

# Boronia Revitalisation Report

## 2021-22

## Acknowledgment of Wurundjeri country

The Boronia Revitalisation Board acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters that we call Boronia: the Wurundjeri people.

All members of the Board pay their respects to Wurundjeri Elders, past and present, and Aboriginal Elders of other communities who are also part of the communities of Boronia.

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# Foreword from the Chair, Jackson Taylor MP



**I'm proud to present the Boronia Revitalisation Board's Revitalisation Report.**

At the start of its initial term in early 2021, the Board prepared a vision framework that, has been guiding the delivery of local projects and initiatives alongside partners including Knox City Council.

Throughout this term, board members provided a voice for their diverse communities and the issues that matter most to them. This is reflected in the diversity of projects delivered in Boronia, including targeted programs supporting Boronia's neurodiverse, homeless, young people at risk of disengaging and elderly communities. The renewal and reactivation of some of Boronia's streets and laneways has also drawn people back to Boronia, as have community events and activities. Together, these have contributed to improved social and economic opportunities for locals and enhanced Boronia's liveability.

This report provides more detail on the Board's achievements to date. So far, it has invested nearly \$3 million in 18 local projects, with more than \$1.1 million in co-contributions from delivery partners, totalling nearly \$4 million of investment into Boronia's revitalisation.

Boronia's revitalisation has only just begun, though. There is so much more to do. These opportunities are captured in this report through the Board's advice on the strategic directions and priority actions that will best support the continued revitalisation of Boronia in future, in a way that best meets the local community's needs.

I would like to thank Knox City Council and other board members for their commitment and work over the past year in helping to make Boronia an even better place to live and work in.

**Jackson Taylor**  
MP for Bayswater





**What  
we're  
delivering**

# About the Boronia Revitalisation Board

**The Boronia Revitalisation Board identifies the priorities and aspirations of community members and co-invests with local partners to deliver renewal works.**

**Boronia's revitalisation is part of the broader Suburban Revitalisation Program that is delivering social and infrastructure projects in eight suburbs of Melbourne, led by local boards.**

**The Board's work is supported by the Office for Suburban Development of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions and is overseen by the Minister for Suburban Development.**

## Our members

The Board was appointed by the Minister for Suburban Development and is chaired by Jackson Taylor, Member for Bayswater.

The Board is made-up of a cross-section of community leaders, including local government, community organisations, service providers, institutions and businesses.

- Jackson Taylor MP, Chair and Member for Bayswater
- Cr Susan Laukens, Mayor, Knox City Council
- Bruce Dobson, CEO, Knox City Council
- Denise Budge, Manager, Knox InfoLink
- Michael Smith, CEO, Eastern Community Legal Centre
- Heather McTaggart, House Manager, The Basin Community House
- Fiona Purcell, CEO, Outer Eastern Local Learning and Employment Network
- Debbie McLaughlin, Director of Wantirna Campus and Assistant Director of Health, Science and Community, Swinburne University
- Debbie Wilkinson, Operations Director, EACH
- Majella Beagley, Business Practice Manager, Boronia Medical Centre and Boronia Psychology
- Mel Spencer, Co-Founder and Executive Officer, Different Journeys
- Tom Schouten, Owner and Operator, Metro Cinemas Boronia
- Matthew Scammell, Principal, Boronia K-12 College
- Alpa Patel, Owner, The Drop In Café.

You can read the biographies of our board members on Boronia's Suburban Revitalisation webpage [suburbandevelopment.vic.gov.au/boronia](https://suburbandevelopment.vic.gov.au/boronia).

# Our vision for Boronia

Our vision is that Boronia is a **safe, vibrant, connected** and **inclusive** community strategically located in Melbourne's growing eastern corridor.

Nestled in the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges, Boronia is working towards greater local **economic activity**, and **enhanced liveability**.

## This vision informs our aspirations and objectives for Boronia's revitalisation.

ASPIRATION



### **Boronia is a safe, inclusive, vibrant and connected community**

- Address perceptions that Boronia is unsafe by transforming and enlivening underutilised areas across the centre.
- Promote enhanced community connectedness and encourage more people to be in the centre more often, and for longer.
- Promote a feeling of safety and welcome by ensuring people of all abilities can navigate the centre easily and provide access to the things they need.
- Identify and enhance places within the town centre that can be the focal point for a civic heart (for example, the train station).

ASPIRATION



### **Promote Boronia's location at the Dandenong Ranges foothills**

- Preserve, celebrate and promote Boronia as a wonderful place to live due to its leafy, green setting among the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges.
- Protect the village feel and greenery amid any structural changes through the centre.

ASPIRATION



### **Local economic activity grows and is more diverse**

- Attract a wider range of businesses to Boronia, focusing on its affordability, and green/leafy amenity in the Eastern Metropolitan Region.
- Promote the range of education, training and employment opportunities that link skilled workers to local (including new) businesses.

ASPIRATION



### **Liveability is enhanced for all, building on local strengths**

- Uncover and showcase all the unique activity happening in Boronia, currently hidden behind main streets.
- Strengthen connectivity between the train station precinct and the surrounding activity centre.
- Enhance legibility, pedestrian and cycle paths throughout the centre to help people of all abilities better navigate and experience all that the Boronia centre has to offer.



The following table provides an overview of the projects being or already delivered by the Board, and their alignment with the Board’s vision objectives as set out in the previous section.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Boronia is a safe, inclusive, vibrant and connected community</b>	<b>Promote Boronia’s location at the Dandenong Ranges foothills</b>	<b>Local economic activity grows and is more diverse</b>	<b>Liveability is enhanced for all, building on local strengths</b>
Knox City Council: Business Façade Upgrade Program – Round 1	✓		✓	✓
Knox City Council: Beautify Boronia	✓			
Knox City Council: Green Spine Corridor Concept Plan		✓		✓
Knox City Council: Lupton Way Shared Zone and Lighting Upgrade	✓			✓
Knox City Council: Erica Avenue Streetscape Renewal – Stage 1 and 2	✓		✓	✓
Knox City Council: Boronia Big Flix Festival	✓		✓	✓
Knox City Council: Pop-Up Events Program	✓		✓	✓
Knox City Council: Wayfinding and Branding Strategy	✓		✓	✓
Knox City Council: Replacement of Major Road Street Lights	✓			
Knox City Council: Boronia Revitalisation Community Grant Fund	✓			
Eastern Community Legal Centre: My Generation Project	✓		✓	✓
Knox Infolink: Boronia Community Breakfast Program	✓		✓	✓
Knox City Council: Laneway and Arcade Renewal	✓	✓	✓	✓
Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia: Boronia Youth Mentoring Program	✓			✓
Different Journeys: Dinner Peer Support Programs and Gaming Events	✓		✓	✓
EACH: Boronia Road Frontage Re-Vamp and Community Food Garden and Pantry	✓		✓	✓

# What we've delivered for Boronia

In our first year, we've kicked-off Boronia's revitalisation with the delivery of a number of projects.



## **Knox City Council: Business Façade Upgrade Grant Program – Round 1 and 2**

The program provided two rounds of co-contribution grants of up to \$5,000 to local businesses to improve the visual appeal of their shopfronts and the general amenity of the activity centre.

The improved shopfronts contributed to the beautification of the area, enhanced amenity, improved perceptions of safety and increased patronage and visitation.

The Suburban Revitalisation Program provided \$50,000 of funding for the first round and \$100,000 for the second round. Knox City Council co-contributed \$15,000 in-kind to the first round and \$20,000 to the second round. The first round was completed in April 2022 and the second will be in August 2022.

## **Knox City Council: Green Spine Corridor Concept Plan**

Concept plans for a green spine corridor along Genista Avenue, Chandler Road and part of Tormore Reserve were developed, in consultation with the local community and key stakeholders.

The delivery of a green spine corridor is one of the key priorities in the *Boronia Renewal Strategy*. Following subsequent stages of work, the corridor will support safe active transport connections and infrastructure, as well as greening the suburb.

The Suburban Revitalisation Program provided \$120,000 of funding and Knox City Council co-contributed \$4,500. The project was completed in May 2022.



## **Knox City Council: Boronia Big Flix Festival**

The Boronia Big Flix Festival delivered family-friendly movie nights over three Saturdays in March and April 2022. Delivered in partnership with local traders and partners, the evenings also featured food trucks and children's activities, activating 257 Dorset Road and contributing to increased activity in the village precinct, as well as support for local businesses.

The Suburban Revitalisation Program provided \$80,000 of funding and Knox City Council co-contributed \$14,000. The project was completed in April 2022.



### **Knox City Council: Boronia Revitalisation Community Grant Fund**

Grants of up to \$5,000 were provided to eligible Boronia not-for-profits and community organisations to purchase small electric appliances or technical equipment. This supported community programs and contributed to Boronia's ongoing revitalisation by improving local social and economic renewal and outcomes. The Suburban Revitalisation Program provided \$50,000 of funding and Knox City Council co-contributed \$7,500. The project was completed in June 2022.

### **Knox City Council: Pop-Up Events Program**

The project delivered two series of pop-up events. Saturdays at the Square featured a range of children's activities at the Boronia Mall Forecourt, and Play Park 257 (257 Dorset Road) was furnished with outdoor ping pong tables and musical instruments and programmed with a range of activities across May. This activated underutilised spaces in the activity centre, increased visitation and fostered community involvement.

The Suburban Revitalisation Program provided \$200,000 of funding and Knox City Council co-contributed \$50,000. The project was completed in June 2022.



# What we're delivering for Boronia

There are a number of projects still under way as we continue to deliver our vision for Boronia.



## **Eastern Community Legal Centre (ECLC): My Generation Project**

The My Generation Project addresses ageism and discrimination through a range of intergenerational activities co-designed with stakeholders. These activities bring together younger and older community members and promote intergenerational relationships.

The Suburban Revitalisation Program provided \$140,000 of funding and ECLC and local partner organisations contributed \$60,000 to this project. It will be completed in September 2022.

## **Different Journeys: Peer Support Programs and Gaming Events**

The project delivers a range of peer support programs for neurodiverse young people and their families/carers, in partnership with Swinburne University and Boronia businesses. Benefits include local business revitalisation and community development, as well as participation and capacity building for neurodiverse young people and their families/carers.

The Suburban Revitalisation Program provided \$32,809 of funding and Different Journeys contributed \$9,095 to this project. It will be completed in July 2022.

## **Big Brothers Big Sisters: Boronia Youth Mentoring Program**

This one-to-one mentoring program supports disadvantaged young people (7–17 years of age) at risk of disengaging from the community.

Local volunteers are trained as mentors and paired with a young mentee to provide a positive role model and build connections.

The program helps to reduce social isolation, building a stronger, more inclusive community. It also improves disengaged young people's chances of remaining in school and contributing to their community.

The Suburban Revitalisation Program is providing \$50,000 of funding and Big Brothers Big Sisters contributed \$13,701 to this project. It will be completed in August 2022.

## **Knox City Council: Laneway and Arcade Renewal**

The project delivers creative elements and upgrades to the main pedestrian laneways and arcades in Boronia, contributing to enhanced pedestrian connectivity, improved perceptions of safety, business activation and increased footfall.

The Suburban Revitalisation Program provided \$150,000 of funding and Knox City Council co-contributed \$104,737 to this project. It will be completed in September 2022.

## **Knox City Council: Replacement of Major Road Streetlights**

The project involves replacing over 500 LED lights along major roads in Boronia, including the main roads within the commercial core and activity centre, contributing to enhanced amenity and perceptions of safety after dark.

The Suburban Revitalisation Program provided \$100,000 of funding and Knox City Council co-contributed \$310,000 to this project. It will be completed in July 2022.

## **Knox City Council: Lupton Way Renewal**

The project delivers beautification works and amenity improvements to Lupton Way, including a parklet, solar lighting, potential public art opportunities and painted surface treatments.

The Suburban Revitalisation Program provided \$150,000 of funding and Knox City Council co-contributed \$50,000 to this project. It will be completed in September 2022.





### **Knox InfoLink: Boronia Community Breakfast Program**

Knox InfoLink and partner organisations host community breakfasts five days a week, free of charge and in a friendly and inclusive environment. Breakfasts are open to community members who are vulnerable, homeless, disadvantaged or socially isolated.

The program provides guests with a nutritious meal, as well as the opportunity to connect and build links with their community and understand how to access services and resources.

The Suburban Revitalisation Program provided \$148,000 of funding, Knox InfoLink \$68,000 and Knox City Council \$22,000. The program is ongoing until August 2022.

### **Knox City Council: Erica Avenue Streetscape Renewal Stage 1 and 2**

The first and second stages of streetscape renewal works along Erica Avenue deliver improvements to public space, including landscaping, new street furniture and paving.

The works along Erica Avenue, between Boronia Road and Chandler Road, also enhance pedestrian and cyclist accessibility, including better connections to Boronia railway station.

The resulting improved streetscape will create more vibrant and pleasant public spaces and provide opportunities for outdoor dining and other daytime and evening activities to increase visitation and pride of place.

The Suburban Revitalisation Program provided \$11 million of funding and Knox City Council co-contributed \$60,000 to this project. The first stage will be complete in October 2022 and the second stage in late December 2022 or early 2023.

### **Knox City Council: Beautify Boronia**

The project delivered four large-scale murals across Boronia. The local community provided inspiration for the artworks, which have contributed to improving the local aesthetic, preventing graffiti and increasing the community's perception of safety and pride in place.

The Suburban Revitalisation Program provided \$150,000 of funding and Knox City Council co-contributed \$20,000. The project will be completed in August 2022.





## **Knox City Council: Wayfinding and Branding Strategy**

A wayfinding and branding strategy was developed to guide future work that will address issues with movement and connections in Boronia. When implemented, wayfinding will display travel times and distances between key services and destinations, encouraging and supporting active transport and improving connections.

The Suburban Revitalisation Program provided \$60,000 of funding and Knox City Council co-contributed \$30,000. The project will be completed in August 2022.

## **Eastern Access Community Health: Boronia Road Façade Upgrade, Community Garden and 24/7 Food Pantry**

The project delivered a new community garden and 24/7 food pantry at EACH's Boronia facility. It also included improvements to the façade that enhanced the look and feel of the building.

Together, this work has made the building more welcoming from Boronia Road, and it has solidified EACH Boronia's role as a community hub, supporting further formal and informal engagement with the local community.

The Suburban Revitalisation Program provided \$100,000 of funding and EACH co-contributed \$45,000 to this project. It will be completed in August 2022.





# Case studies

## Business Façade Upgrade Grant Program – Round 1

### Delivered:

April 2021 – April 2022

### Suburban Revitalisation contribution:

\$50,000

### Delivery partners:

Knox City Council

### Outcomes:

- 17 businesses now have more contemporary shopfronts, increasing their street appeal.
- The project is estimated to have created jobs for as many as 30 local tradespeople during design and construction.
- A survey undertaken by the DJPR Design and Evaluation team found:
  - 75.8 per cent of community respondents agreed upgrades made the area more appealing
  - 62.5 per cent of business owners have received positive feedback on their upgrades from shoppers.

### Description:

The first round of the Boronia Business Façade Upgrade Grant Program awarded co-contributor grants (on a dollar-for-dollar basis) of up to \$5,000 to eligible local businesses to improve the visual appeal of their shopfronts.

In total, 17 businesses in the Boronia Activity Centre received funding, with more than \$50,000 worth of works delivered.

A second round of business façade upgrade grants is being delivered, beginning in September 2021 through to August 2022. Works ranged from painting facades to delivering lighting, tiling, new signage and upgraded awnings.

The project aimed to address concerns among the Boronia community about the activity centre's general amenity and patronage, as well as a desire to beautify the area. Local businesses have benefited from improved branding and visibility, as well as increased engagement with Knox City Council as a result of the process.



Zoe Wright works as a Bridal Consultant at Miss Bella Bridal, a bridal boutique that also specialises in bridesmaid and debutante dresses. Since the new shopfront has been completed, Zoe said the locals, 'are loving it actually! We now get a lot of people come in off the street, which we never usually got before. A lot of people come in and they say, "I love this in the window" and "I saw your shop driving past", things like that, so that's really good. It's really positive and we are loving it.'

Tempo Hair has been in Boronia for more than 25 years. Shannon McLachlan is a hairdresser who works at the salon and lives locally. Tempo Hair was where she got her hair cut when she was growing up.

It was very easy for Shannon to start working at Tempo Hair, as she already knew everyone.

Talking about the new shopfront, Shannon said, 'I feel like people notice us more because we re-did the whole shop, including the sign, so it's like a whole new thing'.

Blake Halls is the new owner of Pedal Addiction. He got into the biking business through his love of bikes.

Since the improvement of the shopfront, Blake said, 'a lot of people have been really excited about it. They like the change of colour, and they've all said it stands out when they are driving around, so that's making us happy, getting a lot more attention.'



## Boronia Community Breakfast Program

### Delivery:

November 2021 – August 2022

### Suburban Revitalisation contribution:

\$148,000

### Delivery partners:

Knox InfoLink in partnership with Boronia Library, EACH, Victoria Police, Uniting Homeless Service, Boronia Medical Centre, Knox Leisureworks, Boronia Rotary Club, Jobs Victoria and many other organisations.



### Outcomes:

- In the first six months of the program's operation, a number of guests experiencing the issues below have been referred to other services:
  - 12 per cent of guests have self-identified as homeless
  - 17 per cent have disclosed issues with alcohol and other drugs
  - 21 per cent have self-identified as lonely or socially isolated
  - 19 per cent have self-identified as experiencing economic disadvantage and/or identified barriers to employment
  - 20 per cent have been linked to a case worker for short-term intensive support.
- Additional outcomes include:
  - 1.3 EFT jobs were created through this project including the project coordinator (30 hours per week) and case worker (20 hours per week)
  - 170 people have been served breakfast and supported through the program to date.

### Description:

The Boronia Community Breakfast Program serves free breakfasts on weekdays to community members in an open and welcoming environment. Many are vulnerable, homeless, disadvantaged, or socially isolated. The program provides guests with a nutritious meal, but more importantly, it provides the opportunity to connect and build links with their community and to introduce them to services and resources as required.

The program recognises that it can be difficult, confusing or overwhelming for people to seek assistance. Many who require assistance may never have accessed a social or government assistance program before. The Breakfast Program creates a safe, welcoming and friendly environment in the local community where attendees can build trust over time before opening up about their circumstances. This is when case workers can provide assistance.

Denise Budge is the centre manager at Knox InfoLink, a not-for-profit community organisation that delivers the Boronia Community Breakfast Program.

Denise said, 'The point of difference with our Breakfast Program is that it's more than just a meal. It's important to us to get to know our guests and find out what services they need and build a level of trust and support them and link them with those services or provide the support ourselves. That's the point of difference. It's more than just a meal.'

Penny Robinson, who coordinates the Breakfast Program said they have '... about 30 to 40 people who'll come every day ... and it's their community ... and a place to get a meal.'

On the atmosphere of the breakfasts, she said, 'Our motto is "All are welcome". I love being here. You get to meet people from all walks of life. There's no judgement. We welcome everyone who wants to come.'

Richard attends and contributes to the Boronia Community Breakfast Program, and it has changed his life.

Talking about this program, Richard said, 'It gives you a sense of worth, it gives me something to look forward to every morning, to see the people – just to have a chat. It's quite difficult some days. If I didn't have this, I don't know where I'd be, I don't know if I'd still be here to be honest.'



## Peer Support Programs and Gaming Events

### Delivery:

December 2021 – July 2022

### Suburban Revitalisation contribution:

\$32,809

### Delivery partners:

Different Journeys, in partnership with Swinburne University and local Boronia businesses

### Outcomes:

- Six neurodiverse young people and six carers were employed to deliver events.
- Feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive. Outcomes have included:
  - reducing the crippling isolation autistic people face
  - helping to build community
  - empowering people
  - strengthening peer relationships
  - providing employment and volunteer opportunities for autistic and neurodiverse people and their families/carers.
- These events have also contributed to raising the profile and patronage of participating Boronia businesses, in addition to connecting them with the local community.
- Participating businesses have also engaged in autism awareness training for management and staff


### Description:

Different Journeys delivers social, recreational and educational events for autistic and neurodiverse teenagers, adults, their families and carers, in partnership with Boronia businesses.

These events provide much-needed opportunities to address social isolation, build community and create employment and volunteering opportunities for people with autism and their carers.

Events have included movies, meals at local restaurants and cafes across Boronia, trivia under the stars and cake decorating.

A key feature of the approach is a partnership with Swinburne University and TAFE students to provide local placement and volunteering opportunities.



Different Journeys and students from Swinburne University work with local businesses to ensure environments are autism inclusive. Examples include lowering lighting and sound levels at the movies, allocating seating and using signage to guide participants.

Diane, owner of Coachella Café since December 2021, hosted a Different Journeys morning tea.

'Neurodiversity is something a child of mine and myself live with, so we are always happy to assist and help promote anything that may improve, educate, or enrich a person's life journey', Diane said.

Her welcoming café focuses on coffee and light eats. It's a popular destination in the community for people living with disability and their carers, as Diane has designed the café to be accessible – with access ramps and space for several large wheelchairs.

'I am keenly aware of the challenges faced both in day to day living and employment. I have employed people on the spectrum across all my businesses over the years and I really try to advocate to other business owners about the benefits of inclusion,' she said.

'I believe that not only welcoming neurodiverse individuals into our space but openly catering to their needs to assist them being comfortable or enjoying their experience is a small way that our team can lead by example and demonstrate to other customers what inclusion looks like, even if it is just for a short coffee break.'







# Our work context

knox infolink  
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# About Boronia

Boronia is located 32 kilometres east of the Melbourne CBD, within the City of Knox and at the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges. It is a leafy residential suburb with a well-serviced town centre supporting a mix of different uses, including an excellent network of health and community services and a growing number of knowledge intensive businesses. Boronia's liveability and relative affordability have attracted families and new residents.

## Key strategic context

Our vision for Boronia's revitalisation was developed within the context of the strategies and plans already undertaken by our stakeholders. We've summarised them here.

### **Boronia Renewal Strategy (revised 2021)<sup>1</sup>**

Knox City Council's *Boronia Renewal Strategy* was published in 2019 and revised in 2021 to seek authorisation from the Minister for Planning to commence a Planning Scheme Amendment.

It is the key guiding strategic document for the renewal of Boronia, building on the *Boronia Structure Plan: 'Your Life, Your Place – Our Future'* from 2006.

The strategy aims to deliver Council's vision for the Boronia Major Activity Centre in 2040.

As a major activity centre under *Plan Melbourne 2017 – 2050*, Boronia is slated to accommodate notable growth in future and be a suburban focal point for services, employment, housing, public transport and community connection.


To develop the strategy, Council analysed existing conditions in the Boronia Activity Centre, engaged with the local community and key stakeholders and undertook market demand assessments. From this emerged a vision, key directions, objectives, strategies and actions to guide Boronia's renewal.

These actions were based on five themes: economic development and investment, land use and built form, movement and access, public spaces and community wellbeing and infrastructure.

The strategy provides a new and contemporary planning framework for the Boronia Activity Centre that will: guide the reinvigoration of its retail and commercial environment; consider ageing, failing and inadequate community and physical infrastructure (for example, Knox Basketball Stadium, Boronia Library, Bellbird Senior Citizens' Centre); consider social disadvantage in the area (such as low incomes, family violence and lower education levels); the need for additional housing and the redevelopment of significant state-owned, underutilised land within the train station precinct.

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<sup>1</sup> [Boronia Renewal Strategy](#)



The strategy presents the following vision for Boronia in 2040:

*A connected and resilient place that values its history and environment, and embraces its forward-thinking community to realise its potential for future generations.*

The vision is supported by nine key directions to support the renewal of Boronia:

- a unique local place
- quality living environments
- a healthy, active and connected community
- resilient
- nurtures local and creative business and social enterprise
- a green place with spaces to play
- smart and digital
- an active nightlife
- a unified urban structure.

Further, the strategy sets out four Big Move Projects to help achieve the vision over the next 20 years:

- Boronia Park Master Plan
- Boronia Train Station Redevelopment Concept
- Dorset Square Town Square and Community Infrastructure Investigation (including a potential digital creative hub as part of a multipurpose community centre)
- Green Spine Corridor (between Chandler Park and Tormore Reserve).

A number of projects funded through the Revitalisation Program were identified as priorities in the strategy, including:

- the Green Spine Corridor Concept Plan to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety and east-west movement, linking Knox Leisureworks, Tormore Reserve through to Chandler Park and Albert Avenue as part of the Green Spine Big Move Project
- preparing a Wayfinding Strategy that includes walking and cycling times and distances between key services and destinations
- the Laneway and Arcade Renewal project, enhancing laneways and arcades as safe and desirable pedestrian links
- improving Lupton Way
- temporary activations (Pop-Up Events Program, Boronia Big Flix Festival) at the 257 Dorset Road pop-up space.

Download the [Boronia Renewal Strategy](#)

## **Boronia Activity Centre: Movement and Access Study (2019)<sup>2</sup>**

This study was prepared by GTA Consultants for Knox City Council and endorsed in 2019. It provides supporting evidence for and informs the Boronia Renewal Strategy.

The report analysed the Boronia Activity Centre's existing conditions and issues from a movement and place approach and identified interventions and opportunities to improve movement.

The document presents a vision:

*A vibrant and active Boronia as a destination and gateway to the Dandenongs that supports safe access by all modes.*

It also provides a set of objectives that underpin the vision and guide the application of a movement and place framework:

- Improve amenity, connectivity and legibility of the pedestrian network to and within the Boronia Activity Centre.
- Support increased use of the Boronia Activity Centre for leisure, recreation, commercial and visitor use.
- Provide a connected bicycle network and dedicated facilities linking key destinations within Boronia.
- Reduce the impact of car parking and associated activity on the amenity and environment.
- Efficiently manage the road network, particularly along Boronia Road and Dorset Road.

The movement and place framework that guided the development of improvements identified in this report is based on the philosophy that transport links perform two functions: the movement of people and goods, and serve as a place, a destination in their own right.

Suggested improvements include:

- The overall amenity of the Boronia Activity Centre could be enhanced by providing a central square (for example, Dorset Square) as a hub for activity.
- The environment for pedestrians could be improved by providing greater priority and amenity throughout the area. For example, Lupton Way could become a shared zone and other traffic calming measures such as raised and enhanced pedestrian crossings would support improved pedestrian movement. The Board funded amenity improvements to and beautification of Lupton Way.

- An east–west Green Spine would enhance both pedestrian and cyclist accessibility and provide a safe and direct route connecting a number of key destinations within Boronia. The Board funded concept plans for a Green Spine Corridor.
- Cyclist safety improvements and filling in the gap in the shared path would provide a more connected cycling network and may reduce the number of crashes in the area, for example, a segregated bicycle lane along Boronia Road.
- The addition of bus priority at intersections and along key roads, and enhancing bus stops could improve reliability, travel times and increase the number of passengers.
- Providing dynamic parking information may reduce circulation and ensure pedestrians have space to walk within car parks. This will improve amenity, for example converting on-street parking in key locations (such as Erica Ave and Dorset Road) into parklets and pocket parks will encourage more people into the streets.
- Ensuring that loading areas are provided, but also allowing for these spaces to be flexible and used by other modes will improve the amenity and flow of the area.
- Announcing the entry to Boronia at each key point and reducing speeds will notify road users that the activity centre is an important place.

The report also presents opportunities and actions that will further support and achieve the various objectives.

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<sup>2</sup> [Boronia Activity Centre: Movement and Access Study \(2019\)](#)

## **Boronia Renewal Project: Community Services and Facilities Review (2018)<sup>3</sup>**

This report was prepared by Knox City Council and published in June 2018.

It forms part of the background research associated with the Boronia Renewal Project and provides recommendations for the Boronia Renewal Strategy.

The review provides an overview of community services and facilities in Boronia and identifies the relevant key influences likely to affect these in the future.

While Boronia is generally well served by community services and facilities, future growth across all age cohorts over the next 20 years will mean there is increased demand. In particular, this growth is predicted to occur in an increasingly ageing population and younger age cohorts.

Further, Council-owned community infrastructure in Boronia is in disparate locations, ageing and purpose built. This means it has little flexibility for change or ability to deliver integrated services.

Based on these factors, the review recommends the following:

- There are opportunities in Boronia to change the delivery of community services and facility provision to respond to local needs.
- Constructing a new multipurpose community facility, or a cluster of new and existing community facilities, would provide a core focus and community hub within Boronia. This should inform planning for the future direction of other existing community services and facilities in Boronia, which may form a focal point for civic and community activity in Boronia.

- Further consultation with relevant service providers and user groups (both Council and non-Council) will be important in understanding the functional needs of these agencies/groups, the services they provide, and how best these could form part of a co-located or integrated facility as part of a community hub.
- There is an opportunity to explore alternative service delivery models, which reflect emerging needs and service sector trends, to ensure more cost-effective service delivery in Boronia. Consideration should include both Council and non-Council service providers and how best these could form part of a co-located or integrated facility as part of a community hub.

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<sup>3</sup> [Boronia Renewal Project: Community Services and Facilities Review \(2018\)](#)

## Boronia Economic Analysis (2021)<sup>4</sup>

This report was prepared by HillPDA Consulting for Knox City Council and published in June 2021.

It provides evidence and policy directions, such as building heights, zoning changes and strategic directions for Council's assets in the Boronia Renewal Strategy. It provides an analysis of economic demand, property and planning, and an overview of development take-up projections.

The report puts forth six themes and related policy directions:

- **Make best use of core activity centre sites.** Ensure that sites are not under-developed as investment occurs, especially on major sites such as Council land, land adjacent to the rail line and large sites that have a low development yield. Possible directions to support this include: increasing height limits in the activity centre's core; use policy and controls to discourage/prohibit low density development in the core; ensure active street frontages; and leverage investment proposals to deliver mixed use outcomes where possible.
- **Make best use of strategic residential sites.** Possible directions supporting this include: investigate changes in zones to increase height limits on strategic sites in the activity centre's periphery; support site consolidation on strategic sites in the activity centre's periphery; use policy and controls to discourage/prohibit low density townhouse development on these strategic sites on the periphery.
- **Support investment with infrastructure and urban amenity improvements.** Possible directions supporting this include: explore traffic calming and urban design treatments to support pedestrian movement and street level activity on Boronia and Dorset Roads; explore the redevelopment and renewal of community services and facilities such as a new multipurpose community facility; and explore the provision of quality public meeting spaces (plazas, open space) and public toilets.

- **Maximise opportunities for the new population** (influx of more diverse and educated population). Possible directions supporting this include: exploring the opportunity to establish a coworking office facility for new business start-ups; reviewing policies to support home-based businesses and small office/home office developments.
- **Evolution and renewal of retail space.** Possible directions supporting this include: exploring the viability of acquiring sites for redevelopment; developing Council land that is surplus to needs/has potential for mixed use development; exploring the viability of establishing a foods and goods market.
- **Infrastructure funding tools to support centre renewal.** Possible directions supporting this include consideration of a special rates and charge scheme, development contributions plan and density bonus scheme.

<sup>4</sup> [Boronia Economic Analysis \(2021\)](#)

## Other government investments in Boronia

### **Commonwealth Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications – Commuter Car Park Upgrade – Belgrave/Lilydale Lines – Boronia**

As part of the Urban Congestion Fund, planning is under way for the delivery and potential relocation of an increased capacity park and ride facility for the Boronia railway station. The project will support public transport usage and efficiency. The Commonwealth Government is providing up to \$20 million in funding.<sup>5</sup>

The project is managed by the Victorian Level Crossing Removal Project under the Commuter Car Park Program.<sup>6</sup>

### **Department of Justice and Community Safety – Empowering Communities Grant**

Knox City Council is one of the local government areas (LGAs) approved for funding through the second round of the Department of Justice and Community Safety's Empowering Communities Grants, with forums to be held locally in 2022.

Knox and other recipient LGAs were selected based on a targeted EOI process, due to their identified need and opportunities to improve community safety and address crime across the municipality. Knox has been provided with \$700,000 of funding from the grant.

Each LGA will establish an Action Group to bring together local community expertise with the shared interest of improving safety and addressing crime in their area. A Building Safer Communities forum will be held early in the initiative to consider local crime and community safety issues and to inform future activity.

Drawing on the outcomes of the forum, the Action Group will develop an agreed common goal, proposed activities to achieve the goal and an evaluation method to be used throughout the initiative and to measure ongoing success.<sup>7</sup>

### **Boronia Train Station Redevelopment Concept<sup>8</sup>**

The Boronia Renewal Strategy has identified the train station precinct redevelopment as crucial to helping deliver the vision of the strategy. Feedback also identified the need for improvements and potential renewal of public assets within the train station precinct.

Council was successful in obtaining funding under the Streamlining for Growth Fund in 2019 to prepare a concept plan for the train station precinct.

### **Boronia Retail Precinct Crime Prevention Project<sup>9</sup>**

The project resulted in the purchase and installation of an upgraded CCTV system in Boronia. The CCTV system aims to deter crime, reduce graffiti and antisocial behaviour and improve the community's perception of safety. The project was delivered in 2019 by Council.

5 [investment.infrastructure.gov.au/projects/ProjectDetails.aspx?Project\\_id=100921-18VIC-UCO](https://investment.infrastructure.gov.au/projects/ProjectDetails.aspx?Project_id=100921-18VIC-UCO)

6 [knox.vic.gov.au/our-services/building-and-planning/land-use-planning/policies-strategies-in-progress/boronia-renewal-project](https://knox.vic.gov.au/our-services/building-and-planning/land-use-planning/policies-strategies-in-progress/boronia-renewal-project)

7 [crimeprevention.vic.gov.au/empoweringcommunities](https://crimeprevention.vic.gov.au/empoweringcommunities)

8 [knox.vic.gov.au/our-services/building-and-planning/land-use-planning/policies-strategies-in-progress/boronia-renewal-project](https://knox.vic.gov.au/our-services/building-and-planning/land-use-planning/policies-strategies-in-progress/boronia-renewal-project)

9 [knox.vic.gov.au/our-services/building-and-planning/land-use-planning/policies-strategies-in-progress/boronia-renewal-project](https://knox.vic.gov.au/our-services/building-and-planning/land-use-planning/policies-strategies-in-progress/boronia-renewal-project)



# Suburban Revitalisation Program evaluation

An evaluation of the Suburban Revitalisation Program (including the work of the Boronia Board) was undertaken by the DJPR Design and Evaluation team in 2021.

The evaluation analysed value for money delivered by the Suburban Revitalisation Boards and their interventions, their appropriateness as a policy response and their alignment with current Victorian Government place-based reform approach.

It also identified lessons for implementing further funding of this program or similar programs in the future. These were represented in the evaluation sections of: justification, effectiveness, funding and delivery, efficiency and risk of cessation.

The evaluation was informed by an interview of Board chairs, survey of board members and outreach to subject matter experts on place-based reforms, key staff and executives in DJPR and Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and delivery partners.

## Key findings resulting from the evaluation included:

- More time to develop and implement strategic projects
- Deepen relationships and community engagement to address local challenges
- Membership, roles and governance processes are aligned with the principles of place-based approaches
- Review Revitalisation Board Terms of Reference to more clearly outline roles of members, including state and local government
- Further develop monitoring and evaluation frameworks.



# Strategic Directions



# Strategic directions

**These strategic directions represent the Board's high-level, medium to longer-term recommendations. They are informed by current strategic plans and scenarios, including the work of the previous Board.**

**The strategic directions provide broad policy and planning goals to improve specific revitalisation outcomes for Boronia.**



## **Promote community initiatives such as the Empowering Communities Grants to local government and non-government organisations across Boronia**

The Empowering Communities Grant awarded to Knox City Council will help to further revitalise Boronia, given its strong focus on improving safety and addressing crime.

The Board recommends undertaking additional work with Knox City Council on the deployment of this and other community-led grant initiatives.

As part of this work, Boronia's community service organisations could be assisted to apply for grants across the justice and health space.

This would leverage other funding opportunities to support the Board's revitalisation efforts.



## **Redevelop the Boronia railway station, ensuring community engagement and accessibility**

Boronia lacks connected public transport infrastructure, and needs more bus routes and a redeveloped railway station.

The Board recognises the positive effect the Lilydale railway station redevelopment has had on Lilydale, and recommends a similar redevelopment in Boronia.

The community is eager and passionate to see the Boronia railway station redeveloped.

A sustained focus on redeveloping Boronia railway station would provide an opportunity to connect Boronia with travellers visiting the Dandenong Ranges, allow for greater community engagement, and open additional opportunities for employment and civic life.

Incorporating community amenities into a redeveloped train station could reduce the need for the community to travel to Croydon and surrounding areas.



## **Improve access to family violence and child wellbeing support in Boronia by strengthening connections and expanding the footprint of the Outer East Orange Door Network**

Family violence continues to be a significant challenge for Victoria, including the Boronia community.

Tackling this challenge will enhance community safety and turn disadvantage into opportunity.

The Board recommends boosting access to support services located in Boronia. This will provide a practical solution for people experiencing family violence.

Expanding the footprint of the Outer East Orange Door Network will ensure greater access to support for Boronia, rather than requiring people to attend the site in Croydon.



## **Improve access to affordable and social housing in Boronia**

The rising cost of living is creating an additional strain on Boronia's affordable housing and social housing situation.

Additional funding and support are required from all levels of government and community service organisations, including Anglicare, to address this issue.

Boronia needs adequate service provision and increased funding for people experiencing housing issues.

While the Board's Community Breakfast Program provides an entry point to support people facing homelessness and needing social housing, there is still limited access to resources for safe housing.

The Board recommends continuing to understand community need, while advocating to the State Government and community service organisations to ensure Boronia receives adequate service provision.



## **Develop social policies that emphasise diversity and inclusion**

Boronia has a proud and diverse community, and this potential needs to be captured in our social policies.

The Board recommends advocating for developing government policies that further promote diversity and inclusion. Accessibility is a crucial issue, with ageing infrastructure that is no longer fit for purpose, and the Boronia community needs better and more inclusive facilities and amenities.

# Vision objectives and priority actions

These vision objectives are the Board's recommendations for the work that is the most critical in the next phase.

They are supported by priority actions, which are place-based actions that can be delivered within the next 12 to 36 months to make a positive impact for Boronia.

## **Attract businesses to Boronia, focusing on its affordability and amenity**

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected Boronia businesses and the community, with local traders facing issues around affordability and lack of foot traffic.

The Board recommends continuing to support existing businesses in Boronia to succeed and expand (including through the recent Boronia Business Engagement Survey) and to attract new businesses to Boronia.

This work will provide Boronia with increased job opportunities for the community and improved access to community services.

In particular, Boronia's green and leafy nature and amenity should be promoted as unique and valuable assets to businesses and the community.

### **Priority action: Develop a place-based employment strategy for Boronia**

The Board recommends developing a strategy to identify Boronia's long-term employment needs and ensure the community is equipped with the right skills for local jobs.

The strategy will map employment opportunities and the skills jobseekers need to access them, now and in the future. It will also analyse the education or training facilities that may be needed to meet Boronia's long-term employment needs.

Developing the strategy would be a collaborative process with existing and potential businesses in Boronia to understand what they need from the local workforce.

## **Promote education, training and employment opportunities that link skilled workers to local businesses (and other organisations/employers)**

Meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities are critical to Boronia's revitalisation.

The Board recommends promoting opportunities for education, training and upskilling.

Access to these opportunities is currently hampered by a lack of infrastructure, such as a multipurpose community space, university or TAFE in Boronia.

Additional planning is needed to identify how education providers can be embedded into Boronia, and how employers can be matched with skilled local workers.

### **Priority action: Develop a Visitor Attraction Master Plan for Boronia that focuses on unique sites and annual events**

The Board recommends developing a Visitor Attraction Master Plan for Boronia by focusing on its green, leafy amenity.

In addition, destination planning will allow visitors to see Boronia as an attractive stop on their journey to the Dandenong Ranges.

The Master Plan will also provide additional marketing and events opportunities for local businesses.

This action aligns with other priority actions, including the funding of additional events.



## **Boost perceptions of community safety by transforming underutilised spaces in Boronia's town centre**

Transforming underutilised spaces will address perceptions of community safety and unlock additional opportunities for Boronia.

Safety remains an ongoing area of concern for the community. These concerns are in part due to Boronia's layout, which features many arcades and older, less-frequented community spaces.

The Board recommends working with the community and its leaders to understand which underutilised spaces across Boronia would benefit from a transformation. These could include multipurpose spaces and unused retail spaces.

As part of this process, hosting regular and well-organised events that showcase Boronia will boost perceptions of community safety.

### **Priority action: Develop and fund an annual calendar of events to dispel safety concerns and drive local activity**

The Board recommends leveraging the success of previously funded events such as the Big Flix Festival to fund an annual program of events.

Events will use spaces that may have previously been perceived as unsafe, such as arcades and alleyways – this would promote Boronia's town centre as a renewed environment that is safe, accessible and appropriate for all weather conditions.

An annual calendar of events will also provide opportunities for young volunteers, who are calling for ways to engage with their community.

Events will be driven by local traders and their operations, to create a pathway to long-term sustainability.

### **Priority action: Develop a marketing and communication strategy to support the beautification of Boronia**

The Board recommends developing a strategy to communicate Boronia's unique identity, aligning with its existing 'Beautify Boronia' investments.

The strategy will outline how Boronia's unique identity can be communicated with stakeholders, and which physical and digital outcomes support a beautified Boronia.

This investment in a marketing and communication strategy will also boost the community's perception of safety.

## **Promote a feeling of safety and welcome by boosting access to the town centre for people of all abilities**

The Board recommends engaging further with the police to demonstrate its ongoing commitment to safety.

Importantly, this also means creating an environment that is well lit and accessible.

Increased amenities, including additional mental health and family violence support, will ensure the community has access to the services they need to thrive.

### **Priority action: Extend the Community Breakfast Program and incorporate additional social support services**

The Community Breakfast Program is as an entry point to the service system for members of Boronia's community who are experiencing disadvantage.

Given the program's positive impact on the community, the Board recommends continuing to fund it, and extending it to include additional services and referral programs for those facing homelessness.

This expansion of pathways to support is critical given that members of the Boronia community need to travel to neighbouring suburbs to access services.

The program could expand support services focussed on further developing access to emergency housing, drug and alcohol supports and employment pathways.

### **Priority action: Fund further wayfinding initiatives across Boronia and its businesses**

The Board recommends seeking funding to extend the reach of existing wayfinding initiatives across Boronia.

The Board's previous work on wayfinding and branding has improved community wayfinding in Boronia. However, additional development is still needed to make it easier to find key sites such as local schools, EACH, Boronia railway station and the legal centre.

The next phase of wayfinding initiatives will take a slightly different approach to the original project, with an emphasis on encouraging locals to get to know their community and the locations that make it unique to them.

This project will engage with local traders and community members to understand what wayfinding would be helpful to them and to promote safety.

## **Identify and enhance places within the town centre that can be the focal point for a civic heart, such as the train station**

The Board's previous façade revitalisation project has improved the town centre, but there is still more to do to boost the perception that Boronia is 'open for business'.

The Board recommends continuing this work to enhance identified places within the civic heart, particularly Boronia railway station.

Having a civic focal point will provide confidence for current businesses and attract future businesses to Boronia as a renewed community.

Enhanced community facilities and public transport infrastructure are crucial to encouraging the community to visit Boronia's civic heart.



BORONIA  
**Suburban  
Revitalisation**

