



City of
KINGSTON

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Advocacy Strategy 2023–2026



Acknowledgment of Country

The City of Kingston proudly acknowledges the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land, and we pay our respect to their Elders, past and present and emerging.

Council acknowledges the Bunurong's continuing relationship to the land and waterways and respects that their connection and spiritual identity is maintained through ancient ceremonies, songlines, dance, art and living culture.

Council pays tribute to the invaluable contributions of the Bunurong and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island elders who have guided and continue to guide the work we do.



Introduction

This document sets out the City of Kingston’s overarching advocacy strategy.

In the preparation of this document a large amount of research was undertaken to identify industry best practice, key issues and opportunities in the space, and our unique local strengths and challenges.

Research included:

- Workshop with Councillors
- Discussions with senior government advisors and lobbyists
- Benchmarking with other councils
- Internal workshops and discussions across the organisation.

The strategy focuses on positioning Kingston to deliver on our advocacy priorities by:

- **strengthening our reputation as a professional and effective partner with all levels of government**
- **developing the organisation’s internal advocacy capacity**
- **clearly targeting our activities for maximum impact and results.**

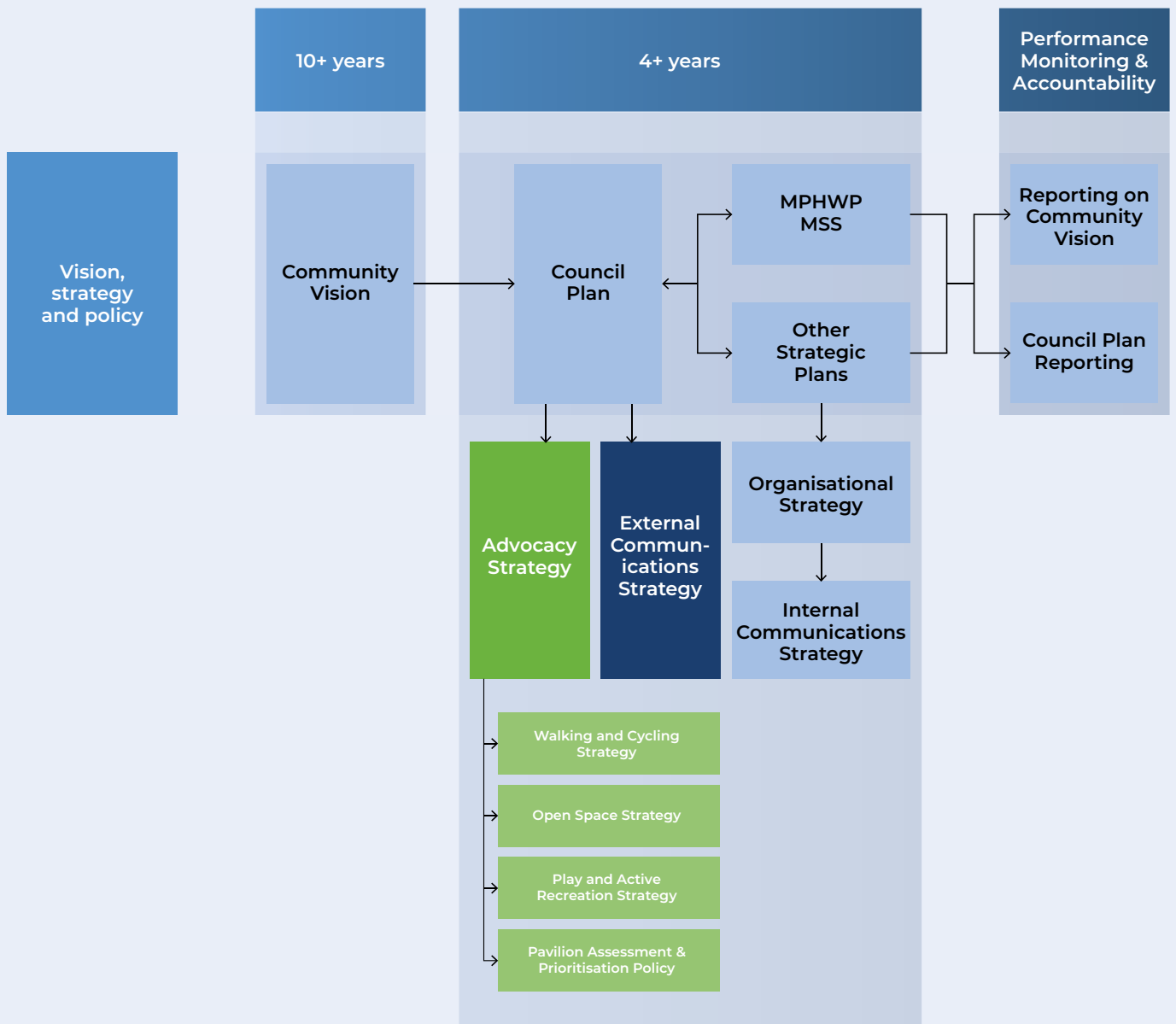
The strategy has been designed to run until the end of the current Victorian Government term, and moving forward will be revised within the first year of each new Council term (in-line with the External Communications Strategy) to ensure continued align with the priorities of Council.





Strategic Alignment

Kingston’s advocacy is driven by our Community Vision and Council Plan.



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Our Purpose and Principles

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Purpose Statement

To seek positive outcomes for Kingston by speaking up for our community's needs.

To be a respected voice that influences decisions made by Governments (and others) to achieve our Council and Community vision for Kingston.

Principles



We use evidence to support our arguments for positive change

We rely on research, data, and personal experience to present credible arguments to support community needs.



We focus on achievable outcomes

We focus on achieving tangible results that positively impact the community.



We strive for improvement

We regularly assess effectiveness of initiatives and embrace a culture of process improvement and learning.



We foster collaboration and strategic partnerships

We seek to build constructive relationships, internally and externally, to achieve shared goals and achieve greater influence.



We listen and engage with our community

We actively engage our community in identifying opportunities and delivering outcomes.



We embrace transparency

We openly communicate our goals and progress to build community trust, understanding and participation.



We build a strong future

We align all efforts with our Council Plan and Community Vision, striving for improvements that will serve our community not only today but for years to come.



We strengthen our reputation

We ensure our efforts and interactions continue to develop Kingston's reputation as a highly effective organisation and strong advocate for our community.

Positioning Kingston

While remaining flexible and responsive, Kingston will plan its advocacy to align with broader state and federal timelines.

Key Election Dates

Federal Election

3 August 2024 – 24 May 2025

Local Government Elections

October 2024

Victorian State Election

28 November 2026

Victorian Annual Budget Submissions Cycle

VIC Budget Submissions

September to late October

Kingston Finalises State Budget Proposals

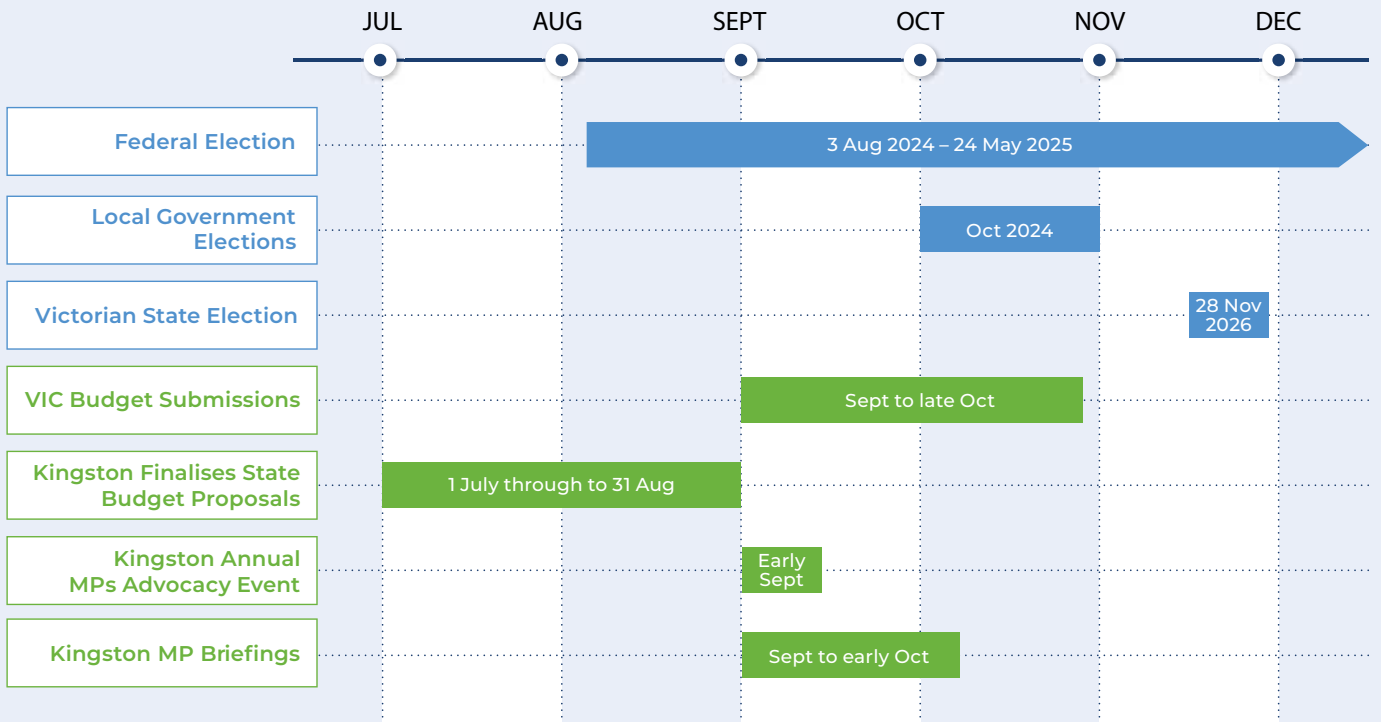
1 July through to 31 August

Kingston Annual MPs Advocacy Event

Early September

Kingston MP Briefings

September to early October





Victorian Government Priorities

We will remain responsive to changing Victorian Government priorities, with current focus centred on:

Clearing the Decks

The 2023 Budget showcases a commitment to reduce spending and fulfill existing projects. New commitments will be limited.

Delivering Victoria's Big Build

Despite financial constraints, ample funding exists for major infrastructure, transport programs, and local development.

Housing Victoria

The Government has pledged substantial housing initiatives still pending. There's a firm commitment to housing projects, legislative reforms, and investing in affordable, high-density living.

Climate Action

The Labor government has revived the SEC and set high-reaching renewable goals. These targets, along with other sustainability measures, need significant investment and collaboration between public and private sectors.

Early Education

The government's recent introduction of free three and four-year-old Kindergarten requires matching funds with available spots. There's a strong short-term focus on early education infrastructure.

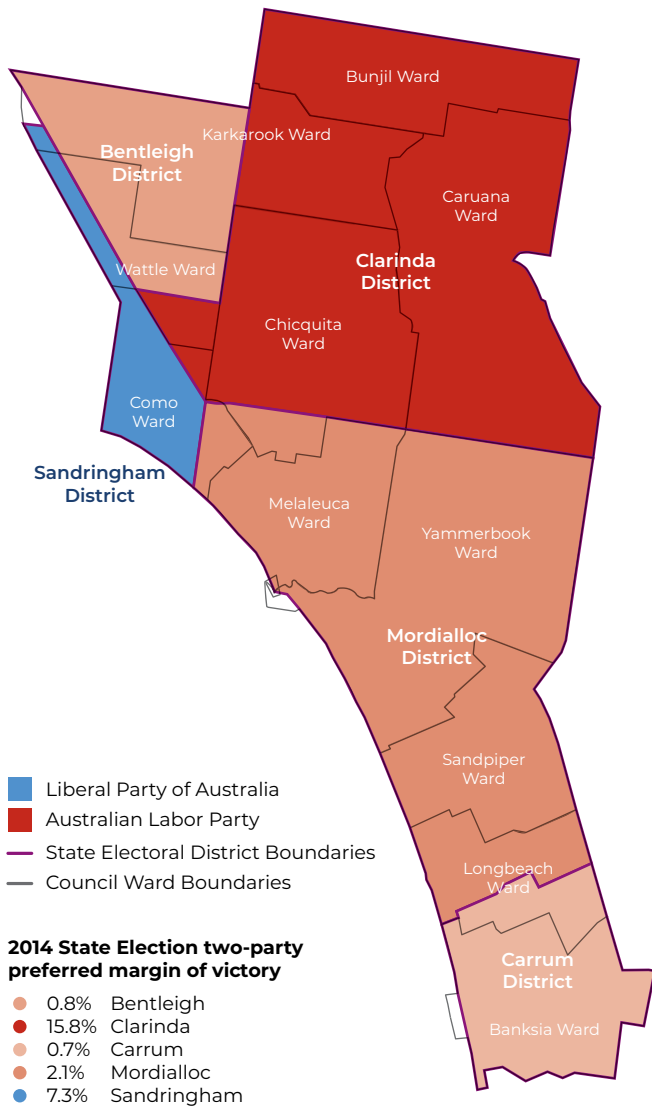
Women's Health and Mental Health

While major health infrastructure investments have decelerated, there's a renewed emphasis on legislative reforms for women's health and mental health. Commitments also extend to program investments and local infrastructure.

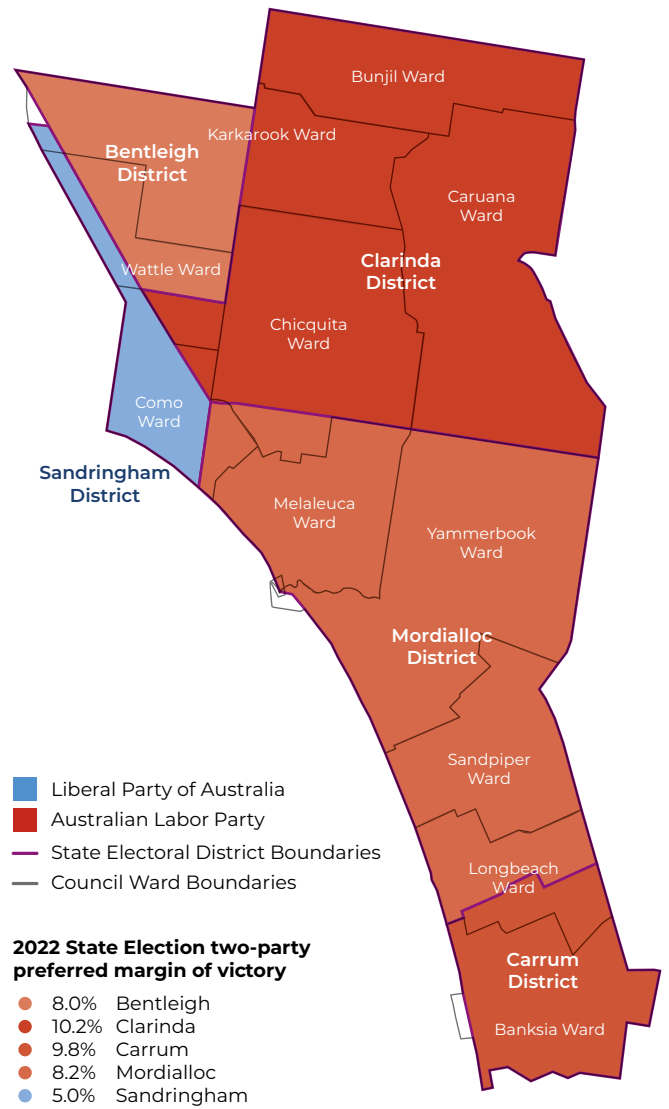


Electoral Analysis

2014 State Election



2022 State Election



For full details see Electoral Analysis in Appendix A.

Targeting our Advocacy

With Kingston's state seats no longer considered 'marginal', and budget constraints facing all levels of government, Kingston will seek to target advocacy efforts and resources for maximum impact and alignment.



Stronger Together

We will look to develop strong collaborative partnerships with a broad range of stakeholders that align with our advocacy principles, shared outcomes and commitments to sustainability, equity and inclusion.

Local Government Sector

Combine forces on overarching issues.

Regional Organisations

Highlight unique geographic challenges and opportunities.

Campaign Partners

Take Action on state and national issues.

Government Representatives

Influence decisions across all government levels.

Community Groups

Harness local enthusiasm to bolster our advocacy.

We aim to transform stakeholder relationships into authentic partnerships, grounded in mutual objectives and founded on the principles of best practice communication.

Early & Consistent Engagement

We engage our partners from the beginning and maintain collaboration throughout our projects to benefit from their insights, allow genuine co-design of campaigns and remain responsive as changes occur.

Two-Way Dialogue

We believe in an open dialogue with our partners, we actively listen and respond, valuing our partners’ feedback and insights.

Multi-Faceted Communication

We employ a range of formal and informal communication techniques including formal meetings between elected officials, direct Officer-to-Officer discussions, soft lobbying for personal, collaborative approaches, and hard lobbying methods featuring public campaigning.





Action Matrix

In developing Kingston's advocacy, we'll take actions that seek to:



Build Organisational Capacity

Strengthen our capability to ensure a co-ordinated approach to advocacy and maximise grant opportunities.

(15 identified actions)



Develop Partnerships

Create genuine, collaborative partnerships for more profound and lasting impact.

(7 actions)



Target Activities

Prioritise initiatives that align with our key strategic objectives.

(12 actions)



Improve Transparency

Foster a culture of open dialogue and clear communication across the organisation and with key partners.




(10 actions)

Tailoring our campaigns

Advocacy campaigns will be driven by Campaign Plans, tailored in scale and activities to meet the individual context of each campaign.

Further detail:

Template Campaign Plan and Scaling (appendix 1)

ACTIONS	 BUILD CAPACITY	 DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS	 TARGET ACTIVITIES	 IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY
Provide regularly updated Electorate-based Issues/ Projects/Opportunities briefs			✓	✓
Conduct regular Advocacy Project Reviews to ensure projects are responsive and well-planned	✓	✓	✓	✓
Brief Local MPs at least quarterly		✓	✓	✓
Create Internal Grant Application Best Practice Guide	✓		✓	
Deliver Advocacy-Focused CRM	✓		✓	✓
Develop Advocacy Campaign Templates	✓			
Develop Advocacy Plans for key projects with identified targets & actions		✓	✓	
Develop Advocacy 'Toolkit'	✓			
Develop Organisation-Wide Advocacy Contact List	✓			
Engage Community for 'Personal Stories' to Supplement Advocacy Proposals		✓	✓	
Establish internal Advocacy Working Group	✓			✓
Provide Annual Councillor & ELT Advocacy Training	✓			
Implement internal annual Victorian Budget Submissions Process to Define 'Asks'			✓	✓
Incorporate Advocacy Briefings into All key stakeholder Meetings	✓		✓	
Improve integration of MAV and ALGA Motions into Advocacy Activities	✓			✓
Integrate relevant data points into all advocacy projects			✓	
Integrate SEIFA Index into Advocacy Proposals			✓	
Map Local Community Groups	✓	✓	✓	
Organise Annual Council Advocacy Workshop	✓			✓
Deliver annual MPs Breakfast		✓		
Publish Quarterly and Annual Advocacy Reports				✓
Release Annual 'Working Together' Advocacy Bulletin for Local MPs and Ministers		✓		
Review and map Regional Voices for potential influence		✓		
Review grant funding schemes, and implement comprehensive grant tracking	✓		✓	✓
Review stakeholders & enhance partnership transition mapping		✓		
Schedule bi-annual Ministerial Meetings		✓		
Weekly Mayoral Advocacy Meetings	✓			✓



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