

# Greetings

Welcome to the Gannawarra - Victoria's Nature Based Tourism Destination.

The Gannawarra is a must visit destination with rivers, lakes, wetlands and red gum forests, rich in Indigenous culture, combining to form authentic nature based experiences.

Camp beneath the stars on the banks of the Murray River, enjoy watersports on Kerang Lakes, explore the tracks and trails of Gunbower National Park or reconnect with nature at Koondrook Retreat.

Whether you want to unwind and relax, indulge or explore the great outdoors, the Gannawarra offers a diverse range of activities and experiences to suit.

We invite you to enjoy the change of pace and the opportunity to get... close to nature.



# Our Towns

Our diverse region is abundant with natural features interwoven by regional towns and rural villages.

The towns across the Gannawarra each offer their own unique character and spirit - from the smaller towns of Leitchville, Murrabit, Quambatook, Lalbert, Lake Charm and Mystic Park to the larger centres of Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook.

We invite you to indulge in great food, coffee and international cuisines, browse our specialty stores and weekend markets, book an experience with a local tourism operator or pamper yourself at our beauty salons.

Drop into the Gateway to Gannawarra Visitor Centre or visit [www.thegannawarra.com.au](http://www.thegannawarra.com.au) to plan your getaway!



@thegannawarra

Tag us in your snaps #thegannawarra

# Visitor Information

## Gateway to Gannawarra Visitor Centre

Located on the banks of the Gunbower Creek in Cohuna is a modern information centre with all the material required to make a visitors experience memorable.

Features include;

- Visitor information
- Maps and brochures
- Local products
- Gifts and hampers
- Free mountain bike and fishing rod hire
- Aboriginal Artefacts 'Keeping Place'
- Agriculture, business and lifestyle displays
- Public Amenities



### Visit the Gateway to Gannawarra Visitor Centre

90 King George Street, Cohuna VIC  
Open Monday - Friday 9am to 5pm weekdays and 10am - 1pm weekends and public holidays.  
(Closed on special public holidays).  
Phone: 03 5456 2047.

To find out more about the Gannawarra visit [www.thegannawarra.com.au](http://www.thegannawarra.com.au)

## Sir John Gorton Library

Visit Sir John Gorton Library, a great local resource providing free WiFi, computers with internet access and printing facilities, visitor information, family history research and exhibition displays.

### Visit the Sir John Gorton Library

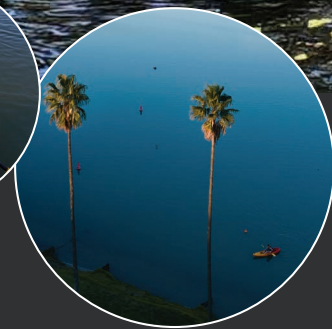
Cnr Shadforth Street and Murray Valley Hwy, Kerang VIC  
Open Monday to Friday 10am - 5pm and Saturday 10am - 12noon. (Closed public holidays).  
Phone: 03 5452 1546.

**Cover: Murray River Adventures, Gunbower Island.**

*This brochure was published in March 2023. The publishers are not liable for any injury, damage or loss arising from the use of information and services featured in this brochure. Always take caution in and around waterways.*

the Gannawarra

# Kayak and Canoe guide



the Gannawarra  
Victoria's Nature Based Tourism Destination



# Kayak and Canoe

From the open waters of the Kerang Lakes, to the discrete natural lagoons of Gunbower Island, the Gannawarra offers many unique paddling options for kayaking and stand-up paddleboarding adventures.

The many wetlands of the Gannawarra are diverse and provide a range of authentic experiences. Some of the wetlands are opportunistic and may only be accessible after heavy rainfall events, flooding or environmental water flows.

This brochure features information on our kayak and canoe trails, as well as things to see and do in the Gannawarra region. Further information and maps can be accessed via the Gateway to Gannawarra Visitor Centre in Cohuna.

## Paddle Safety

When visiting the forest, it's important to be prepared. The following suggestions are provided to ensure a safe and pleasurable experience.

- Always wear a life jacket or buoyancy vest.
- Ensure that your vessel is free of leaks and in good condition.
- Bring water and snacks.
- Always carry a first aid kit with you when kayaking.
- When launching your vessel make sure there is a safe entry and exit point.
- Always check the current weather forecast and warnings before entering waters.
- Ensure that the ability of all kayakers and canoers is at the correct level for the journey.
- Let someone know when and where you plan to begin and end your journey.
- Take a GPS and/or mobile phone (although phone reception may be limited in parts of the region).
- Consider taking a guided-paddle with an experienced kayaking company.
- River red gums can drop their branches without warning, be careful when kayaking and remember to leave your vehicle parked in a safe spot.
- Please be aware duck hunting may occur between March and June in some waterways.

Thank you to Murray River Adventures for their assistance in providing safety information.



## Kayak and Canoe Hire

### Murray River Adventures

Murray River Adventures is the southern base of Sydney Harbour Kayaks providing kayaking eco-experiences throughout the waterways of the Gannawarra, guided by local experts.

Murray River Adventures also offer 'take-away' kayak and canoe rental out of Cohuna for exploring, camping, fishing or bird-watching. Minimum rental is 24 hours.

To book visit [www.murrayriver.tours](http://www.murrayriver.tours), call 0413 005 787 or email [murrayriver@sydneyharbourkayaks.com.au](mailto:murrayriver@sydneyharbourkayaks.com.au)



## Accommodation and Camping

The Gannawarra offers many waterfront accommodation options - perfect for your paddling holiday.

Book a unique glamping experience at Koondrook Retreat and enjoy unspoiled views of the creek and forest from your self contained safari tent. Launch your kayak from the retreat and paddle upstream along the Gunbower Creek, or downstream into the Murray River.

Caravan parks along Lake Charm, Kangaroo Lake and Gunbower Creek offer cabin, RV and relaxed camping options on the water's edge. RV free camping sites and dump points are also located across the Gannawarra for the self-contained caravan or motorhome.

Camping is extremely popular throughout the region and offers a variety of natural canvases. Gunbower Island and sections along the Murray River and Gunbower Creek boast plenty of native bushland for secluded camping (no facilities).

Whatever your style, the Gannawarra offers accommodation options to suit, with the choice of modern apartments overlooking the Murray River, cosy motels close to the centre of town or family friendly Airbnb's.

To find the perfect accommodation for your stay in the Gannawarra scan the QR code or visit [www.thegannawarra.com.au](http://www.thegannawarra.com.au)



# Things to do

- Visit **Koondrook**, a historic Murray River village. The waterfront incorporates the international award-winning Koondrook Wharf, meticulously restored Goods Shed, historic Arbuthnot Sawmills, Redgum Statue River Walk and all abilities playground.
- Wander across the red gum footbridge along the **Goanna Walking Track** in Koondrook; a 3.2km walking loop through the Gunbower Forest via historic Condidorio's Bridge.
- Stroll the **Koondrook Barham Redgum Statue River Walk** along the Murray River and discover magnificent red gum sculptures, carved by chainsaw.
- Follow **Spences Bridge Forest Drive** through the Gunbower State Forest. The narrated CD is available to purchase from Gateway to Gannawarra Visitor Centre for just \$5. Alternatively you can listen free via Soundcloud.
- Enjoy a swim or build sandcastles along the sandy shores of **Cohuna Beach at Apex Park**. The park also features an all abilities adventure playground, impressive skate park and modern barbecue facilities.
- Experience **Kow Swamp**, a large natural wetland south of Leitchville. Kow Swamp is rich in indigenous history and is a great place for fishing, kayaking and picnicking.
- Explore **Kerang Regional Park** via the Loddon River Walk. The popular riverside walk offers natural wetlands and vibrant birdlife.
- Camp, swim, fish, kayak or simply relax on the sandy shores of **Lake Meran**, a picturesque freshwater lake with red gum surrounds.
- Visit the **Ibis Rookery** at Middle Reedy Lake - the largest rookery in the Southern Hemisphere.
- Join the hundreds of eager shoppers on the first Saturday of each month at the **Murrabit Country Market**, one of Victoria's longest running markets. You can also visit **Kerang Community Market** (4th Saturday of each month) and **Cohuna Farmers Market** (4th Sunday of each month).
- Experience **Quambatook Silo Cinema**, a unique community run cinema screening great Aussie films on old grain silos.
- **Factory and Field Waffles** is a must visit, attracting visitors from afar with its indulgent food and coffee.

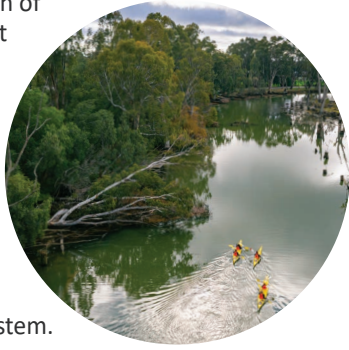
For more things to do... pick up a copy of the Gannawarra Visitor Guide or visit [www.thegannawarra.com.au](http://www.thegannawarra.com.au)



# Our Waterways

## Gunbower Creek

Gunbower Creek is an anabranch of the Murray River that offtakes at Torrumbarry and re-enters at Koondrook. It forms the western boundary of Gunbower Island and is environmentally significant for fish breeding and supplying water to wetlands such as Reedy Lagoon. It is also an important natural carrier in the Torrumbarry Irrigation System.



The creek's high water levels and gentle banks make it an attractive destination for camping with ready access to the water for fishing and kayaking. Abundant wildlife including kangaroos, reptiles, emus, water birds and the elusive platypus can be found along the creek.

## Gunbower Island Canoe Trail

Victoria's premier canoe location. Take in the waters of Safe's Lagoon which forms part of the 5km Canoe Trail, an easy two hour paddle. While paddling, see birds nesting in tree hollows, hear their calls and see the myriad of creatures living among the reeds and waters. The route to the canoe trail is signposted through the forest from Koondrook and offers a kayak launch for easy access into the creek. Maps and brochures are available from the Gateway to Gannawarra Visitor Centre or online.



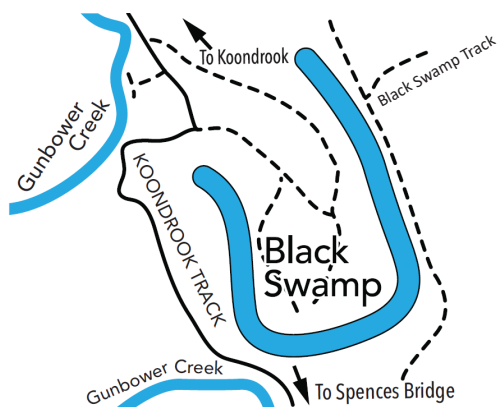
## The Koondrook Track

The Koondrook Track between Koondrook Weir and Spences Bridge follows the Gunbower Creek within Gunbower State Forest. There are many clearings along the track that are suitable to launch your craft. From these points you can explore the waterways of the creek and enjoy the wildlife and waterbirds' remarkable environment. It's possible to paddle many kilometres or just a short distance round trip, whatever suits your fitness level or travel plans.

## Black Swamp, Gunbower Island

The approximate 4.5km paddle (round trip) of Black Swamp is sure to provide a memorable experience. It is maintained as a permanent wetland either through natural or environmental water and considered a high-value wetland as it provides suitable feeding, breeding and refuge habitat for waterbirds. Access the swamp from Koondrook Track.

*Note: Variable water levels - confirm suitability with Gateway to Gannawarra Visitor Centre.*

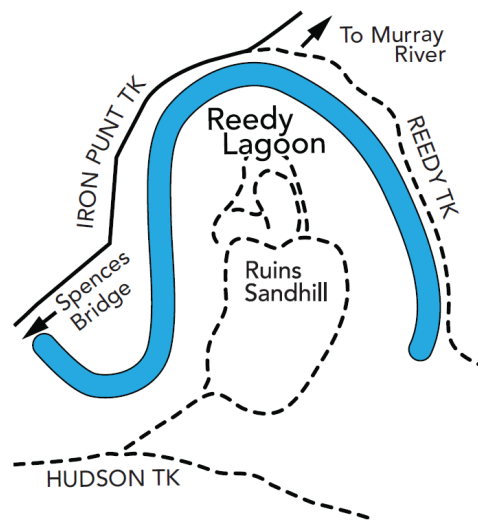


*We acknowledge the Barapa Barapa, Yorta Yorta and Wamba Wamba people as the Traditional Owners of the Gannawarra. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge their rich culture and connection to Country.*

## Reedy Lagoon, Gunbower Island

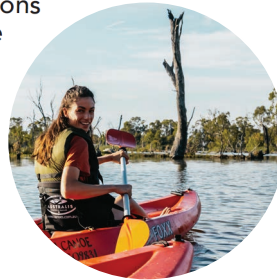
The jewel of Gunbower Island, Reedy Lagoon is a wetland accessed from Spences Bridge Road and from a small track off Hudson Track. The 5km paddle (round trip) is a haven for a myriad of insects, reptiles, amphibians and many bird species nesting and feeding in the rich water eco system.

*Note: Variable water levels - confirm suitability with Gateway to Gannawarra Visitor Centre.*



## Cohuna Lagoon

Launch from the sandy banks of Cohuna Beach in Apex Park and paddle past the holiday park and into Cohuna Lagoon. This easily accessible paddle through the old forest area which filters out beyond the Gunbower Creek's main channel is just under 4km (round trip) and is rich with birdlife and beautiful scenery. Paddlers may continue upstream to Daltons' Bridge (keeping to the south edge of the creek) but be aware of boats operating in the creek around Cohuna Ski Run and boat ramp.



## Murray River

The Murray River provides many opportunities for paddling. It's red gum forests support many native animals including emus, kangaroos and a range of birds.

Launch at boat ramps located in Gunbower Forest, Koondrook and Murrabit and decide on a paddle distance that suits your time and fitness level.

Murray River access maps are available at the Gateway to Gannawarra Visitor Centre and are a valuable resource for planning your trip.



## Kow Swamp

Located south of Leitchville, Kow Swamp is a large natural wetland and is an important water storage in the Torrumbarry Irrigation System. It is a significant bird breeding and fishing location and is rich in Aboriginal history. Lions Park, located on the eastern shore of Kow Swamp, is suited for kayaking, offering great photo opportunities and stunning sunset views.

## Loddon River

The Loddon River is an important tributary of the Murray River, with a catchment area of almost 7 per cent of Victoria and a total length of 360km. In times of flood, flows are diverted into the Kerang Lakes system.

The Loddon River supports a number of threatened flora species, including the Umbrella Wattle, Cane Grass and Reade's Daisy. Threatened fauna along the river include the Great Egret, Intermediate Egret, Australasian Shoveller and White-bellied Sea Eagle.

Access the river from the kayak launch within Kerang Regional Park. The park is accessible for vehicles from the western end of Wyndham or North streets, Kerang. Kerang Regional Park also offers the Loddon River Walk and cycling track which meanders through the relaxed woodland setting adjacent to the river.



## Kerang Lakes

The Kerang Lakes comprises of 23 named lakes, marshes and swamps on the lower reaches of the Avoca and Loddon rivers. The lakes are recognised as wetlands of international significance under the Ramsar Convention, and provide important feeding and breeding grounds for a large number of local and migratory waterbirds.

**Kangaroo Lake** (984 hectares) and **Lake Charm** (520 hectares) are key destinations with locals and visitors alike for watersports, swimming, fishing, kayaking and birdwatching year round. Both freshwater lakes are held at a constant level as part of the Torrumbarry irrigation water supply system.

*Take caution when power boats are operating on the lakes.*

**Lake Meran**, located on the northern edge of Leaghur Forest, is a picturesque freshwater lake subject to seasonal fluctuations. The white sandy shores of Lake Meran provide easy kayak access.



**The Reedy Lake system** includes two permanent freshwater lakes suitable for kayaking, Reedy Lake (182 hectares) and Middle Reedy Lake (195 hectares). Middle Reedy Lake holds the highest environmental value supporting the renowned ibis rookery and features high quality native vegetation and many waterbirds including large Ibis and Royal Spoonbill.

An 8km paddle launching and finishing at Apex Park on Reedy Lake can be undertaken all year round. At the north end of Reedy Lake the channel links into Middle Lake to an abundant bird breeding sanctuary. The shallower nature of Middle Lake and dead trees within the water is ideally suited to kayaking.

**Racecourse Lake** (235 hectares) is held at a constant level and maintained for irrigation water storage. Trees have died within the wetland bed and Cumbungi and Willow trees have spread around the shore of the wetland. This lake is suitable for paddling all year round.

**Cullens Lake** is a large ephemeral lake (632 hectares). Another Ramsar listed wetland, it has very high environmental value and provides a valuable feeding and resting area for many waterbirds. Recent flood events provided healthy numbers of the endangered Australasian Bittern. Kayak when water level permits.

**Lake Bael Bael** is a large freshwater lake (646 hectares), part of the Avoca Marshes that fills from the Avoca River in times of flood, holding around 10,000 megalitres. It is a Ramsar-listed wetland and is an important breeding and feeding site for waterbirds. When water level permits, the lake is host to a spectacular array of birdlife. A 9km paddle is possible (at the extremity).

**First Marsh** (780 hectares) is an intermittent freshwater lake in the Avoca floodplain. Wedge-tail Eagles and White-bellied Sea Eagles nests can be seen throughout. **Second Marsh** (233 hectares) and **Third Marsh** (946 hectares) are deep freshwater marshes which fill intermittently from the Avoca River floodwater via First Marsh and provide important breeding and feeding areas for waterbirds. All three of the marshes are Ramsar-listed wetlands with very high environmental values.

## Avoca River

The Avoca River system has the most variable flow of all the Victorian rivers in the Murray-Darling Basin and ceases to run during dry years. In times of high flow, the waters of the Avoca River will flow into the Kerang Wetlands and Little Murray River.

*Accessible only after heavy rainfall events, flooding or environmental water flow.*