

Report to the Future Melbourne Committee**Agenda item 6.1****Neighbourhood key issues and City of Melbourne Projects for Kensington****18 October 2022****Presenter:** Rushda Halith, Director Community Development**Purpose and background**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Kensington neighbourhood community and upcoming key initiatives. (Refer Attachment 2).
2. On 14 December 2021, Council endorsed Future Melbourne Committee meetings to occur in neighbourhood locations to encourage and support more local residents, businesses, workers and students to participate, experience and engage in Future Melbourne Committee meetings through attending, observing, making a submission and/or asking a public question in a neighbourhood setting.
3. This initiative is part of a neighbourhood approach commenced last year to strengthen how the Council understands and works with different communities across the municipality.
4. The municipality is made up of a broad set of neighbourhoods, each with its own unique characteristics and needs – from densely populated urban environments, such as the central business district, to more residential areas, such as Kensington, Carlton and South Yarra. Using community development practice and a place-based approach, Council seeks to better understand the strengths, needs and priorities of communities to guide its work. Ensuring opportunity of access and participation of diverse voices and views will be a key priority as this approach is embedded this year through neighbourhood plans and projects, developed in partnership with communities.

Key issues

5. Kensington is a uniquely charming suburb with a village-like feel, only 4km north-west of the central city. Locals describe the strong sense of community, heritage character and many parks and green spaces as key strengths of the neighbourhood.
6. The area that Kensington sits on has rich Aboriginal heritage and continuing cultural significance, especially the two waterways that flank the neighbourhood, the Maribyrnong River and Moonee Ponds Creek. This chain of ponds once flowed into a vast saltwater lake on the edge of the city.
7. Almost 11,000 people live in Kensington, with family households making up 54 per cent of dwellings – one of the highest proportions of family dwellings in our municipality. There is a diverse housing mix, from heritage cottages to public housing, townhouses and apartments.
8. Nearly a third of residents live in a flat or apartment, and 48 per cent are renting. People aged between 25 and 39 years make up the largest age demographic. Almost a quarter of people speak a language other than English at home: Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish, Somali and Italian are the top five community languages.
9. About 390 businesses generate more than 4000 jobs in Kensington (Census of Land Use and Employment 2020).
10. Brick factories and industrial units reflect the varied history of the area. There are many industrial and commercial buildings in the south-east part of the neighbourhood.
11. There are significant plans for urban renewal in Macaulay, a wedge of Kensington between the Moonee Ponds Creek and the train line. Over the coming decades, Macaulay will transform into a mixed-use, mid-rise precinct that will create great streets and increase walkability, and add developments that celebrate the history, cultural values and character of the area.
12. The community is highly active, boasting more than 20 service providers and community groups. Since 2020, City of Melbourne has funded over 20 community projects in Kensington.

13. Recent findings from neighbourhood consultation show that people in Kensington feel higher levels of connection to community in comparison to other parts of the municipality.
14. The Kensington Neighbourhood Network – convened by the Kensington Neighbourhood House with Unison Housing – regularly collaborates on local projects. City of Melbourne provides \$100,000 a year for community support activities at the neighbourhood house.
15. There are also many community-led initiatives and projects including community gardens, community compost hubs, a repair cafe for jewellery, textiles and more, as well as the first Good Karma Network, a newly established bike repair hub pilot, Reconciliation Action Group and more.
16. Older people can access a broad range of events at the Kensington Neighbourhood Centre in Anthony Street. A sensory garden is open to all visitors, and was designed for people living with dementia and their families.
17. To support children’s health and development from birth until school age, City of Melbourne runs the Kensington Maternal and Child Health Centre. This includes maternal and child health, immunisation, family and parenting support, playgroups and counselling. Next door, there’s a 140-place early-years education and childcare centre and kindergarten.
18. Nearby is The Venny Adventure Playground – run on behalf of the City of Melbourne. It’s a free community backyard and play space, and offers programs to support children and their families.
19. City of Melbourne also manages and maintains more than 30 public spaces and 10 playgrounds across Kensington, including JJ Holland Park, Kensington Stock Route, Women’s Peace Garden, Newmarket Reserve, Riverside Park and more, as well as a bowls club and tennis courts.
20. The Kensington Community Aquatic and Recreation Centre is currently being redeveloped. Works are underway to provide a 25 metre eight-lane pool, learn-to-swim pool and water play area, a three-court stadium, three multipurpose program rooms, change rooms and a cafe. We’re investing \$25 million in the redevelopment this financial year.
21. Other major new infrastructure investment in Kensington this financial year includes \$4 million for pump station upgrades in Stubbs Street, new cycle infrastructure, reduced speed limits and green space, infrastructure and cultural projects.
22. City of Melbourne is also investing about \$2.2 million on renewal works for roadways and footpaths, and some \$570,000 on maintenance for community facilities.
23. To attract people to iconic shopping strips in Kensington, the Business Precinct Program provides up to \$90,000 in annual funding for the Kensington Business Association.
24. There are also plans to grow the local urban forest and explore opportunities to revitalise the Moonee Ponds Creek. City of Melbourne is also looking at how we use the Maribyrnong waterfront. And building neighbourhood resilience to prepare the community for climate change and disasters.
25. Recent consultation with the community has identified local priorities for the Kensington neighbourhood. 900 pieces of feedback were received. The priorities are available on the new [Kensington Neighbourhood Portal](#).

Recommendation from management

26. That the Future Melbourne Committee notes the overview of the Kensington neighbourhood community and upcoming key initiatives.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 3 of 12)
2. North Melbourne: Neighbourhood Highlights and Initiatives (Page 4 of 12)

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. Council adopted the schedule of Future Melbourne Committee and Council meetings on 14 December 2021, in accordance with its Governance Rules. This included the locations for the community Future Melbourne Committee meetings, which commence from February until November 2022.

Finance

2. The financial impact associated with the key initiatives outlined in the overview of the Kensington Neighbourhood community and upcoming key initiatives in Attachment 2 are in 2022-23 budget.

Conflict of interest

3. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a material or general conflict of interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Health and Safety

4. Council projects and activities in Kensington seek to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of the community.

Stakeholder consultation

5. The holding of meetings in community locations, will increase the community's capacity to experience and participate in the democratic process, in addition to engaging with Councillors informally on a range of matters.

Relation to Council policy

6. This report aligns with the community aspirations identified in the Council Plan 2021-2025 and the Governance Rules.

Environmental sustainability

7. Council projects and activities in Kensington focus on enhancing both environmental and social sustainability.

KENSINGTON

Neighbourhood Highlights and Initiatives



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1. About Kensington



Kensington is a unique suburb with a village-like feel located approximately 4km north-west of the central city.

Kensington is part of the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples. They have cared for and protected it since time immemorial and parts of the area we now know as Kensington have rich Aboriginal heritage and cultural significance, especially the two waterways, the Maribyrnong River and Moonee Ponds Creek which the neighbourhood is bounded by.

Kensington encompasses Racecourse Road to the north, Smithfield Road to the west, the Maribyrnong River and South Kensington railway line to the south, and Moonee Ponds Creek to the east.

Almost 11,000 people live in Kensington, with family households comprising 54 per cent of dwellings - one of the highest in our municipality. People aged between 25-39 years make up the largest age demographic. Almost one quarter of people speak a language other than English at home with Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish, Somali and Italian the top five community languages (ABS 2021).

There is a diversity of housing and built form across the neighbourhood which ranges from small heritage cottages, to public housing dwellings, townhouses in Kensington Banks, as well as newer apartment buildings in the Macaulay urban renewal area. There are also many industrial and commercial uses in the south east part of the neighbourhood with brick factories and industrial units further reflecting the varied history of the area.

The Macaulay urban renewal area includes parts of Kensington east of the Craigieburn railway line which is envisaged to undergo further change and transition into a mixed use, mid-rise precinct in the coming decades.

Local people in Kensington describe the strong sense of community, 'village feel', distinct heritage character and many parks and green spaces as being key strengths to the neighbourhood. Recent findings from our Participate Kensington neighbourhood consultation indicates people in Kensington felt higher levels of connection to community in comparison to other parts of the municipality.

Kensington has a highly active community with a dedicated neighbourhood agency network of more than 20 service providers and community groups. The Kensington Neighbourhood Network convened by the Kensington Neighbourhood House with Unison Housing, regularly collaborates on local projects to tackle emerging needs and opportunities. The neighbourhood is home to many community led initiatives and projects including community gardens, community compost hubs, repair café, the first Good Karma Network, a newly established bike repair hub pilot, Reconciliation Action Group and more.

2. Council Services in Kensington

• Childcare and family services

The Kensington Community Children's Co-Operative is a City of Melbourne facility run by a community Committee of Management. It offers a 140-place early years education and childcare centre with integrated and sessional kindergarten.

We also operate the Kensington Maternal & Child Health Centre which supports children's health and development from birth until school age. The integrated Family Services team includes maternal and child health, immunisation, family and parenting support, and counselling, with services delivered to the community members all over Kensington. Playgroup sessions are also offered through this service.

• Community spaces

The Kensington Neighbourhood Centre located in Anthony Street, hosts a range of programs and events for older people. It is also available for community hire and prioritises older people's community groups and not-for-profit organisations. The Centre contains a Sensory Garden for use by all visitors and holds programs specifically to support people living with dementia and their families.

The Venny Adventure Playground is run by a Committee of Management on behalf of the City of Melbourne. The Venny offers a free community backyard and playspace alongside a range of programs to support children and their families.

Kensington Town Hall is currently managed by YMCA and has many spaces available for community use. It hosts many community events and activities, and is home to the Kensington Compost Hub.

- **Parks and open spaces**

We manage and maintain more than 30 public spaces and 10 playgrounds across Kensington, including JJ Holland Park, Kensington Stock Route, Women's Peace Garden, Riverside Park and more.

- **Sporting and recreation venues**

The Kensington Community Aquatic and Recreation Centre is closed for redevelopment. Construction is underway to provide a 25 metre eight-lane pool, learn-to-swim pool and water play area, a three-court stadium, three multipurpose program rooms, change rooms and a cafe.

JJ Holland Park includes three sports fields which are regularly used by 10 community sporting clubs and local schools for training and competition. The park also includes a skate park and BMX track, and playground.

Newmarket Reserve provides community soccer clubs use pitch in winter season, community sport and training use in summer. The Kensington Flemington Bowls Club is also located here. Kensington Banks Tennis Courts in Riverside Park are accessible throughout the year.

3. Our investments in Kensington

- **Capital works**

The major new infrastructure investment in Kensington this financial year includes:

- \$25 million for Kensington Community and Recreation Centre redevelopment
- \$4 million for pump station upgrades in Stubbs Street
- \$79,000 to reduce speed limits
- \$250,000 for cycle infrastructure
- \$330,000 for other green space, infrastructure and cultural projects.

We will invest around \$2.2 million on renewal works in Kensington including for roadways, footpaths, kerb and channel, parks, landscape and property.

We will invest around \$570,000 on maintenance works in Kensington including at our community facilities and other property, for urban forest health and pedestrian infrastructure.

- **Investing in community**

In addition, through the Business Precinct Program, we will invest up to \$90,000 annual funding to Kensington Business Association for business support and activation initiatives.

We support a range of community groups in and around Kensington to deliver local project and activities through our grant programs. Since 2020 we have funded 21 community projects based in and around Kensington to the value of more than \$218,000. We also provide funding to the Kensington Neighbourhood House of approximately \$100,000 per year to deliver a range of community support and development programs and activities.

4. Kensington Neighbourhood Priorities and Activities

Over the last year, as part of the [Neighbourhood Model](#), we've undertaken consultation with community to identify 27 local priorities for the Kensington neighbourhood, receiving almost 900 pieces of feedback.

These priorities are publicly available on the [Kensington Neighbourhood Portal](#) which was launched in June 2022. The portal is a 'one-stop-shop' for local residents, businesses and visitors to stay up to date about what's happening locally, opportunities to connect and engage and keep informed on progress of neighbourhood priorities.

Below is a summary from our first quarterly update to community on activities aligned to the priorities that are contributing to neighbourhood priorities.

Aboriginal Melbourne	
Priority	Update on Key Activities
Wurundjeri Heritage and Culture	We've worked with Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong Boon Wurrung Traditional Owners to create Mapping Aboriginal Melbourne an interactive digital map that brings together a range of knowledge including key places of Aboriginal cultural and historical significance.
Supporting Reconciliation	We're helping support the establishment of a local community-led Reconciliation Action Group for Kensington.
Access and Affordability	
Priority	Update on Key Activities
Local food security and production	<p>As part of our Urban Forest Strategy 2012 - 2032 we're delivering an edible food walk along the Kensington Stock Route and recently planted 97 new edible trees including pomegranates, almonds, finger limes, avocados and more.</p> <p>We're collaborating with Kensington Neighbourhood House, Unison Housing, The Venny and Transition Town Kensington to deliver a climate justice pilot project focused on improving food insecurity and developing a more resilient local food system.</p> <p>We've been supporting the Kensington Stockyard garden to consider plans to expand and help establish a new bush foods program and cultural seating area. We're also working on a process to help ensure increased community access to the Westbourne Community Garden.</p>
Recreation spaces and programs	We've commenced construction of Kensington Community Aquatic and Recreation Centre. Works to demolish the old centre were completed in April followed by excavation and groundworks for the new centre.

Improving Library access and digital inclusion	In June we launched our first mobile library “Mel-van’ aiming to bring books, resources, wifi and digital support to many of our more isolated and less mobile community members. We’re also running regular free Café Connect sessions in Kensington which helps provide more one on one tech and device support for older people.
Climate and Biodiversity	
Priority	Update on Key Activities
Climate action and neighbourhood resilience	<p>We are developing a pilot project to gain a deeper understanding of inequity and build capacity to deal with vulnerabilities to climate change.</p> <p>We’re facilitating integrated water management solutions to support increased greening, reduced flooding and reduced pollution to the bay and Maribyrnong River.</p> <p>We’re currently consulting with community and building industry on how we can make our buildings zero carbon.</p>
Increase neighbourhood greening	We recently planted 21 new trees at Scarborough Place and Durham Street, providing canopy, biodiversity and 89 square metres of permeable surfaces for natural absorption and filtration of rain water.
Invest in and advocate for renewable energy	We’re currently undertaking community consultation on our Power Melbourne project which will install a network of neighbourhood batteries around the city. The batteries will be linked to a retail electricity plan to help residents and businesses access more affordable renewable electricity.
Reduce waste and develop a circular economy	We continued the rollout of the Food Organics and Green Organics (FOGO) high-rise trial. Through our grant programs we have been supporting community led initiatives to develop circular economy including the launch of a new bike repair hub pilot this month, and regular monthly Kensington repair hub pop up sessions.
Economy of the Future	
Priority	Update on Key Activities
Local business and employment	<p>We’re committed to supporting businesses in Kensington who endured difficult trading challenges in recent years including \$61,200 of Business Precinct Program funding made available to the Kensington Business Association in 2022-23. Further business support opportunities are available through this year’s Shopfront Activation Program, City activation grants program and Christmas activation fund.</p> <p>The Lord Mayor's Small Business Awards recently recognised the achievements of business owners who've been operating in the City of Melbourne for more than 10, 20 and 40 years. This included Lou Redina from Redina Real Estate in Kensington.</p>

Local shopping	We recently undertook significant works to Bellair St to improve drainage, kerb and channel infrastructure and footpath including the restoration of the colourful street mosaics created as part of a community art project in 1996.
Melbourne's unique Identity and place	
Priority	Update on Key Activities
Heritage and character	We're implementing land use and built form outcomes of the Macaulay Structure Plan through a planning scheme amendment and introducing a Development Contributions Plan to deliver infrastructure identified in the Macaulay Structure Plan.
Dogs off leash	Recent creation of a new dog off leash area at Riverside Park in response to two phases of community consultation and strong support for more dog off leash areas.
Safety and Wellbeing	
Priority	Update on Key Activities
Traffic and parking Active transport	We've convened a community reference group and are developing plans for approximately \$450,000 worth of projects to be delivered in 2023-24 which prioritises the improvement of pedestrian safety and walkability in Kensington. Later this financial year, we're also expecting to construct bike lane safety upgrades on Macaulay Rd and Arden St, a new raised zebra crossing across Epsom Road at Market St, and a new zebra crossing across Barnett St at Macaulay Road.
Community activation and connection	We're supporting the delivery of a number of community led initiatives including through our community grants program. This includes the creation of a new barbecue social space at the Kensington housing estate, and a "Green Time not Screen Time" project with families living in public housing to reconnect with and experience time in nature after COVID lockdowns.
Local amenity and safety	We hosted a Safety Summit on 19 August, and brought together government agencies, service providers, resident groups and other community members to discuss safety concerns. The Clean Melbourne Graffiti Blitz ran from 6 March to 30 June to combat illegal graffiti and tagging, improve public spaces and ensure the city is sparkling to entice people in. Our campaign to tackle illegal graffiti continues, with a record \$28.2 million investment in our Budget, including \$1.5 million to expand the Rapid Response Clean Team.

Our strategic work in Kensington

- **Kensington Urban Forest Plan**

Developed in collaboration with our local community, Kensington's urban forest is envisioned in the 2012-2024 Plan to be "...a tranquil oasis composed of a diversity of street and park plantings blending seamlessly with community and private garden spaces." The plan sets out priority planting areas and tree canopy targets and identifies specific greening opportunities throughout the precinct, a species palette and 10 year planting plan.

- **Macaulay Structure Plan**

The Macaulay Structure Plan 2021 is a long-term planning document that reimagines a 90 hectare precinct covering parts of Kensington and North Melbourne as a thriving home and workplace for our growing community. Informed by two phases of public consultation, the vision for Macaulay is for a mixed-use, mid-rise neighbourhood that is highly liveable, sustainable and prosperous. Locals can look forward to new parks and open spaces, community hubs, improved transport options, and high-quality building construction.

- **Disaster preparedness and resilience planning**

Through our new initiative on Community Disaster Resilience we will look to run programs to help our community be more prepared. We're keen to understand further what types of events, programs and support would be valuable in Kensington for building neighbourhood resilience for tackling climate change and disasters.

- **Moonee Ponds Creek Strategic Opportunities Plan**

The Moonee Ponds Creek Strategic Opportunities Plan outlines opportunities to revitalise the creek with a chain of parklands, new open spaces, and wetlands. While the City of Melbourne does not control the Moonee Ponds Creek corridor, it plays an important role, working with the Victorian Government, neighbouring councils and community groups to ensure that Moonee Ponds Creek meets the needs of the community in the future.

- **Municipal Planning Strategy**

Municipal Planning Strategy (2022) establishes the overarching strategic planning policy for the municipality. It considers the area's context, history, assets, strengths, attributes and influences and establishes the vision and strategic direction for future land use and development.

The new Municipal Planning Strategy includes greater emphasis on promoting sustainable development, promoting housing diversity and affordable housing, mitigating climate change, promoting employment, innovation and creative industries, providing infrastructure and elevating high quality design outcomes and design excellence. For Kensington, it outlines the context and character of the area, the long term vision, key changes, challenges and opportunities across the built form and public realm, environment, water, economy, culture and heritage, infrastructure, land use and community wellbeing.

- **Maribyrnong Waterfront: A Way Forward planning work**

The Maribyrnong Waterfront spans approximately 58 hectares and is bordered by the Maribyrnong River to the west and Dynon Rail yards and Kensington residential area to the east. This work provides increased clarity for land uses in the area and details key opportunities in land use and employment, urban structure and built form, water and open space and transport and access.