

GANNAWARRA *CONNECT*



GANNAWARRA
Shire Council

July-September 2024

IN THIS EDITION

From the Mayor	1
What's On	2
Immunisation sessions	2
Community News	2-5
Projects Update	6
Economic Development	7
Your Councillors	8
Council Meetings	8
Contacting Council	8

FROM THE MAYOR

With this being the last *Gannawarra Connect* Mayoral Message before Council's elections, I would like to thank all residents for supporting Council's initiatives during the past four years.



It has been a challenging period thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2022 floods and the impact of cost of living pressures, however we should be proud of where we live and what we can achieve when we work together.

I encourage all who are interested in representing their community to stand for Council when nominations open soon. Information regarding how you can do this is listed on page 3 of this edition of *Gannawarra Connect*.

Regards,
Mayor Ross Stanton

2024/2025 COUNCIL BUDGET ADOPTED

Thank you to all residents who had their say on Council's 2024/2025 Proposed Budget.

Adopted at Council's June 2024 Meeting, the 2024/2025 Budget features a significant investment in capital works, with many of these improvements made possible thanks to funding from the State and Federal Governments.

Key services Council provides to the community, such as our popular Children's services, libraries, waste management and recreational facilities, will also be supported thanks to the 2024/2025 Budget.

The 2024/2025 Budget complies with the State Government's Fair Go Rates System, which states that the total revenue raised through municipal rates cannot increase by more than 2.75 per cent compared to the previous year.

For more information regarding the 2024/2025 Budget, click on the Budget heading at www.gsc.vic.gov.au/documents.



COMMUNITY NEWS

WHAT'S ON

6 JULY

Murrabit Country Market

27 JULY

Kerang Community Market

28 JULY

Cohuna Farmers & Makers Market

3 AUGUST

Murrabit Country Market

10-11 AUGUST

Golden Rivers Artists workshop, Kerang

24 AUGUST

Kerang Community Market

25 AUGUST

Cohuna Farmers & Makers Market

7 SEPTEMBER

Murrabit Country Market

22 SEPTEMBER

Cohuna Farmers & Makers Market

28 SEPTEMBER

Kerang Community Market

5 OCTOBER

Murrabit Country Market

EVERY SATURDAY

Kerang and Cohuna parkruns

EVERY SATURDAY

Grow Collective Community Garden, Kerang

Event details can be found at

www.gsc.vic.gov.au/events

To add your event to Council's calendar of events, visit

www.gsc.vic.gov.au/events

NOTE: Event details were correct at time of publishing

JOIN THE WARM WINTER READ

There is still time to join the Gannawarra Library Service's Warm Winter Read.

This popular Public Libraries Victoria initiative encourages adults to read daily during winter.

People who register will be eligible for some amazing book-related prizes that will be awarded following the end of the program on 31 August.

For more information, click on the Events and Programs heading at www.gsc.vic.gov.au/libraries or visit your local Gannawarra Library Service branch.



IMMUNISATION SESSIONS BY APPOINTMENT

JULY 2024

Wednesday, 3 July

Kerang
(10.30am – 12 noon)

Wednesday, 17 July

Cohuna
(10.30am - 12 noon)
Kerang
(4pm - 5.30pm)

AUGUST 2024

Wednesday, 7 August

Kerang
(10.30am – 12 noon)

Wednesday, 21 August

Cohuna
(10.30am - 12 noon)
Kerang
(4pm - 5.30pm)

SEPTEMBER 2024

Wednesday, 4 September

Kerang
(10.30am – 12 noon)

Wednesday, 18 September

Cohuna
(10.30am - 12 noon)
Kerang
(4pm - 5.30pm)

NOTE: Bookings must be made prior to attending any of Council's immunisation sessions, which can be done by phoning (03) 5450 9333.

For more details, visit www.gsc.vic.gov.au/immunisation

Gannawarra Shire Council acknowledges the Barapa Barapa, Yorta Yorta and Wamba Wamba people as the traditional Owners of the land now known as Gannawarra.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge their rich culture and connection to Country.





JOIN OUR LIFEGUARD TEAM THIS SUMMER

Applications to join Gannawarra Shire Council team of Outdoor Pool Lifeguards for the 2024/25 swimming pool season will open soon.

This important team of people oversee operations at the Council-managed Cohuna and Kerang swimming pools, with both facilities open between mid-November and mid-March each year.

Applications are open to anyone aged 16 years and over, with Life Saving Victoria Lifeguard training, first aid training and accreditation provided free of charge.

For more information, visit www.gsc.vic.gov.au or follow Council on Facebook.

GET READY NOW FOR COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Gannawarra Shire residents and landowners will head to the polls this October to elect the next group of Councillors who will oversee Council for the next four years.

Seven Councillors will be elected, with the 2024 election the first ballot featuring Gannawarra Shire's unsubdivided structure.

Unlike our current structure, which saw voters elect candidates representing their ward across four separate ballots, the 2024 election will see voters take part in the one ballot process. This also means candidates will be standing for the entire municipality, not just their home district.

As with previous years, the Victorian Electoral Commission will manage the Gannawarra Shire Council election, with voting to be conducted via postal ballots. Details regarding when ballots will be distributed and returned will be announced soon.

For more information regarding the 2024 Gannawarra Shire Council elections, please visit www.gsc.vic.gov.au/election

I WANT TO STAND FOR COUNCIL

If you want to stand for Council, now is the time to begin the nomination process.

The steps required to nominate as a candidate are outlined at www.gsc.vic.gov.au/election. These include:

- Completing compulsory online Local Government Candidate Training.
- Attend the Municipal Association of Victoria's Stand for Council information session at Swan Hill, being held on Wednesday, 7 August.

Information when nominations open and close will be confirmed by the Victorian Electoral Commission soon. Once confirmed, these details will be published online at www.gsc.vic.gov.au/election

RATES NOTICES COMING

Ratepayers will receive their rates notices for 2024/25 in the mail or by email from late August.

Ratepayers may choose to pay their rates in full, with payment due by mid-February 2025.

The most popular option is by instalments, with the first instalment payment due by 30 September 2024.

Ratepayers who are experiencing financial hardship are encouraged to contact Council on (03) 5450 9333 as early as possible to request a payment plan.

3G NETWORK CLOSURE IMMINENT

Council continues to work with mobile phone providers to improve connectivity in readiness for the closure of the Telstra 3G (third generation) network.

Residents whose mobile phones are only 3G compliant are urged to upgrade their device to one that is 4G or 5G compliant as soon as possible, with Telstra's 3G network to close on 31 August 2024 and Optus' 3G network closing from September 2024. Vodafone has already shut down its 3G network, which occurred in January 2024.

Rural residents are requested to check their on-farm monitoring devices to ensure they are 4G or 5G compliant.

Businesses that provide eftpos for purchasing will also be impacted, with owners encouraged to speak to their bank to check that their devices are 4G or 5G compliant.

You can check if your device is affected by the closure of the 3G network by texting "3" to the number "3498".

For more information regarding the closure of the 3G network, visit the Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association website 3G closure website, located at www.3Gclosure.com.au, or contact your mobile phone service provider.

LIBRARY SERVICE'S COSY SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAM

Spaces are still available for five Gannawarra Library Service-organised activities occurring during the July school holidays.

The highlight of the two-week program is Teddy Bear Story Time sessions occurring at the Cohuna Library on Thursday, 4 July from 4pm and Kerang's Sir John Gorton Library on Wednesday, 10 July from 4pm.



Kerang's Sir John Gorton Library will also host three craft sessions during the two weeks - Porcelain mug decorating (Tuesday, 2 July, 10.30am and 2.30pm), finger knitting (Thursday, 11 July, 10.30am), and a free craft morning (Tuesday, 9 July, 10.30am).

Bookings for all sessions are essential, with all children participating to be accompanied by an adult.

For bookings or more information, click on the Events and Programs heading at www.gsc.vic.gov.au/libraries or phone (03) 5452 1546.

REMINDER TO DISPOSE OF YOUR WASTE CORRECTLY

Council has seen an increase in the number of reported incidents of the illegal dumping of waste throughout the municipality during the past year.



Disposing of household and other waste correctly not only ensures the safe removal of items, it also reduces the presence of materials that can impact our health, pollute our environment and threaten wildlife.

Residents and visitors can play their role in disposing waste correctly in the following ways:

- By placing the correct items in their kerbside waste (red) and recycling (yellow) bins for disposal.
- By taking waste and recycling items to any of Council's transfer stations, located at Cohuna, Kerang, Lalbert and Quambatook, for disposal. Locations and operating hours can be found by clicking on the Transfer Stations heading at www.gsc.vic.gov.au/waste

Anyone who sees what they suspect is illegal dumping can report it to Environment Protection Authority Victoria online at www.epa.vic.gov.au/report-pollution/reporting-pollution or by phoning 1300 372 842.

PRATT ROAD BRIDGE ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

Motorists who use the Pratt Road bridge to access the eastern side of Middle Lake are benefiting from recently completed work to widen the access to the bridge.



The works resulted from residents' concerns regarding the ability for larger vehicles to access the bridge that spans the connection between Reedy and Middle lakes.

As part of the completed works, the approaches to either side of the bridge were widened.

Council thanks residents for their advocacy for these improvements and looks forward to seeing motorists benefit from these works

FLOOD-DAMAGED ROAD REPAIRS TO RESUME

Efforts to repair roads damaged by the 2022 floods will soon resume after the State Government confirmed it will provide funding under joint Commonwealth and State Government funded Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

Three of the 12 road repair packages have received approval to proceed, enabling much-needed repairs to roads across the municipality. Locations include:

- Roads east of Kerang damaged by the flooding of Pyramid Creek.
- Roads within Koondrook damaged by the erection of flood protection levees.
- Roads between Koondrook and Murrabit.

Harril Pty Ltd, Northern Constructions Pty Ltd and RECivil Pty Ltd were awarded tenders in September 2023 to complete these works.

Council continues to work with the State Government in relation to the approval and funding process for the remaining road repair packages. This is unfortunately not a Gannawarra Shire Council-specific issue, with other municipalities impacted by the 2022 floods managing similar funding arrangement concerns.

Once works are ready to commence, regular updates will be provided informing of any disruption to the road and drainage networks in advance, whilst ensuring appropriate traffic management is in place to minimise disruptions.



GANNAWARRA FLOOD REFLECTIONS EXHIBITION

Residents and visitors have made the most of the Gannawarra Flood Reflections Exhibition's tour of the municipality.

Featuring 100 images taken by residents during the 2022 floods, the exhibition was on display at Murrabit during May and at Cohuna throughout June.

Council staff are working with community representatives in relation to where the exhibition will be on display during the second half of the year. Once confirmed, details regarding exhibition locations will be promoted via Council's website, Facebook page and *Gannawarra News*.

The exhibition is funded by the Victorian and Commonwealth governments under the Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) as part of the Gannawarra Community Flood Recovery Program.

PROJECTS *UPDATE*

KERANG CBD REDEVELOPMENT NEARING COMPLETION

The final touches are being completed as part of Stages 3 and 4 of the Kerang CBD Redevelopment.

This \$2.136 million project, fully funded by the Federal Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program, has built on improvements completed to Kerang's central business district completed during the past seven years.

During the past two months new paving, garden beds and street furniture have been installed along Wellington Street between Nolan and Victoria streets. Similar work along Fitzroy Street between Scoresby and Wellington streets will be completed by early July.

These works have also enhanced historic monuments or markers along these sections of road, with the highlight being the installation of new lighting around the Karlie McDonald Memorial Clock.

For more information regarding the Kerang CBD Redevelopment, please visit www.gsc.vic.gov.au/KerangCBD



THE GLASSHOUSE @ THE GANNAWARRA WORKS BEGIN

Construction of *The Glasshouse @ The Gannawarra* is underway.

To be incorporated into Kerang's Sir John Gorton Library, this exciting project will feature a public meeting space that will cater for gatherings seeking a venue larger than current buildings, including local senior citizens centres and community hall supper rooms, but smaller than the Cohuna and Kerang memorial halls. This space will also incorporate technology required for modern meetings, conferences and training sessions.

The Glasshouse @ The Gannawarra will also support the Gannawarra Library Service to plan and deliver youth programs including movie making, sound and music recording.

As part of initial works, solar arrays located west of the library have been removed, enabling drainage and foundation development to occur.

Access to sections of the library will be impacted whilst construction occurs, with updates regarding restrictions to be promoted via Council's website, Facebook page and *Gannawarra News*.

This \$3.07 million project is supported by \$1.5 million contribution from the State Government's Living Libraries Infrastructure Program and \$718,000 from the Federal Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program.

For more information regarding *The Glasshouse @ The Gannawarra*, please visit www.gsc.vic.gov.au/glasshouse



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

HOLIDAY PARK PREPARES FOR WORKER ACCOMMODATION INFLUX

Kerang Holiday Park owners, Tony and Dieu Height have been preparing for the influx of development earmarked for the Gannawarra.

The Heights took over the business in 2021 and have already seen substantial growth.

“We see the potential growth and we are keen to take advantage of the opportunities to grow our business” Tony said.

“Kerang is going through a transformation with some exciting projects that we think will be great for the local economy.”

The Heights have tapped into the growing need for worker accommodation in the area, led by numerous major projects. This include construction of British Solar Renewables (BSR) Engineering, Procurement and Commissioning (EPC)’s Kerang Solar Plant, located at the corner of Old Echuca Road and the Murray Valley Highway.

“The staff involved in the BSR project are spending locally, purchasing their workwear and boots locally and alternating purchases between the two supermarkets,” Tony said.

“On weekends their families are coming to stay in Kerang and they are travelling around and visiting the local towns, attending events and spending at the local hospitality businesses.”

The Heights are also developing strong working relationships with staff involved with VNI West and the VHM Goschen Mineral Sands Project, which will both require significant worker accommodation options.



ABOVE: BSR EPC Health, Safety and Environment Advisor, Tony Jones and Kerang Holiday Park owner, Dieu Height outside the BSR EPC Kerang Solar Plant.

FUNDING SECURED TO DEVELOP KOONDROOK’S LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Koondrook will have the opportunity to transform its economy through the development of the Koondrook Local Development Strategy.

Through the Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action’s Community Development Fund and the forestry transition program, Koondrook has received \$500,000 to develop a Local Development Strategy (LDS), which will support the community to transition away from the dependence on the native forest timber industry and towards new and sustainable industries.

The funding will be used to employ a consultant over a two-year period to support community engagement activities, deliver a context analysis report and to prepare the final LDS for Koondrook and district. The funding will also support the delivery of business cases for any major projects identified in the plan to ensure the projects will be development ready.

“We see this as a real opportunity to plan the economic future of Koondrook and already there are a number of major projects in the pipeline that will allow us to diversify the economy,” Koondrook Development Committee chairperson, Tom Chick said.

The Koondrook LDS will require substantial community consultation during its development phase, with a local project group to be established to oversee the activities and ensure strong community representation across the process. There will be ample opportunity for community members to be involved and to contribute ideas towards the strategy.

COUNCIL INFORMATION

YOUR COUNCILLORS AVOCA WARD



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MURRAY WARD



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YARRAN WARD



Cr Keith Link
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Cr Garner Smith
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COUNCIL MEETING DETAILS

The **July 2024 Meeting of Council** will be held on Wednesday, 17 July at the Koondrook Senior Citizens Centre (2 Station Street) at 6pm.

The **August 2024 Meeting of Council** will be held on Wednesday, 21 August at the Kerang Senior Citizens Centre (169 Boundary Street) at 6pm.

The **September 2024 Meeting of Council** is currently scheduled to be held on Wednesday, 18 September at the Kerang Senior Citizens Centre (169 Boundary Street) at 6pm.

Changes to meeting details and times will be promoted via *Gannawarra News* and Council's Facebook page.

Agendas for Meetings of Council are available online at www.gsc.vic.gov.au/meetings two days prior to each meeting.

All Council Meetings are recorded, with a recording available to view 24 hours after the meeting at www.gsc.vic.gov.au/meetings.

Residents can submit up to two questions per person per meeting for consideration, which can be done by completing a form online at www.gsc.vic.gov.au/questiontime by 5pm the day prior to the Council Meeting. This form is also available from the Cohuna and Kerang Customer Service Centres.

CONTACTING COUNCIL

IN PERSON

Cohuna Customer Service Centre
21-23 King Edward Street
Kerang Customer Service Centre
47 Victoria Street

BY PHONE

(03) 5450 9333 during business hours

BY EMAIL

council@gsc.vic.gov.au

BY MAIL

PO Box 287
Kerang VIC 3579

ONLINE

Lodge a request at www.gsc.vic.gov.au/request

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook – www.facebook.com/gannawarra
X (Twitter) – www.twitter.com/GannawarraShire