction controls, with concerns about how some measures would work in practice.

What we heard through written submissions

Four written submissions were received from individuals and interest groups. Two submissions focused on concerns about the proposal to remove burn-off permits for properties in Bushfire Management Overlay areas, including fire risk, smoke, air quality, liability, the need for expert oversight, and alternative ways to manage green waste. Two submissions focused on animal management, including opposition to blanket animal number limits, concerns about housing and fencing requirements, and support for education-led, welfare-based approaches.

How feedback will be used

Community feedback from Phase 1 will help Council understand community priorities, concerns and potential impacts as it prepares the draft Local Law. It will also inform supporting assessments, including the Community Impact Statement, Gender Impact Assessment and Human Rights Assessment.

Feedback will be considered alongside legislative requirements, Council strategies and policies, technical advice and legal review. Community input does not decide the final outcome on its own, but it is an important part of shaping the draft Local Law before the next phase of engagement.

What happens next

Next step	Timing	What this means
Review of community feedback	March to May 2026	Council reviews Phase 1 feedback and prepares the draft Local Law and supporting assessments.
Phase 2 community engagement	18 May to 14 June 2026	The community is invited to provide feedback on the draft Local Law.
Review of Phase 2 feedback	June to August 2026	Council reviews feedback received on the draft Local Law and considers refinements.
Council endorsement	Planned for 24 August 2026	The proposed new Local Law is presented to Council for consideration.

Timeline is based on the project information available during Phase 1 engagement.

Council will keep the community updated through the Have Your Say project page and email updates to people who follow the project. [Visit the Local Law Review 2026 Have Your Say page.](#)

For more information, contact the Community Laws Team on 03 9298 8000 or email LocalLawReview@knox.vic.gov.au.