

GANNAWARRA *CONNECT*



November-December 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

From the Mayor	1
What's On	2
Immunisation sessions	2
Community News	2-3
Projects Update	4-5
Economic Development	6-7
Your Councillors	8
Council Meetings	8
Contacting Council	8

FROM THE MAYOR

With COVID-19 restrictions easing thanks to residents' commitment to receive the best available vaccine for them, now is the time to support our local businesses. Whether it is choosing to dine out or shopping locally this Christmas, every dollar spent in the Gannawarra will continue our recovery from the pandemic.



You may have also noticed numerous projects underway throughout the Gannawarra. Many of these projects are on track for completion by the end of the year.

Finally, with Christmas approaching, I hope all residents have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Like 2020, this year has provided numerous challenges for the Gannawarra, but I hope that 2022 will be a prosperous year that will see our community emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic united to make the Gannawarra a great place to live and work.

Regards,

Mayor Charlie Gillingham

PREPARE NOW FOR THE FIRE SEASON

Residents are encouraged to remove or reduce any potential fire risks from their property now in readiness for the coming Fire Danger Period.

With the 2021/22 Fire Danger Period to be declared in the coming weeks, residents are encouraged to act early and prepare for what is predicted to be another high fire danger season.

To assist with efforts, the Country Fire Authority website featuring activities Victorians can undertake now before the bushfire season. These resources can be downloaded at www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/how-to-prepare-your-property

Meanwhile, in the interest of community safety, Council staff will soon commence fire hazard inspections, focusing on vacant blocks and areas that surround dwellings throughout the Gannawarra.

For further information on how you can keep your family and community safe this fire season, please visit www.gsc.vic.gov.au/emergency



COMMUNITY NEWS

EXHIBIT AT THE SIR JOHN GORTON LIBRARY

Council welcomes all artists, groups or community organisations to submit an Expression of Interest to present your exhibition at Kerang's Sir John Gorton Library.

Exhibitions may consist of traditional or contemporary art forms, film, cultural heritage or community projects.

This is a place to celebrate, express and explore the diversity of arts and culture in the Gannawarra region.

To submit an Expression of Interest, please complete the form at www.gsc.vic.gov.au/CreativeGannawarra



SOCIAL MEALS RETURNS FOR CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

Council's popular Social Meals program will return this December, enabling residents to gather for Christmas celebrations.

Held at Cohuna, Kerang, Koondrook, Lalbert, Lake Charm, Leitchville, Macorna, Murrabit and Quambatook, attendees are able to socialise and enjoy a home-cooked two-course meal for just \$11.

Bookings are essential, which can be done by phoning (03) 5450 9333.



WHAT'S ON

6 NOVEMBER

Murrabit Country Market

28 NOVEMBER

Cohuna Farmers & Makers Market

4 DECEMBER

Murrabit Country Market

19 DECEMBER

Cohuna Farmers & Makers Market

26 DECEMBER

Kerang Turf Club Boxing Day meet

31 DECEMBER

New Year's Eve celebration, shire-wide

Event details can be found at

www.gsc.vic.gov.au/events

**events are subject to change pending COVID-19 restrictions*

To add your event to Council's website, visit www.gsc.vic.gov.au/add_your_event

IMMUNISATION SESSIONS

NOVEMBER 2021

Wednesday, 3 November

Kerang
(10.30am – 12 noon)

Wednesday, 17 November

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

DECEMBER 2021

Wednesday, 1 December

Kerang
(10.30am – 12 noon)

Wednesday, 15 December

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.

It is encouraged that only one parent/guardian attend with the child to be vaccinated. Anyone showing any of the symptoms of COVID-19, or those who are in isolation, should not attend.

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.



COMMUNITY NEWS

DO YOU KNOW A GREAT GANNAWARRA RESIDENT?

Nominations are now open for Gannawarra Shire Council's 2022 Australia Day Awards, which recognise the contribution residents make to their communities.

Presented annually as part of Australia Day celebrations, these awards recognise residents who make the Gannawarra a great place to live.

Nominations are sought for the following award categories:

- Citizen of the Year; and
- Young Citizen of the Year (for residents aged 15-24 years of age on Wednesday, 26 January 2022).

Nominations can be completed online at www.gsc.vic.gov.au/Australia_Day_Awards. Nominations close at 9am on Monday, 29 November 2021.

Pictured are Mayor Charlie Gillingham (centre) with 2021 Gannawarra Shire Council Citizen of the Year, Pattie McDonald and Young Citizen of the Year, Tayla Hore.



VISIT YOUR LOCAL SWIMMING POOL THIS SUMMER

The Cohuna and Kerang swimming pools will open for the 2021/22 season Monday, 15 November, with COVIDsafe measures to be in place.

Both venues will be open daily between 3pm and 7pm until Tuesday, 30 November with opening hours extended to between 10am and 8pm from Wednesday, 1 December.

Operating hours may also be extended on days of extreme heat, with changes promoted via Council's Facebook page — www.facebook.com/gannawarra

Please note that Council's outdoor pools will be closed on days the Bureau of Meteorology website's forecast temperature for either town is 23 degrees Celsius or lower.

For more information, please visit www.gsc.vic.gov.au/pools



2021 ANNUAL REPORT AVAILABLE ONLINE

Council's 2021 Annual Report (left) celebrates many of the community's achievements that occurred between July 2020 and June 2021.

The 160-page document, which was presented at the October 2021 Council Meeting, features Council's financial report for the year ended 30 June 2021 from the Victorian Auditor General's Office. This includes the audited financial statements, the audited performance statement and the signed auditor's report.

To view Council's 2021 Annual Report, as well as previously produced annual reports, please visit www.gsc.vic.gov.au/Annual_Reports

PROJECTS UPDATE

GANNAWARRA'S CONSTRUCTION BLITZ CONTINUES

A multi-million dollar construction blitz across the Gannawarra continues, with various projects currently under construction.

These projects form part of the \$16.542 million capital works program Council will roll out during 2021/22, highlighted by town developments, investment in recreational facility improvements and supporting tourism initiatives.

To keep updated regarding these and other projects, please follow Council on Facebook or read *Gannawarra News*, which can be downloaded at www.gsc.vic.gov.au/newsletters

CBD WORKS BENEFITING SHOPPERS

Residents and visitors are already benefiting from improvements to the Scoresby Street section of Kerang's central business district.

Stage 2 of the Kerang CBD Development is on track to be completed by the end of the year, with works already completed along the northern section of Scoresby Street between Fitzroy and Victoria streets. Improvements already completed include new paving along this section and a dedicated dining area on the northwestern corner of Fitzroy and Scoresby streets.

Works still to be completed include new paving along the southern section of Scoresby Street between Fitzroy and Victoria streets, the installation of seating pods and improvements to the grassed dining area at the southwestern corner of Scoresby and Victoria streets.



TOWN STORMWATER DRAINAGE WORKS CONTINUING

The transformation of Murrabit's town stormwater network from an open drain setup to an underground drainage infrastructure system is underway.

As part of the \$1.1 million Murrabit Township Stormwater Project, funded through the Federal Government's Local Roads Community Infrastructure Program (Phase 2), the construction of a detention basin and pump station occurred in October.

The first of the network's underground pipes were also installed last month, with the project scheduled for completion by the end of the year.

PROJECTS UPDATE

CHILDREN'S CENTRE EXPANSION

The expansion of the Gannawarra Shire Children's Centre is progressing, with the external framing and roof installation completed last month.

Once completed, the expansion will enable the centre to accommodate future subsidised three-year-old kindergarten classes from 2022.

The work, funded through the Victorian State Government's *Building Blocks Program* and the Victorian School's Building Authority, will also increase the centre's capacity from 95 places to 126 places.



Due to the Gannawarra Shire Children's Centre expansion, some services are currently operating under new arrangements:

- **Gannawarra Shire Children's Centre Kindergarten classes** have been relocated to Kerang South Primary School. Please call the Gannawarra Shire Children's Centre at (03) 5452 1357 or email children@gsc.vic.gov.au for further details.
- **Maternal and Child Health appointments** in Kerang are being conducted at Northern District Community Health until the end of 2021. Note, appointments and enquiries must still be made by contacting Council on (03) 5450 9333.
- **Immunisation sessions** have been re-located to the Sir John Gorton Library in Kerang. Appointments are essential and can be made by phoning Council on (03) 5450 9333. For further details on immunisations please visit www.gsc.vic.gov.au/Immunisation



PLAYERS, OFFICIALS TO BENEFIT FROM NEW CHANGE ROOMS

Visitors to the Murrabit Recreation Reserve during the 2022 Golden Rivers Football Netball League season will benefit from the construction of new netball change rooms, with works underway.

Instigated by the Murrabit Netball Club and supported by a \$219,200 grant from the State Government's Female Friendly Facilities program, the project will incorporate a new netball change room, umpires rooms, an accessible bathroom, first aid room and the renovation of the current netball change rooms.

ALL ABILITIES PLAYGROUND TAKING SHAPE

Construction of Cohuna's All Abilities Adventure Playground continues, with the Apex Park facility on track for completion in December 2021.

Funded through the Victorian State Government's Rural and Regional Victoria Infrastructure Stimulus 2020 Grants Program, the playground will feature a carousel, seated swing, stand-up seesaw, flying fox, fencing, increased seating, and sealed footpaths for easier access by prams and wheelchairs.

The playground builds on recent improvements to Apex Park, including Cohuna Beach and the installation of new barbecue shelters.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

INDUSTRIAL GROWTH

The industrial sector is experiencing strong growth in the Gannawarra, with Tate Drive in Kerang leading the charge. Demand is also strong in Cohuna and Koondrook, where Council is planning to undertake further industrial expansion to meet future demands.

The recent Stage 9 expansion of Tate Drive is complete and of the 13 new lots available, nine are already on hold for future development. These new lots will see a mix of new manufacturing businesses related to agriculture and construction, plus a range of new service businesses.

KerFab have long been one of Kerang's leading manufacturing businesses and recent onsite works will support further growth and expansion.

"The new works will allow further expansion of the business including a new shed along with onsite parking for the employees," KerFab's Jay Chirnside said.

"We are excited by the opportunities and looking forward to further business growth in Kerang."

The infrastructure works in Tate Drive have also provided benefit to Dunstan Farmers Engineering.

"The works undertaken during the Tate Drive development have been a huge advantage to our business as we can now access town water and sewer, as well as the benefit of moving heavy vehicles onto the highway safely by utilising the Tate Drive highway access" site manager, Peter den Houting said.

Recent sales have been strong in Cohuna's Keely Industrial Estate, with Council planning further civil works to unlock an additional 13 lots. Meanwhile, Council is working with community members to consider further land for commercial development in Koondrook.

DIVERSIFYING THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

Agriculture continues to be a major driver of the Gannawarra's economy, with Council keen to bring more diversity into the sector to strengthen economic growth.

During the past couple of years, the Gannawarra has seen growth in horticulture, poultry, pigs, organic cropping, new irrigation and innovative dairy projects. A range of "new" projects are underway, many of which we haven't sighted before in the Gannawarra.

The Dee Family's Dairy project (right) is a great example of the way the dairy sector is adapting to new production initiatives. The loafing barn and robotic dairy can cater for 500 head of cattle and has improved milk production by around 27 per cent.

"The loafing barn has also reduced our feed costs as we are now able to produce more of our own feed on farm. We also have the added benefit of being able to better monitor and care for our stock," Colin Dee said.

"With the increase in water and feed prices we needed to find ways to improve production to stay viable into the future. We believe this project has set us up to be sustainable for the long term."

Other innovative developments include the ECS Botanics (formerly known as Murray Meds) medicinal cannabis project at Murrabit, which is substantially increasing its production capacity.

"Affordable land with access to services and water was crucial to the development of our business," director, Nan Schoerie said.

"ECS Botanics has a strong future in the production of medicinal cannabis as the facility at Murrabit continues to grow in line with strong consumer demand".

The Murrabit facility commenced operations in 2019 and is currently employing 20 staff across a range of roles from outdoor farm workers to the post harvesting production team.

ECS is currently investing significant capital with the construction of six large protective cropping enclosures (above). All works on site are being undertaken by local tradespeople.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

VISITOR GUIDE BOOSTS TOURIST WEBSITE VIEWS

The Gannawarra tourism website—www.thegannawarra.com.au—is benefiting from the publishing of the new Gannawarra Visitor Guide.

Distributed across Victoria and southern New South Wales in September, the Gannawarra Visitor Guide showcases towns, services, and businesses from across the Gannawarra Shire.

The guide encourages visitors to visit the Gannawarra tourism website to learn more about the region, its attractions and accommodation options. This has led to an 83 per cent increase to site visits in 29 August-6 October 2021 compared to 21 July-28 August 2021.

The Gannawarra Visitor Guide was developed in-house by Council's Economic Development team, and ties in with the "Victoria's nature based tourism destination" branding. The guide also encourages residents to explore their own backyard and is a useful reference tool when assisting visiting friends and relatives.

Copies of the Gannawarra Visitor Guide are available locally at the Gateway to Gannawarra Visitor Centre in Cohuna and Kerang's Sir John Gorton Library.

KOONDROOK RETREAT'S POPULARITY GROWS

The Gannawarra's newest accommodation experience, Koondrook Retreat continues to receive high profile promotion.

Earlier this year, Instagram influencer Tyson Mayr (@tysontravel) visited Koondrook Retreat while on a road trip along the Murray. Tyson had glowing reviews on the hospitality of the locals and the nature based glamping experience.



Tyson's feedback is certainly making its way into the wider market with several "people of profile" having made bookings at the retreat.

Koondrook Retreat, like many accommodation providers, has been affected by COVID-19 lockdowns and has noticed a trend of bookings coming from regional destinations such as Swan Hill, Echuca and Bendigo. Many guests have been making last-minute bookings and are not wanting to risk travelling too far.

The future looks positive with only a few weekends free over the next few months. The retreat has a number of special weekends planned including the upcoming Wellness Retreat where guests will enjoy yoga, massage, mind wellness, a guided forest hike and catered meals.

Much of the feedback received about the retreat highlights the unique location so close to town yet so close to nature, the Goanna walking track is very popular, the tents are so well appointed and very clean and the meals at the local hotel are great!

For more information regarding Koondrook Retreat, please visit <https://koondrookretreat.com.au/>



PADDLESTEAMERS RETURN TO THE GANNAWARRA

It has always been a priority of Council to see more boating activity on the river at Koondrook and it has been great to see Echuca-based paddlesteamer, PS Emmylou hosting cruises between Echuca and Koondrook.

"They (Gannawarra Shire Council) have done a great job in Koondrook and it's attracting serious attention from the commercial sector. We would love to undertake more work out of Koondrook," Murray River Paddlesteamers director, Rohan Burgess said.

Three seven-night cruises have been completed, with further tours planned for 8 November and 15 November.

"The trip was absolutely beautiful and the warmth of the staff was amazing. We love Koondrook and the coffee at the Long Paddock and we spend quite a bit of time camping on magnificent Gunbower Island," Swan Hill residents Daryl and Lily (above), who recently spent three nights cruising on the PS Emmylou, said.

COUNCIL INFORMATION

YOUR COUNCILLORS AVOCA WARD



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MURRAY WARD



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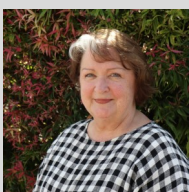
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YARRAN WARD



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Cr Garner Smith
(Deputy Mayor)
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COUNCIL MEETING DETAILS

The **November 2021 Meeting of Council** will be held on Wednesday, 17 November at 6.30pm. The **December 2021 Meeting of Council** will be held on Wednesday, 15 December at 6.30pm.

Meetings are held at the Kerang Senior Citizens Centre, located at 169 Boundary Street, Kerang, and livestreamed via Council's website — www.gsc.vic.gov.au/livestream. Changes to meeting locations 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.

If you have any questions about Council or would like to lodge a request, please refer to the Contacting Council section of this newsletter.

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

Twitter – www.twitter.com/GannawarraShire