



GANNAWARRA

Shire Council

Wednesday, 17 May 2023

10:00am

Senior Citizens Centre

Kerang

AGENDA

Council Meeting

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Geoff Rollinson
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

1 WELCOME TO COUNTRY

Playing of the Welcome to Country video clip.

2 OPENING DECLARATION

We, the Councillors of the Shire of Gannawarra, declare that we will undertake the duties of the office of Councillor, in the best interests of our community, and faithfully, and impartially, carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in us, to the best of our skill and judgement.

3 APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Meeting - 19 April 2023

5 DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

General conflict of interest

Unless exempt under Section 129 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) or regulation 7 of the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020, a Councillor or member of Council staff has a general conflict of interest in a matter if an impartial, fair-minded person would consider that the person's private interests (as defined in Section 127(2) of the Act) could result in that person acting in a manner that is contrary to their public duty.

Material conflict of interest

Unless exempt under Section 129 of the *Local Government Act 2020* or regulation 7 of the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020, a Councillor or member of Council staff has a material conflict of interest in respect of a matter if an affected person (as defined in Section 128(3) of the Act) would gain a benefit or suffer a loss depending on the outcome of the matter.

Disclosure of a conflict of interest

A Councillor who has a conflict of interest and is attending a meeting of the Council must make a full disclosure of that interest by either advising:

- a) the Council at the meeting immediately before the matter is considered at the meeting; or
- b) the Chief Executive Officer in writing before the meeting –

whether the interest is a general conflict of interest or a material conflict of interest; and the nature of the interest.

Note: If a Councillor advises the Chief Executive Officer of the details under b) above, the Councillor must make a disclosure of the class of interest only to the meeting immediately before the matter is considered at the meeting.

In accordance with Section 130 of the Act, a councillor who has disclosed a conflict of interest in respect of a matter must exclude themselves from the decision making process in relation to the matter, including any discussion or vote on the matter at any Council meeting, and any action in relation to the matter.

Failure to comply with Section 130 of the Act may result in a penalty of 120 penalty units

6 BRIEFING SESSIONS

6.1 RECORDS OF COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS - 5 APRIL TO 10 MAY 2023

Author: Mel Mathers, Executive Assistant - Chief Executive Office

Authoriser: Geoff Rollinson, Chief Executive Officer

Attachments: 1 Councillor Briefing Record - 8 May 2023
2 Councillor Briefing Record - 10 May 2023

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the records of Councillor Briefings 4 April to 10 May 2023.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents to Council written records of Councillor Briefings in accordance with Clause 31 of the Gannawarra Shire Council Governance Rules.

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in regards to this matter.

COUNCIL PLAN

Council Plan 2021-2025: Be a creative employer of choice through our adherence to good governance and our inclusive culture.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In accordance with Clause 31 of the Gannawarra Shire Council Governance Rules, a written record of a meeting held under the auspices of Council is, as soon as practicable, reported at a meeting of the Council and incorporated in the minutes of that Council meeting.

The record must include:

1. The names of all Councillors and members of Council staff attending
2. The matters considered
3. Any conflict of interest disclosures made by a Councillor attending
4. Whether a Councillor who has disclosed a conflict of interest left the meeting.

CONSULTATION


Consultation with Councillors and staff has occurred to ensure the accuracy of the Councillor Briefing records.

CONCLUSION

To ensure compliance with Clause 31 of the Gannawarra Shire Council Governance Rules, it is recommended that Council note the Councillor Briefing records as attached to this report.


RECORD OF A COUNCILLOR BRIEFING



Type of Meeting	Councillor Briefing	
Date:	Monday, 8 May 2023	
Time:	9:00am – 3:04pm	
Location:	Kerang Senior Citizens Centre	
In Attendance: (Councillors)	Cr Charlie Gillingham Cr Kelvin Burt Cr Travis Collier Cr Ross Stanton Cr Keith Link (9:00am – 2:50pm) Cr Garner Smith (1:40pm – 3:04pm)	
Apologies:	Cr Jane Ogden	
In Attendance: (Officers)	Geoff Rollinson, Phil Higgins, Wade Williams, Paul Fernee, Roger Griffiths, Mel Mathers, Shanna Johnny, Kellie Burmeister, Narelle O'Donoghue, Brenton Hall, Jodie Basile, Carole Wandin	
In Attendance: (Other)	Phil DeAraugo, Senior Consultant, REMPLAN	
Matters Discussed:	Presentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Draft Urban Growth Strategy Draft May Council Agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none">7.1 Quarterly Budget Report – Quarter Ending 31 March 20237.2 Audit & Risk Committee Independent Member Remuneration7.3 Audit and Riad Committee – Independent Member Appointment7.4 Council Polic6y Review7.5 Policy No. 148 – Flags7.6 Draft Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy Councillor Briefing Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Corporate Performance Reporting Framework Quarterly ReportRelated Party DisclosuresFinancial Plan UpdateRoadside Weeds and Pest Program UpdateBuilding and Planning Activity – Quarterly Update2022/2023 Capital Works Program UpdateCohuna Community Bus CommitteeGannawarra Flood Recovery UpdateCommunity Care Services UpdateLocal Roads Investment ProspectusFuture Listing Report Councillor Issues	
Conflict of Interest Disclosures		
Matter No.	Councillor/Officer making disclosure	Councillor/Officer left meeting Yes/No
Nil		
Completed By:	Geoff Rollinson – Chief Executive Officer 	

RECORD OF A COUNCILLOR BRIEFING



Type of Meeting	Councillor Briefing	
Date:	Wednesday, 10 May 2023	
Time:	4:00pm – 6:00pm	
Location:	Kerang Senior Citizens Centre	
In Attendance: (Councillors)	Cr Kelvin Burt Cr Ross Stanton Cr Keith Link Cr Garner Smith	
Apologies:	Cr Charlie Gillingham Cr Jane Ogden Cr Travis Collier	
In Attendance: (Officers)	Geoff Rollinson, Phil Higgins, Paul Ferner, Mel Mathers, Alissa Harrower, Carole Wandin	
In Attendance: (Other)	Mandy Hutchinson – CEO, Northern District Community Health Alexia Stephens – General Manager of Programs and Services, Northern District Community Health Deanne Radcliffe – General Manager Corporate Services, Northern District Community Health	
Matters Discussed:	Community Care Services	
Conflict of Interest Disclosures		
Matter No.	Councillor/Officer making disclosure	Councillor/Officer left meeting Yes/No
Community Care Services	Cr Charlie Gillingham	Did not attend meeting
Community Care Services	Cr Jane Ogden	Did not attend meeting
Completed By:	Geoff Rollinson – Chief Executive Officer 	

7 BUSINESS REPORTS FOR DECISION

7.1 QUARTERLY BUDGET REPORT - QUARTER ENDING 31 MARCH 2023

Author: Shana Johnny, Chief Financial Officer

Authoriser: Phil Higgins, Director Corporate Services

Attachments: 1 Quarterly Budget Report - March 2023

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the report outlining the 2022/2023 Quarterly Budget Report as at 31 March 2023.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At 31 March 2023, Council is anticipating that the budgeted underlying deficit of \$1.157 million will increase by \$1.132 to an anticipated underlying deficit of \$2.289 million. The deficit in 2022/23 is due to the advance payment of the Victorian Grants Commission 2022/23 annual allocation in April 2022 and depreciation being higher than anticipated as a result of the infrastructure revaluations as at 30 June 2022.

The budgeted Operating Result of \$7.521 million surplus will decrease by \$7.273 million to an anticipated Operating Result of \$249,000 surplus. This decrease is due to the deferral of grant income anticipated to be recognised into 2023/24.

Council's Capital Works program is progressing with an anticipated variation in scheduled works of \$6.230 million. The adopted capital budget for 2022/23 is \$14.027 million and it is expected to decrease to \$7.797 million by 30 June 2023. This decrease is due to the delays in delivery of some major multi-year projects and also some projects awaiting confirmation of grants.

The financial position of the Council remains stable.

PURPOSE

Council prepares a quarterly financial report as at 30 September, 31 December and 31 March each year. The purpose of the report is to ensure that the financial position of the Council is being managed and that Council remains financially sustainable.

ATTACHMENTS

Quarterly Budget Report – March 2023

DISCUSSION

This quarterly financial report to 31 March 2023 involves some variations to the forecasts due to the flooding event, unearned income transferred from the previous year, carry over items into next year and asset revaluations. Despite these issues Council remains financially sustainable.

The detailed explanation of the variations is contained in the "Financial Viability" section below and the attached "Quarterly Budget Report – 31 March 2023".

RELEVANT LAW

Section 97 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires a quarterly report to be presented to Council at a Council meeting which is open to the public showing a comparison of the actual and budgeted results to date and an explanation of any material differences.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

The Quarterly Budget Report links to the budget process and the Council decision relating to the budget adoption on 28 June 2022.

OPTIONS

The variations projected are not significant and therefore a revised budget is not required.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The key risks are financial and compliance risks. As the projected variations are positive, this limits the financial risk with the Quarterly Budget Report. Works are progressing on a Business Plan in the Community Care area.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Budget went through extensive consultation. This report highlights only minor change and no further community engagement has been undertaken.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not applicable.

COLLABORATION

Council Officers with responsibility for line budgets have had input into the report.

The Quarterly Budget Report to 31 March 2023 was presented to Council's Audit and Risk Committee meeting on 9 May, 2023.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The Quarterly Budget Report presents the interim financial position to 31 March 2023 and is consistent with the budget.

Indicator	Budget (\$'000)	Forecast (\$'000)	Variance (\$'000)
Underlying result	(1,157)	(2,289)	(1,132) U
Comprehensive Income result	7,521	249	(7,273) U
Capital works	14,027	7,797	6,230 F
Cash position	18,819	13,833	(4,986) U

Operating Budget

The 'Summary of Adjustments' details the changes between the approved budget and the forecast to 31 March 2023. The major changes in the operating budget are:-

- An increase in rate revenue of \$250k following supplementary valuations and additional bin service charges. This increase is offset by a decrease in budgeted income through

Payment in Lieu of rates (PILOR) and anticipated reduction in rates from flood impacted properties (68k).

- A decrease in landfill fees due to the closure of Council's landfill to the public (126k) and reduction in community care service fees due to the reduced client service hours on account of staff vacancies/shortages and delivery of services during the flood period (\$43k).

Reduction in user fees in children's services due to enrolment absences and room closures during the flood period (\$200k). From January 2023, kindergarten is full subsidised by the State Government – the reduction in user fees is offset by increase in grants to fund this service (\$270k).

- The increase in operating grants is due to the recognition of unearned income as at 30 June 2022 in 2022/23 (\$369k), flood assistance grants (\$2.97m) and other additional grants received post adoption of the Budget. These additional grants are offset by additional costs.

The flood assistance grants will be spent in line with the grant agreements and allocated towards additional employee costs and materials & services. At the time of preparing this report, the exact spend between categories is unknown.

- Reduction in community care services (NDIS & Brokered Programs) reimbursements due to the reduced client service hours on account of staff vacancies/shortages during the year and delivery of services during the flood period (\$732k).
- With the RBA cash rate increasing, the interest forecast has been amended to reflect an increase in interest income.
- An increase in employee costs on account of expected back pay of superannuation and accrual of leave entitlements on overtime hours worked by permanent part time (rostered) employees. This payment relates to community care workers and cleaning staff whose overtime earnings are treated as ordinary time earnings which attracts superannuation and leave entitlements. The payment is back dated to 1 July 2017 (\$351k). Other increases in employee costs include higher than anticipated Workcover premiums (\$70k), additional employee costs in children's services due to the use of casual staff, relief staff during periods of extended leave and additional children's programs (125k) and additional grant funded services.

This increase is offset by a reduction in community care service employee costs due to the impact of staff shortages/vacancies and reduced services during the flood period. Besides staff shortages/vacancies in community care services, there have a number of staff vacancies across the organisation throughout the year primarily due to secondment to higher positions or flood related positions.

- Increase in operational materials and services is primarily due to grant income carried forward to facilitate completion of programs, grant funding towards flood assistance (\$2.58m) and other additional grants received post adoption of the Budget.
- Depreciation for 2022/23 is higher than budgeted as a result of the infrastructure revaluations as at 30 June 2022.

- Capital grants have decreased by \$6.14 million. This decrease is primarily due to the deferral of grant funding for the major multi-year projects to 2023/24: Kerang to Koondrook Rail Trail - \$2.2 million, Living Libraries grant for the Glasshouse - \$1.487m. Kerang CBD Upgrade Stage 3 - \$1.924m and Sustainable Recreational Water for Quambatook -\$1.610m.

This decrease also relates to the deferral of the recognition of grant income in accordance with accounting standards which requires Council to recognise grant funding that has not been expended at 30 June as 'unearned income' in the Balance Sheet.

At the time of preparing this report, the impact of asset impairment as a result of the Oct/Nov 2022 floods is currently being assessed and has not been factored into this report. Asset impairment is a non-cash item but will affect the surplus, adjusted underlying result, balance sheet items and any associated financial indicators.

Capital Budget

At the end of March 2023, 73% of the forecasted capital works budget had been spent or committed. The recent floods have delayed programmed capital works. The capital budget adopted by Council was \$14.027 million. There is a reduction in the forecasted capital works budgeted of \$6.23 million to recognise deferral of budgeted spend on major multi-year projects. The anticipated budgeted spend on capital works by 30 June 2023 is \$7.797 million. A detailed listing of variations is included in the attachment. The major variations relate to:-

- Deferral of the Glasshouse project (\$1.360m), Kerang to Koondrook rail trail (\$2.4 million), Kerang CBD Upgrade Stage (\$1.784m) and Sustainable Recreational Water for Quambatook (\$1.610m). Kerang to Koondrook rail trail project is subject to grant funding.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

The budget and annual financial statements are prepared in accordance with the accounting standards.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

This report aligns to the Council Plan strategy to pursue initiative to achieve long term financial sustainability.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares they have no conflict of interest in regards to this matter.




Quarterly Budget Report

for the Quarter Ending 31 March 2023



Comprehensive Income Statement

		As at 31 March 2023			Projected Year End		
	Note	YTD Budget \$000	YTD Actual \$000	YTD Variance \$000	FY Budget \$000	FY Forecast \$000	FY Adjustments \$000
Income							
Rates and Charges	1	14,343	14,423	80	14,312	14,494	182
Statutory Fees and Fines		235	244	9	398	396	(3)
User Fees	2	2,519	2,450	(69)	3,861	3,172	(689)
Grants Operating	3	7,727	7,663	(64)	9,331	13,504	4,173
Contributions and Donations		16	35	19	43	59	16
Reimbursements	4	2,683	2,782	99	4,150	3,586	(564)
Sale of Assets	5	924	848	(76)	1,253	1,754	501
Cost of Assets Sold	5	(684)	(656)	28	(452)	(1,322)	(869)
Interest Earned	6	239	239	0	40	382	342
Other Income		226	249	23	301	301	-
Total income		28,227	28,276	49	33,238	36,327	3,088
Expenses							
Employee Costs	7	(12,833)	(13,071)	(239)	(18,152)	(18,166)	(13)
Operational Materials and Services	8	(9,030)	(7,705)	1,325	(9,326)	(12,995)	(3,669)
Bad and Doubtful Debts		-	(2)	(2)	-	-	-
Borrowing Costs		(14)	(10)	5	(14)	(14)	-
Depreciation	9	(5,330)	(5,301)	29	(6,593)	(7,107)	(514)
Other Expenses	10	(208)	(220)	(12)	(310)	(334)	(24)
Total expenses		(27,416)	(26,310)	1,106	(34,395)	(38,616)	(4,221)
Underlying surplus/(deficit)		812	1,966	1,155	(1,157)	(2,289)	(1,132)
Grants Capital and Major Projects	11	6,322	5,957	(364)	8,679	2,538	(6,140)
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		7,133	7,924	790	7,521	249	(7,273)

Favourable greater than 10% 
 Constant between plus or minus 10% 
 Unfavourable less than 10% 

Rounding

Unless otherwise stated, amounts in financial reports have been rounded to the nearest thousand dollars. Figures in the financial statements may not equate due to rounding.

Overall Result

At 31 March 2023 Council is showing an underlying surplus YTD of \$1.966 million, this is \$1.155 million more than budgeted for the same period. Income has a favourable variance of \$0.049m and there is a \$1.106m favourable variance for expenditure YTD.

Council is forecasting a \$2.289 million underlying deficit for 30 June 2023 which is an increase in the deficit of \$1.132m on the 2022/23 adopted budget. The deficit is due to the advance payment of the Victorian Grants Commission 2022/23 annual allocation (\$1.67m) in April 2022 and depreciation being higher than budgeted as a result of the infrastructure revaluations as at 30 June 2022.

Note	Income	
1	Rates and charges Favourable 182	
	Increase due to supplementary valuations and additional bin services.	128
	Substantial increase in Capital Improved Value(CIV) on Kerang substation instigated by the Valuer General's office.	122
	Decrease in budgeted Payment in Lieu of Rates (PILOR) from Horfield solar farm yet to commence operation.	(42)
	Estimated reduction in rates revenue from pending supplementary valuations on flood impacted properties.	(26)
2	User fees Unfavourable (689)	
	Reduction in landfill fees due to the closure of the Council's landfill to the public.	(126)
	There is a reduction in community care services user fees due to the reduced client service hours on account of staff vacancies/shortages and delivery of services during the flood period.	(43)
	Reduction in user fees from children's services can be attributed to multiple reasons -	(490)
	* Loss of income due to the impact of the flood on attendance and closures due to staff absences (\$200k),	
	* Reduced fees due to kindergartens being fully subsidised by the State Government from Jan 2023 (\$270)-offset by grants.	
3	Grants - Operating Favourable 4,173	
	Unearned grant income at 30 June 2022 recognised in 22/23 in line with the accounting standards.	369
	Additional grant funding for the Resilient Gannawarra project.	45
	Additional grant funding received as part of the Rural Roads Support Package.	35
	New grant funding received for Urban and Rural Growth Strategy. This project will continue into 2023/24.	53
	Flood assistance grants from the state and federal governments -	2,972
	* Council Flood Support Fund (\$1.5m)	
	* DRFA flood advance payments (1.088m)	
	* Community Recovery Officer Program (\$384k)	
	The grants will be spent in line with the grant agreements and allocated towards additional employee costs and materials & services. At the time of preparing this report, the exact spend between categories is unknown.	
	Additional Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) funding which is offset by additional costs.	245
	Additional children's services grants to deliver the state governments new initiatives i.e free kinder and, transition 4 year old kinder to pre-prep (2025).	109
	As mentioned above, kindergartens are fully subsidised by the State Government from Jan 2023.	270
	Grant received to help support vulnerable Victorians to access COVID RAT tests - offset by expenditure.	30
4	Reimbursements Unfavourable (564)	
	NDIS Incentive payment for staff COVID booster vaccinations and one off payment for the additional costs of keeping NDIS participants safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.	99
	Workcover reimbursements to mid-year 2022/23.	29
	There is a reduction in community care services (NDIS & Brokered Programs) reimbursements due to the reduced client service hours on account of staff vacancies/shortages during the year and delivery of services during the flood period.	(732)
	Reimbursement from the Department of Education for children's services trainees hired during the COVID period.	40
5	Sale of Assets & Cost of Assets Sold Unfavourable (368)	
	Variance relates to unsold industrial blocks carried forward for sale in 2022/23 and the impact of revaluation of Council land & buildings class of assets in 2021/22.	(330)
	Forecast adjusted for the anticipated sale of fleet to 30 June 2023 due to availability of new vehicles.	(38)
6	Interest Earned Favourable 342	
	At the time of the adoption of the Budget 2022/23, the cash rate was .85%. The current cash rate is 3.60%. The interest forecast has been amended to reflect the increase in interest rate.	342

	Expenses	
7	Employee Direct Costs Unfavourable (13)	
	Workcover premium higher than anticipated.	(70)
	Saving due to temporary staff vacancies partly due to secondment to higher positions or flood related positions during the year. This is partly offset by contractors & consultant fees.	481
	Additional Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) funding which is offset by employee costs.	(146)
	Reduction in community care service hours due to the impact of staff shortages/vacancies during the year and reduced services during the flood period.	648
	Additional employee costs due to the floods. Council's contribution towards flood related works will be partly reimbursed through the Victoria Grants Commission Annual Return process.	(75)
	Expected back pay of superannuation and accrual of leave entitlements on overtime hours worked by permanent part time (rostered) employees which should have been treated as ordinary time earnings. This payment affects community care workers and cleaning staff and is back dated to 1 July 2017.	(351)
	Additional employees costs in children's services due to the use of casual staff, relief staff during periods of extended leave and additional children's programs.	(125)
	Additional staff costs funded under Flood assistance grants -Community Recovery Officer Program	(384)
8	Operational Materials and Services Unfavourable (3,669)	
	Expenditure associated with unearned grant income and the community grants project at 30 June 2022 carried forward for the completion of the programs.	(441)
	Expenditure to match grant funding to complete Resilient Gannawarra project.	(45)
	Expenditure to match grant funding for Rural Roads Support Package to be fully expended by 30 June 2023.	(35)
	Expenditure to match grant funding for Urban & Rural Growth Strategy. Forecast accounts for amounts to be expended by 30 June 2023.	(53)
	Unbudgeted costs associated with electoral structure review by the Victorian Electoral Commission.	(61)
	Unbudgeted CEO recruitment costs.	(37)
	Consultant costs associated with staff vacancies.	(21)
	Additional costs funded through flood assistance grants - * Council Flood Support Fund (\$1.5m) * DRFA flood advance payments (1.088m).	(2,588)
	Reduction in budgeted EPA payable due to closure of Council's landfill.	60
	Additional green waste mulching required.	(93)
	Additional costs associated with above mentioned children's services grants to deliver the state governments new initiatives i.e free kinder and, transition 4 year old kinder to pre-prep (2025).	(109)
	Additional cleaning contractor cost due to staff vacancies	(37)
	Unbudgeted Council contribution towards Murray River Adventure Trail	(25)
	Additional waste management costs due to transportation of waste to Patho	(27)
	Support vulnerable Victorians access COVID RAT tests - offset by grants.	(30)
9	Depreciation Unfavourable (514)	
	Depreciation for 2022/23 is higher than budgeted as a result of the infrastructure revaluations as at 30 June 2022.	(514)
10	Other expenses Unfavourable (24)	
	Increase in Councillor allowance in line with the Independent Tribunal Determination.	(24)
11	Grants - Capital Unfavourable (6,140)	
	Unearned grant income at 30 June 2022 recognised in 22/23 in line with the accounting standards.	1,224
	Additional grant received for Kangaroo Lake Jetty Structure project.	63
	Kerang to Koondrook Rail Trail (Murray River Adventure Trail) project carried over to 2023/24.	(2,200)
	Living Library Projects (The Glasshouse) carried over to 2023/24.	(1,407)
	Kerang CBD Development Stage 3 - multi-year project carried over to 2023/24.	(1,924)
	ICT - Joint Council Asset Management Software - joint funded project. Project delivery has been deferred to 2023/24	(250)
	Sustainable Recreational Water for Quambatook - project carried over to 2023/24.	(1,623)

Capital Works Report as at 31 Mar 2023

	Note	Adopted Budget \$000	YTD Actuals \$000	Hard Commitm ents \$000	Total Expenditure \$000	Projected Forecast - Total Cost \$000	Permanent Adjustments \$000
PROPERTY							
Land Improvements							
New Gravel Pit Geotechnical Investigation	1	\$ 40	\$ 57	\$ 22	\$ 79	\$ 85	\$ 45
Buildings							
Living Library Projects - The Glasshouse	2	\$ 1,440	\$ 26	\$ 48	\$ 74	\$ 80	\$ (1,360)
Cohuna Preschool Outdoor Space Redevelopment		\$ 196	\$ 5	\$ 181	\$ 186	\$ 196	\$ -
Gannawarra Shire Children's Centre Outdoor Space Redevelopment		\$ 200	\$ 5	\$ 188	\$ 193	\$ 200	\$ -
Leitchville Pre-School Outdoor Shade		\$ 12	\$ 10	\$ -	\$ 10	\$ 12	\$ -
Building Improvements							
Buildings Renewal		\$ 100	\$ 10	\$ 9	\$ 18	\$ 100	\$ -
TOTAL PROPERTY		\$ 1,987	\$ 113	\$ 447	\$ 560	\$ 672	\$ (1,315)
PLANT AND EQUIPMENT							
Plant, Machinery and Equipment							
Heavy plant replacement		\$ 120	\$ 90	\$ -	\$ 90	\$ 96	\$ (25)
Light plant replacement	3	\$ 337	\$ 79	\$ 115	\$ 194	\$ 204	\$ (133)
Computers and Telecommunications							
ICT Capital renewals	4	\$ 145	\$ 108	\$ -	\$ 108	\$ 214	\$ 69
ICT - Joint Council Asset Management Software	5	\$ 250	\$ (0)	\$ -	\$ (0)	\$ -	\$ (250)
Library books							
Library book replacement		\$ 100	\$ 73	\$ 17	\$ 91	\$ 117	\$ 17
RFID Installation		\$ 40	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 40	\$ -
TOTAL PLANT AND EQUIPMENT		\$ 992	\$ 350	\$ 133	\$ 483	\$ 671	\$ (322)
INFRASTRUCTURE							
Roads							
Bitumen Roads Reseal Program		\$ 930	\$ 739	\$ -	\$ 739	\$ 930	\$ -
Gravel Re-sheeting Program	6	\$ 1,010	\$ 473	\$ 69	\$ 542	\$ 1,550	\$ 540
Sealed Roads Rehabilitation Program		\$ 980	\$ 503	\$ 133	\$ 636	\$ 980	\$ -
Kerang CBD Development Stage 3	7	\$ 1,936	\$ 223	\$ 12	\$ 235	\$ 152	\$ (1,784)
Footpaths and Cycleways							
Footpath replacement program		\$ 116	\$ 92	\$ -	\$ 92	\$ 116	\$ -
Kerang to Koondrook Rail Trail (Murray River Adventure Trail) - Grant dependent	8	\$ 2,400	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (2,400)
Kerang to Koondrook Rail Trail Design		\$ 575	\$ 84	\$ 291	\$ 375	\$ 575	\$ -
Kerb and channel							
Kerb replacement program		\$ 156	\$ 18	\$ 12	\$ 30	\$ 156	\$ -
Drainage							
Stormwater Network and Town Pump renewal	9	\$ 200	\$ 80	\$ 290	\$ 370	\$ 311	\$ 111
Recreational, Leisure & Community Facilities							
Swimming Pool Renewal Program		\$ 100	\$ 1	\$ 44	\$ 45	\$ 100	\$ -
Town/Boundary Entrances and Signage		\$ 20	\$ 11	\$ 6	\$ 17	\$ 20	\$ -
Parks, Open Space and Streetscapes							
Street Furniture		\$ 50	\$ 35	\$ -	\$ 35	\$ 50	\$ -
Tree Planting Program - Cool It Program		\$ 10	\$ 7	\$ 3	\$ 10	\$ 10	\$ -
Sustainable Recreational Water for Quambatook	10	\$ 1,750	\$ 140	\$ 1,950	\$ 2,090	\$ 140	\$ (1,610)
Kangaroo Lake West Recreational Access Redevelopment	11	\$ 240	\$ 16	\$ 229	\$ 245	\$ 304	\$ 64
Other Infrastructure							
Strategic Project Development and Planning		\$ 100	\$ 51	\$ -	\$ 51	\$ 107	\$ 7

	Note	Adopted Budget \$000	YTD Actuals \$000	Hard Commitm ents \$000	Total Expenditure \$000	Projected Forecast - Total Cost \$000	Permanent Adjustments \$000
Koondrook Levee Design (inc Walking Track to Cassidy Lane)	12	\$ 200	\$ 69	\$ 98	\$ 167	\$ 118	\$ (82)
TOTAL INFRASTRUCTURE		\$ 10,773	\$ 2,541	\$ 3,138	\$ 5,679	\$ 5,620	\$ (5,153)
TOTAL NEW CAPITAL WORKS		\$ 13,752	\$ 3,005	\$ 3,717	\$ 6,722	\$ 6,962	\$ (6,790)
Works carried forward from the 2020/21 year							
PLANT AND EQUIPMENT							
Plant, Machinery and Equipment							
Heavy Plant Replacement		\$ 30	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ 30	\$ -
Light Plant Replacement	13	\$ 122	\$ 42	\$ -	\$ 42	\$ 46	\$ (76)
TOTAL PLANT AND EQUIPMENT		\$ 151	\$ 67	\$ -	\$ 67	\$ 75	\$ (76)
INFRASTRUCTURE							
Building Improvements							
Buildings Renewal		\$ 60	\$ 86	\$ -	\$ 86	\$ 60	\$ -
Other Infrastructure							
Southern levee acquisition		\$ 64	\$ 16	\$ 3	\$ 20	\$ 64	\$ -
TOTAL INFRASTRUCTURE		\$ 124	\$ 102	\$ 3	\$ 105	\$ 124	\$ -
TOTAL CARRIED FORWARD CAPITAL WORKS 2020/21		\$ 275	\$ 169	\$ 3	\$ 172	\$ 199	\$ (76)
Other Projects							
Gsc Security Access System		\$ -	\$ 2	\$ 89	\$ 90	\$ -	\$ -
Other Plant And Equipment		\$ -	\$ 15	\$ -	\$ 15	\$ -	\$ -
Koondrook Kinder New Building Fit Out	14	\$ -	\$ 4	\$ 14	\$ 18	\$ 50	\$ 50
Murrabit Stormwater - Stage 5 & 6	15	\$ -	\$ 195	\$ -	\$ 195	\$ 192	\$ 192
Cohuna CBD Waterfront Development		\$ -	\$ 20	\$ -	\$ 20	\$ 20	\$ 20
Atkinson Park All Abilities Playground - Grant Dependent	16	\$ -	\$ 387	\$ -	\$ 387	\$ 373	\$ 373
Irrigation Pump For Cohuna Rec Reserve Oval 2		\$ -	\$ 28	\$ -	\$ 28	\$ -	\$ -
TOTAL OTHER PROJECTS		\$ -	\$ 650	\$ 102	\$ 753	\$ 635	\$ 635
TOTAL WORKS 2022/23		\$ 14,027	\$ 3,824	\$ 3,823	\$ 7,647	\$ 7,797	\$ (6,230)

Summary - Overall Result

The adopted capital budget for 2022/2023 is \$14.027m. There has been a decrease in the forecasted capital works budget by \$6.230m to recognise projects carried over to 2023/24. Anticipated budgeted spend by 30 June 2023 is \$7.797m. 98% of the forecasted capital works budget had been committed by 31 March 2023.

The following projects have been reviewed -

Note	\$000
1 New Gravel Pit Geotechnical Investigation tender was higher than budgeted.	45
2 Living Library Projects - The Glasshouse - multi-year project carried over to 2023/24.	(1,360)
3 Light plant replacement is lower than budgeted due to the availability of new vehicles.	(133)
4 ICT Capital renewals - expenditure carried forward for equipment ordered in 2021/22 and delivered in 2022/23.	69
5 ICT - Joint Council Asset Management Software - joint funded project (total \$750k) Gannawarra Shire Council is the auspice body. Project delivery has been deferred to 2023/24.	(250)
6 Gravel Re-sheeting Program - funds carried forward to facilitate the completion of the Beautification project at Murrabit.	540
7 Kerang CBD Development Stage 3 - multi-year project carried over to 2023/24.	(1,784)
8 Kerang to Koondrook Rail Trail (Murray River Adventure Trail) project carried over to 2023/24.	(2,400)
9 Stormwater Network and Town Pump renewal - expenditure carried forward from 21/22 to complete the project and tender was higher than anticipated.	111
10 Sustainable Recreational Water for Quambatook - project carried over to 2023/24.	(1,610)
11 Kangaroo Lake West Recreational Access Redevelopment - additional grant funding received.	64
12 Koondrook Levee Design (inc Walking Track to Cassidy Lane) - Project carried over to 2023/24.	(82)
13 Light Plant Replacement - Vehicle received before 30 June 2022 earlier than anticipated.	(76)
14 Koondrook Kinder New Building Fit Out - furnish new kinder and MCH building.	50
15 Murrabit Stormwater - Stage 5 & 6 - funds carried forward to finalise construction of this fully funded project.	192
16 Atkinson Park All Abilities Playground - funds carried forward to finalise construction of this project.	373

The 22/23 carried forward works mentioned above are funded from grants and rates allocation from prior year 21/22.

Balance Sheet As at 31 March 2023

	2021/22	Year to Date	Projected Forecast To 30 June 2023
	\$000	\$000	\$000
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	13,110	18,278	11,329
Trade and other receivables	2,961	5,200	2,960
Financial assets	5,709	2,503	2,503
Inventories**	356	536	662
Other Assets	299	13	299
Total current assets	22,435	26,529	17,754
Non-current assets			
Property, infrastructure, plant and	247,644	245,511	247,013
Investment Assets	1,030	1,030	1,030
Total non-current assets	248,674	246,541	248,043
Total assets	271,109	273,070	265,796
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	1,391	235	1,391
Trust funds and deposits	559	1,312	559
Unearned Income	5,466	-	0
Provisions (CL)*	3,707	3,707	3,707
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings (CL)	95 -	0	102
Total current liabilities	11,218	5,255	5,759
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions (NCL)*	1,494	1,494	1,494
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings	155	155	53
Total non-current liabilities	1,649	1,649	1,547
Total liabilities	12,867	6,904	7,306
Net Assets	258,242	266,166	258,490
Equity			
Accumulated surplus	102,325	110,249	102,574
Reserves	155,917	155,917	155,917
Total Equity	258,242	266,166	258,490

*At the end of 2021/22, provisions (current and non- current) – within the Balance Sheet relate to Employee provisions for annual leave and long service leave (\$3.975m) and landfill rehabilitation (\$1.226m). These provisions calculated at the end of each financial year is based on actual leave balance at the end of the year and adjusted for the Reserve Bank of Australia's wage inflation and discount rates.

** Council has added crushed concrete to the inventory list. This item is expected to be used as road making material and is expected to be fully utilised by 30 June 2024

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS (\$000)

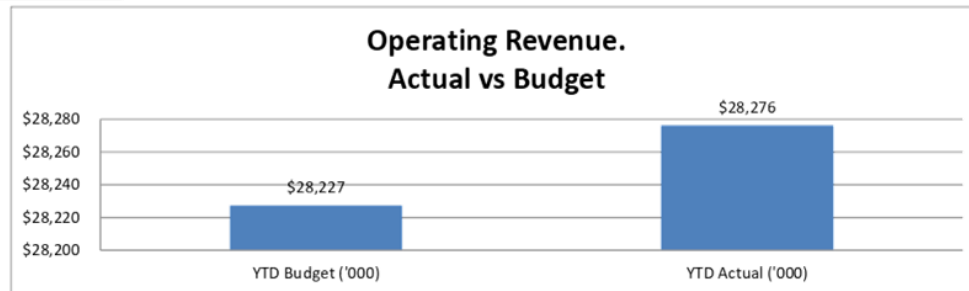
Description	2021/22	Year to Date	Projected Forecast To 30 June 2023
Cash Flows from Operating Activities			
Rates and charges	13,860	11,783	14,494
Statutory Fees and Fines	409	242	396
User Fees	2,913	2,663	3,489
Grants Operating	11,191	7,266	13,107
Grants Capital	8,982	887	(2,532)
Contributions monetary	90	35	59
Interest received	15	239	382
Trust funds and deposits taken	(253)	-	-
Other receipts	4,400	3,031	4,276
Net GST refund	(187)	528	1,262
Employee Costs	(17,219)	(13,071)	(18,166)
Materials & Services	(8,403)	(8,753)	(14,631)
Trust funds and deposits paid		794	-
Other Payments	(303)	(220)	(367)
Net Cash provided by operating activities	15,495	5,425	1,770
Cash Flows from Investing Activities			
Payment for property, infr. p&e	(12,235)	(4,206)	(8,576)
Proc. from sale property, infr. p&e	670	848	1,930
			-
Payment for investments	(3,206)	-	-
Proc. from sale of Investments		3,206	3,206
Net Cash used in Investing activities	(14,771)	(152)	(3,441)
Cash Flows from Financing Activities			
Proceeds from borrowings			-
Finance Costs	(106)	(10)	(14)
Loan Redemption	(18)	(95)	(95)
Net Cash used in Financing Activities	(124)	(105)	(109)
Net Increase / (Decrease) in Cash/ Invest.	600	5,168	(1,780)
Cash / Investments at beginning of year	12,510	13,110	13,110
Cash / Investments at end of financial period	13,110	18,278	11,330
Investments on Hand at Year end	5,709	2,503	2,503
Total Cash, cash equivalents and investments	18,819	20,781	13,833

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

	Year to Date		
	YTD Budget ('000)	YTD Actual ('000)	Variance ('000)
Total income	\$28,227	\$28,276	\$49
Total expenses	(\$27,416)	(\$26,310)	\$1,106
Underlying Surplus/(deficit)	\$812	\$1,966	\$1,155

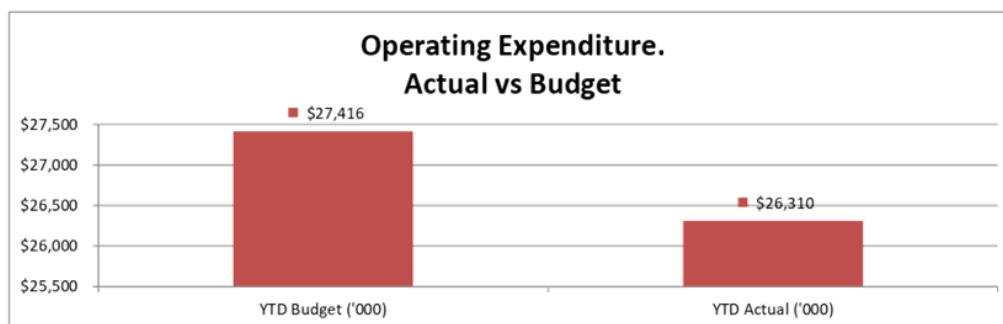
Abbreviations: YTD - Year to date EOY - End of year FY - Full year

Operating Revenue:



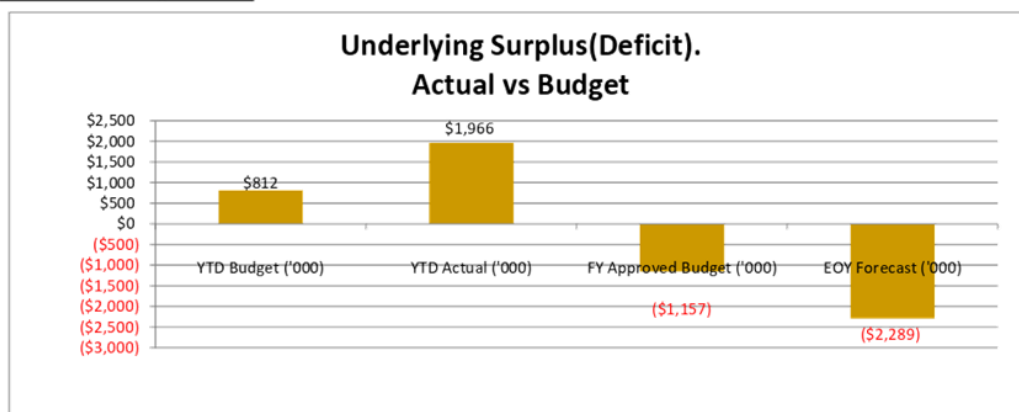
To date there is a favourable YTD variance of \$0.141 million.

Operating Expenditure:



To date there is a favourable YTD variance of \$1.106 million

Result from ordinary activities:

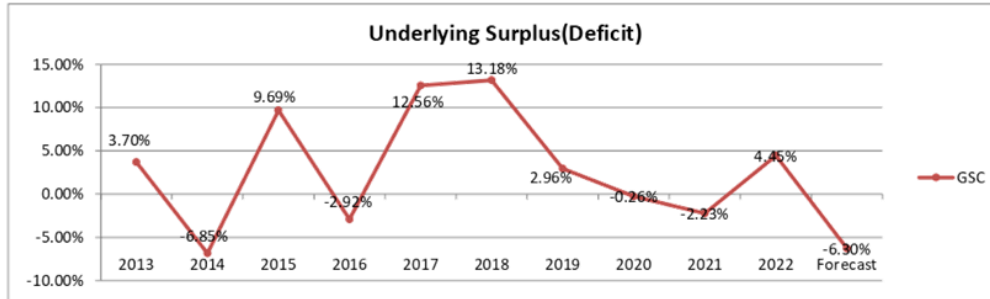


A unfavourable year to date result has been achieved with a forecasted favourable change on budget at 30 June 2023

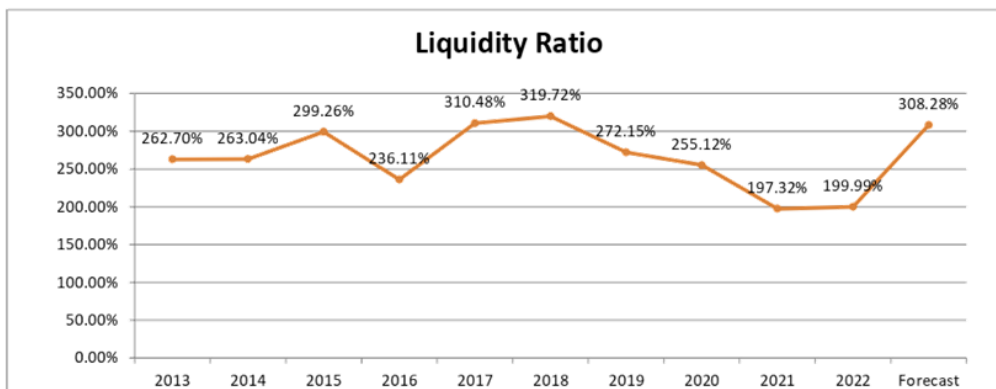
Abbreviations: YTD - Year to date FY - Full year EOY - End of year

Financial Ratios

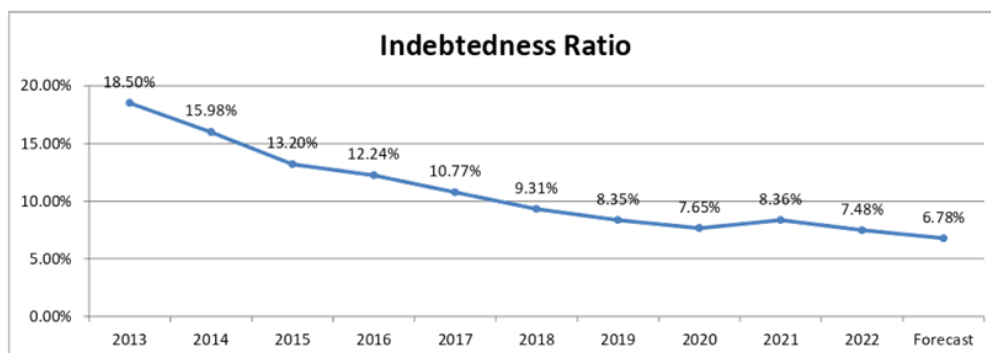
Financial Sustainability:



Underlying surplus(deficit): An indicator of the sustainable operating result required to enable Council to continue to provide core services and meet its objectives. The underlying result removes Non-Recurrent Capital grants from the surplus and reflects Council's ability to fund its operating expenditure out of all other operating income. A shift in the level of operating grants leads to a material change in the underlying result.



Liquidity ratio: Measures the level of Council's current assets to meet its current liabilities. A ratio higher than 100% indicates current assets being greater than current liabilities.



Indebtedness Ratio: Measures Council's non-current liabilities as a percentage of Council own source income.

7.2 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE INDEPENDENT MEMBER REMUNERATION

Author: Phil Higgins, Director Corporate Services

Authoriser: Phil Higgins, Director Corporate Services

Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That the 2023/2024 Audit and Risk Committee annual sitting fee be \$1,815 for the Chair and \$1,295 for the other Independent Members.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gannawarra Shire Council's Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Charter provides that the remuneration paid to each independent member be reviewed and set annually by the Council.

It is recommended that a 2.5% increase be applied to the ARC annual sitting fees for 2023/2024.

PURPOSE

This report ensures the Audit and Risk Committee Charter responsibilities are being met.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

DISCUSSION

The ARC Charter provides that the remuneration paid to each Independent Member be reviewed and set annually by the Council. Council currently pays an annual sitting fee of \$1,770 to the Chair and \$1,265 to each Independent Member.

RELEVANT LAW

Section 53 and 54 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

At Council's 22 April 2022 meeting, the ARC fees were indexed for the 2022/23 budget based on a 1.75% increase.

OPTIONS

The options open to Council are:-

- Option 1 – not increase the ARC annual sitting fees;
- Option 2 – increase the ARC annual sitting fees by the rate capping index, enterprise bargaining agreement or some other index;
- Option 3 – equate the ARC annual sitting fees to align with fees paid by similar small rural councils.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The ARC overview the financial, risk and governance functions of the Council.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not applicable

COLLABORATION

Recently FinPro undertook a survey on audit and risk committee member remunerations. This reveals that the range of remuneration for independent members for the small rural councils is \$255 to \$531 per meeting or \$1,020 to \$2,124 per annum. For the chair of the ARC the like data reveals a range of \$300 to \$663 per meeting or \$1,200 to \$2,652 per annum.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The Proposed Budget for 2023/2024 for ARC sitting fees is \$30 below the recommended sitting fees in this report.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

This report is complying with the ARC Charter.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in regards to this matter.

7.3 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE - INDEPENDENT MEMBER APPOINTMENT

Author: Phil Higgins, Director Corporate Services

Authoriser: Phil Higgins, Director Corporate Services

Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council appoint Laura Conti to the position of Independent Member of Gannawarra Shire Council's Audit and Risk Committee for a period of 3 years, expiring 17 May 2026.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the resignation of an Independent Member, a recruitment process was undertaken to appoint one of the three Independent Members on the Audit and Risk Committee.

PURPOSE

The Audit and Risk Committees (ARC's) purpose is to support Council in discharging its oversight responsibilities related to financial and performance reporting, risk management and maintenance of a sound internal control environment.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

DISCUSSION

In accordance with the ARC Charter, independent members are appointed by Council for staggered terms to ensure that a loss of knowledge on the ARC does not occur at the one point in time, and:-

- Will generally be appointed for three-year terms;
- May be reappointed to a maximum of nine years;
- Collectively have expertise in financial management and reporting and risk management and also experience in public sector management.

Laura Conti will be appointed to the Audit and Risk Committee for a period of three years with the term expiring on 17 May 2026.

RELEVANT LAW

Sections 53 and 54 of *Local Government Act 2020*.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

At its 15 March 2023 meeting, Council was advised of the resignation of one of the Independent Members on the ARC.

OPTIONS

The Council appoints members to the ARC and therefore has the options to re-appoint or re-advertise the role.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The three independent members on the ARC ensure that there are independent people overseeing key Council operations. The aim is to have expertise in financial management and reporting and risk management and also experience in public sector management.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The three independent members on the ARC ensure that there is involvement by key community members.

The advertising of the Independent Member was via social media and print media – both locally and regionally.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not applicable

COLLABORATION

This matter has been discussed with the Mayor, Chief Executive Officer and Chair of the ARC.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The ARC is operating within the adopted budget.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

The appointment of independent members needs to align with the ARC Charter.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in regards to this matter.

7.4 COUNCIL POLICY REVIEW - POLICY NO. 146 - CLIMATE CHANGE

Author: Kyle Hodgkinson, Climate Change Adaption Officer

Authoriser: Wade Williams, Acting Director Infrastructure and Development

Attachments: 1 Policy No. 146 Climate Change

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse recently reviewed Policy No. 146 – Climate Change.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council officers undertake regular reviews of Council policies to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and that they are reflective of current practices. This report addresses the following policy which has recently been reviewed:

- Policy No. 146 – Climate Change

PURPOSE

For Council to review the amended Climate Change policy, with a view to adopting, to comply with legislative requirements and align with Council's adopted Climate Change Adaption and Mitigation Strategy.

ATTACHMENTS

- Policy No. 146 – Climate Change

DISCUSSION

Council officers undertake regular reviews of Council policies to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and that they are reflective of current practice. Council policies are reviewed as needed, however most policies must be reviewed within either 12 months or two years after a General Election. Reviewed policies are presented to Council for endorsement, or for repeal if it has been determined the policy is no longer required.

Council policies provide guidance to staff, Council and the community and are published on Council's website.

Below is a summary of recommended adjustments to reviewed policy.

Policy No.	Policy Title	Comments
146	Climate Change	This policy outlines Council's commitment to mitigating and adapting to Climate Change. Recommended adjustments will align this policy with the recently adopted Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy, adopted by Council on the 15 March 2023.

RELEVANT LAW

The *Local Government Act 2020*, identifies several overarching governance principles which create obligations for councils in the context of climate change, including:

- Under 9(2)(c) Councils are required to promote the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks.
- Under 9(2)(b) Councils are required to give priority to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.

The Victorian State Government *Climate Change Act 2017*, Subsection 17(2) stipulates that the relevant decision-makers must have regard to:

- the potential impacts of climate change relevant to the decision or action; and
- the potential contribution to the State's greenhouse gas emissions of the decision or action.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council Policy No. 146 – Climate Change – adopted by Council on 15 December 2021.

Climate Change Adaption and Mitigation Strategy – adopted by Council on 15 March 2023.

OPTIONS

Council can choose to endorse the revised policy as is, or alternatively make further adjustments.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

This policy identifies Climate Change as a risk to Councils ongoing operations, the policy provides a strategic framework for mitigating and adapting to Climate Change through the objectives;

- Ensure climate mitigation and adaption is integrated into the Gannawarra Shire Council's business and climate resilience is a part of the municipality's future.
- Provide the basis to make decisions on climate action and embed consideration of climate mitigation and adaptation across Council business.
- Transition Council operations to net zero emissions and assist the community to become climate ready.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Council policies provide guidance to Council, staff and the community in decision making and service delivery.

Policies are reviewed as required however most policies must be reviewed within either 12 months or two years of a Council election. Regular reviews of Council policies ensure compliance with relevant legislation and that they are reflective of current practices.

COLLABORATION

Not applicable.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Responding to the risks of climate change by reducing energy consumption and emissions will result in decreased financial burden on Council into the future as energy costs continue to rise.

Promotion of alternative energy generation facilities within the municipality presents a pathway to receiving increased income through PiLOR.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Victoria's Climate Change Strategy - DELWP
- DELWP Climate Change Adaption Action Plans
- Loddon Mallee North Regional Growth Plan
- Neighbourhood Issue: Climate Costs and Risks to Councils publication
- Loddon Mallee Renewable Energy Roadmap

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Gannawarra Shire Council Plan 2021 – 2025 – Goal 3 – Achieve long-term financial and environmental sustainability
- Climate Change Adaption and Mitigation Strategy.
- Environmental Sustainability Strategy
- Gannawarra Community Safety Plan 2012-2025
- Domestic Waste Policy
- Gannawarra Community Resilience Action Plan 2021-2023
- Gannawarra Urban and Rural Strategy Plan
- Asset Management Plan

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest regarding this matter.



Climate Change

COUNCIL POLICY NO. 146

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide Council with a strategic framework for mitigating and adapting to climate change.

The objectives of the policy are to:

- Ensure climate mitigation and adaptation is integrated into the Gannawarra Shire Council's business and climate resilience is a part of the municipality's future.
- Provide the basis to make decisions on climate action and embed consideration of climate adaptation and mitigation across Council business.
- Transition Council operations to net zero emissions and assist the community to become climate ready.

2. BACKGROUND

Gannawarra Shire Council acknowledges the scientific evidence and the risk that climate change presents to the community and the planet. Council cites the *Local Government Act 2020* requirements for councils to take climate risks into account in its planning and decision making, therefore in the 'Growing Gannawarra 2021-2025 Council Plan,' Council set the following strategic priority:

Support community resilience through climate adaptation, clean energy, environmental sustainability and waste management programs

Over the years Council has undertaken a range of positive actions, including solar installation on assets, heat mapping assessments and promoted the construction of renewable energy and transmission assets in the region. This work has helped the initial steps towards combatting Climate Change but this policy will help Council recognise the need to consolidate its actions and create a planned response to adapt and mitigate climate change. Council also recognises The Gannawarra is particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and it needs to commence early measures to increase the municipalities' resilience. It is necessary that Council builds its capacity to adapt to and mitigate the challenges of climate change, enable a more effective response, and minimise economic and social impacts caused by climate change. With its current position The Gannawarra has the capacity to become one of the top renewable energy producing municipalities in the state and by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, shifting to 100% renewables, engaging the community, Council will help support a long-term transition to an environmentally and economically sustainable municipality.

3. POLICY PRINCIPLES

The achievement of Council's Climate Change objectives requires leadership from Council, collaborative engagement and support from all sectors of the municipality.

The overarching principles are:

- Apply the precautionary principle in a risk management framework to strategic planning, operational and management decision making when considering the potential implications associated with climate change.
- Respond to the risks of climate change to Council assets and services and assist the community to be more

resilient to the effects of climate change.

- Actively join climate change initiatives that promote education, economic growth and the community to become more sustainable and increase livability.

4. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

1. Implementation of the Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy.
2. Undertaking actions and projects within the organisation to reduce emissions and enable adaptation to future climate scenarios.
3. Integrating the principles of climate change adaption and mitigation into existing policies, procedures and decision making, considering both short-term and long-term perspectives.
4. Developing new organisational procedures and resources to address climate change mitigation and adaption gaps in Council's plans and procedures.
5. Regularly review strategies, plans, policies, and procedures, where their content may be affected by climate change, to ensure currency as the science develops.
6. Ensuring Council's actions, decisions and policy response to climate change remains current and reflects the Council's operational capacity and community expectations as the science around climate change develops.
7. Embracing innovative and new technology to develop, promote and implement environmental sustainable solutions that promote and support a circular economy.
8. Seeking funding to continue to adapt to and mitigate climate change within council operations and services, and to undertake projects in partnership with the community.
9. Working with community sectors to facilitate action on climate change as relevant to their circumstances.

5. RELATED POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

- Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy
- Environmental Sustainability Strategy
- Gannawarra 2025
- Gannawarra future scan
- Gannawarra Shire Council Plan
- Economic Development Strategy
- Gannawarra Waterfront Masterplans
- Loddon Mallee North Regional Growth Plan
- Procurement Policy

6. POLICY REVIEW

Council will review this policy initially within twelve months of its adoption, thereafter it will be reviewed as required but always within twelve months of a general election of the Council.

At the time of review, this policy was compliant with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

Members of the public may inspect all Council policies at Gannawarra Shire Council's Kerang and Cohuna Office or online at www.gsc.vic.gov.au. Any enquires in relation to this policy should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer on (03) 5450 9333.

Records – 3.000518
Originally adopted:
To be reviewed

15/12/2021
2022

7.5 DRAFT POLICY NO. 148 - FLAGS

Author: Scott Bourne, Communications Coordinator
Authoriser: Paul Fernee, Acting Director Community Wellbeing
Attachments: 1 Council Policy No. 148 - Flags
2 Community Flag Schedule

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse Policy No. 148 – Flags and Community Flag Schedule.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gannawarra Shire Council Policy No. 148 – Flags and the Community Flag Schedule will govern the flying of flags outside the Kerang Council Building and Gateway to Gannawarra Visitor Information Centre, Cohuna and establish a mechanism to consider requests for the flying of other flags significant to the Gannawarra community outside Council buildings or on Council-managed flag poles.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Gannawarra Shire Council Policy No. 148 – Flags and the Community Flag Schedule is to ensure Council complies with the Flags Act 1953 and is able to appropriately consider community requests to fly flags outside Council buildings or on Council-managed flag poles.

ATTACHMENTS

Council Policy No. 148 – Flags
Community Flag Schedule

DISCUSSION

Council resolved at the November 2022 Council Meeting to develop a Flag Policy to address requests to fly flags to promote causes within the municipality. This recommendation resulted from a request to fly the Rainbow Flag on IDAHOBIT Day (17 May 2023).

At the March 2023 Council Meeting, Council endorsed for community feedback to be sought regarding Draft Council Policy No. 148 – Flags and Draft Community Flag Schedule for a period of 28 days; and to receive a further report to consider the final Council Policy No. 148 – Flags and Community Flag Schedule.

RELEVANT LAW

The *Flags Act 1953* formally identified the Australian National Flag, as well as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flags (proclaimed in July 1995) as “Flags of Australia”.

The *Australian flags – part 2: The protocols for the appropriate use and the flying of the flag* define the flying and handling of flags proclaimed in the Flags Act 1953.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

At the November 2022 Council meeting, Council resolved to develop a Flag Policy to address requests to fly flags to promote causes within the municipality.

At the March 2023 Council meeting, Council endorsed Draft Council Policy No. 148 – Flags and Draft Community Flag Schedule for community feedback for a period of 28 days; and to receive a further report to consider the final Council Policy No. 148 – Flags and Community Flag Schedule.

OPTIONS

The following options are available for Council to consider:

1. Adopt the two documents as presented.
2. Make adjustments to the two documents.
3. Decide not to endorse the two documents.

Option 3 would mean Council has no formal mechanism to address community requests to fly flags to promote causes within the municipality.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community feedback was sought between 15 March 2023 and 12 April 2023, with the engagement process promoted in the following ways:

- Distribution of a media release on 20 March 2023;
- Social media post published on Council's Facebook page on 20 March 2023;
- Reference in the 21 March 2023 and 4 April 2023 editions of *Gannawarra News*; and
- References during the fortnightly 3SH Mayoral Interview, conducted on 23 March 2023 and 6 April 2023.

Seven responses were received during the community engagement period. Topics/comments raised in these submissions and responses are outlined in the table below:

Submission subject/comment	Council response
Types of flags flown outside Council buildings permanently (e.g Australian flag only, Australian and Aboriginal flags, Commonwealth/Shire flags only).	<p>Council must comply with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Australian National Flag Protocols, with the Australian Flags Booklet advising the following:</p> <p><i>The Australian Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Islander Flag should be flown on additional flagpoles, where available, next to or near the Australian National Flag on Australian Government buildings and establishments.</i></p> <p><i>If there is only one flagpole available, the Australian Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Islander Flag should not replace the Australian National Flag.</i></p> <p><i>If there are two flagpoles available, it is at the discretion</i></p>

	<i>of the authority concerned to determine which flag should be flown with the Australian National Flag.</i>
There is a national standard for flying flags outside Council buildings/flying flags other than Australian and Aboriginal flags diminishes the value of these flags.	A mechanism to handle community requests to fly flags to promote causes within the municipality is required, evident by two requests received by Council in 2022.
Inclusion of the Rainbow Flag in the Community Flag Schedule.	Council resolved at the November 2022 Council Meeting to fly the Rainbow Flag on IDAHOBIT Day in 2023 and develop a Flag Flying Policy to address future requests to fly flags to promote causes within the municipality. The process to add the Rainbow Flag to the Community Flag Schedule for future years will be guided by the future Council Policy No. 148 – Flags if adopted.

The Kerang Elders Group was also asked to provide input, however its schedule of meetings did not align with the engagement period for these documents. As a result, if the draft policy is adopted, feedback will be sought and presented to Council as part of the policy's annual review, scheduled to occur in May 2024.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Not applicable.

COLLABORATION

Not applicable.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

There is no direct cost to Council's budget in the adoption of this Policy.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Australian National Flag Protocols

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Council Plan 2021-2025;

Goal 1: Liveability – 1.1 Improve the health, safety and wellbeing of our community through partnerships, services and programs.

Goal 3: Sustainability – 3.3 Be a creative employer of choice through our adherence to good governance and our inclusive culture.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be presented in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in regards to this matter.



Flags

COUNCIL POLICY NO. 148

1. POLICY OBJECTIVE

This policy governs the flying of flags outside key Council assets in Kerang and Cohuna and establishes a mechanism to consider requests for the flying of other flags significant to the Gannawarra community.

2. SCOPE

This policy outlines the protocols in relation to the flag poles managed by Gannawarra Shire Council, but excludes those managed by other organisations.

3. POLICY

It is important that the Council and external organisations adhere to the Department of the Premier and Cabinets protocols for flying and/or use of flags, to ensure that flags are being used with the proper respect and dignity.

3.1 Regular locations for flying of flags

Council will fly flags on a permanent basis at the following locations:

Location	Number of flag poles	Flags flown
Kerang Council Building (49 Victoria Street, Kerang)	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Australian National Flag• Aboriginal Flag <p>NOTE: Flags flown continuously over the 24-hour period, except during times of replacement or maintenance of flags and poles</p>
Garden Park, Cohuna (90 King George Street, Cohuna)	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Australian National Flag• Aboriginal Flag• Community flagpole <p>NOTE: Flags flown continuously over the 24-hour period, except during times of replacement or maintenance of flags and poles</p>

Council has the capacity to fly flags on a temporary basis at the following locations:

Town	Location/s	Number of flag poles
Kerang	Atkinson Park (near soundshell)	1
	Bendigo Road median strip (near intersection of Bendigo Road and Andrew Street)	1

3.2 Definition of flags

3.2.1 Australian National Flag

The Australian National Flag is the chief national symbol and was raised for the first time on 3 September 1901 in the presence of the first Australian Prime Minister, the Hon. Edmund Barton.

This symbol of nationality stands for the democracy which allows Australians to discuss its meaning and origins.

The flag has three elements on a blue background: the Union Jack, the Commonwealth Star and the Southern Cross. The Union Jack in the upper left corner represents the history of British settlement. Below the Union Jack is a white Commonwealth, or Federation, star. It has seven points representing the unity of the six states and the territories of the Commonwealth of Australia.

The star is also featured on the Commonwealth Coat of Arms. The Southern Cross is shown on the flag in white. It is a constellation of five stars that can only be seen from the southern hemisphere and is a reminder of Australia's geography.

The Australian National Flag may be flown everyday throughout the year.

Guidelines regarding the flying of the Australian National Flag are outlined in *The Australian flags – part 2: The protocols for the appropriate use and the flying of the flag*. This can be viewed at www.pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/government/australian-flags-booklet/part-2

3.2.2 The Aboriginal Flag

The Australian Aboriginal flag was proclaimed as a flag of Australia under Section 5 of the *Flags Act 1953* on 14 July 1995. The symbolic meaning of the flag colours (as stated by its designer and aboriginal elder Mr Harold Thomas) are:

Black: Represents the Aboriginal people of Australia

Red: Represents the red earth, the red ochre and a spiritual relation to the land

Yellow: Represents the Sun, the giver of life and protector.

The Aboriginal Flag may be flown everyday throughout the year.

3.2.3 The Torres Strait Island Flag

The Torres Strait Islander Flag was created as a symbol of unity and identity for Torres Strait Islander peoples, designed by the late Bernard Namok from Thursday Island.

The flag was recognised by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission in June 1992 and given equal prominence with the Aboriginal flag.



The flag was proclaimed as a flag of Australia under Section 5 of the *Flags Act 1953* on 14 July 1995.

The Torres Strait Islander Flag may be flown everyday throughout the year.

3.3 Order of precedence

The Australian National flag takes precedence in Australia over all other flags when it is flown in company with other flags. Thereafter when flown in the community, the order of precedence of flags is:

- The Australian National Flag.
- State and Territory flags.
- Other flags prescribed by the *Flags Act 1953* including:
 - The Australian Aboriginal flag.
 - The Torres Strait Islander flag in either order.
 - Ensigns and pennants including local government; Commonwealth, state and territory agencies; and non-government organisations.
 - Ensigns and pennants of Council supported causes.

3.4 Dignity of Flags

All flags should be treated with respect and dignity. Flags must be handled ceremoniously, which means:

- Taking time to handle them formally, carefully, and respectfully and avoiding sudden movements when raising and lowering flags;
- Flags must never fall to or be laid on the ground; and
- Flags must never be flown if they are damaged, faded or dilapidated.

3.5 Retirement of Flags

In accordance with the Australian National Flag Protocols, when the material of a flag begins to deteriorate, it can either be placed in a permanent place of storage or be destroyed privately and in a dignified way. This may include cutting the flag into small unrecognisable pieces, placing it in an appropriate sealed bag or closed container, and then placing it in the normal rubbish collection.

Alternatively, Council may choose to hold a ceremony to mark the retirement of a used flag, such as the Australian National Flag. Further information on this process can be found in the Australian National Flag Protocols on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet website.

3.6 Flying a Flag at Half-Mast

Flags are flown at half-mast as a sign of mourning.

There may be times when direction is given by the Department of Premier and Cabinet for the Australian National Flag and the Victorian State Flag to be flown at half-mast. Compliance with notifications from the Department of Premier and Cabinet is mandatory.

All flags that are flown alongside the Australian National Flag will be flown at half-mast when the Australian National Flag is flown at half-mast. The Australian National Flag should be raised first and lowered last.

3.6.1 ANZAC Day

On 25 April each year, flag/s are to be flown at half-mast until 12 noon, then at the peak of the flagpole for the remainder of the day.

3.6.2 Remembrance Day

On 11 November each year, flag/s must be flown at the peak of the flagpole until 10.30am, when it is lowered at half-mast for the Remembrance Day service and raised back to the peak from 11.02am for the remainder of the day.

3.6.3 Flying the Aboriginal Flag at half mast

Following a request from the relevant Aboriginal Community and at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer or in their absence the Director Corporate Services, the Australian Aboriginal Flag will be flown at half-mast to mark the passing of an Aboriginal person who has contributed significantly to the Gannawarra Shire community.



3.6.4 Flying the Torres Strait Flag at half mast

Following a request from the relevant Torres Strait Islander Community and at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer or in his/her absence the Director Corporate Services, the Torres Strait Islander Flag will be flown at half-mast to mark the passing of a Torres Strait Islander person who has contributed significantly to the Gannawarra Shire community.

3.6.4 Notification of flags flying at half mast

Apart from ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day, Council will notify the public when either the Australian National Flag, Aboriginal Flag or Torres Strait Island Flag is flown at half-mast through one or more of Council's communication channels, including the reason.

3.7 Community Flag Schedule

Upon adoption of this Policy and upon every subsequent review, Council shall adopt a Community Flag Schedule which sets out which flags shall be flown, when they shall be flown, and which flag poles shall be used.

The schedule is to be considered a living document, and therefore can be added to by Council resolution, either for a one-off occasion or on an ongoing basis.

In considering the addition of flags to the Community Flag Schedule, regard shall be given to whether the flying of the flag will cause offence to sectors of the community or whether highlighting a particular issue, cause or group would be inconsistent with Council's values, commitment to inclusiveness or does not align to Federal or State legislation.

3.8 Application Process for Requests to Fly Additional Flags

An application to fly an additional flag not listed in the Community Flag Schedule can be done by writing to the Chief Executive Officer. The application must indicate:

- How the flying of the flag would recognise the social, inclusive, cultural, environmental, economic or historical matter of Local, State and/or National significance that has a direct relevance to the Gannawarra Shire Council community;
- What time period the flag is requested to be flown and the reason for the duration. Flags will not be permitted to be flown for longer than 7 days, unless Council resolves for the flag to be flown for a longer period of time;
- Who will raise and lower the flag; and
- If the occasion requires a Mayor or Councillor to be in attendance, and whether they are required to make a speech.

All requests to fly additional flags will be determined by Council resolution.

Any flag proposed to be flown must be provided by the applicant at his/her cost, be in good condition and meet appropriate dimensions noted in the *Flags Act 1953*.

Council will not enter into agreements to raise flags with parties:

- That are involved in or encourage unlawful activities or causes;
- That promote gambling, alcohol or tobacco products;
- Who do not share Council's views on promoting a diverse, tolerant and inclusive community;
- That are associated with religious, political or extremist groups or which may incite unrest or ill-feeling within the community;
- Whose purposes to display the flag requested for flying misrepresent the flag's intent; or
- That are for advertising purposes, unless it is for a Council related event.

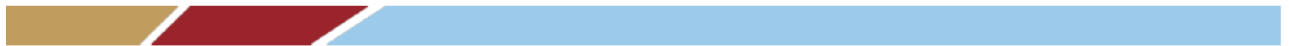
4. POLICY REVIEW

It is recommended this policy be reviewed annually. At the time of review, this policy was compliant with the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Members of the public may inspect all Council policies at Gannawarra Shire Council's Kerang and Cohuna Offices, or online at www.gsc.vic.gov.au.

Any enquiries in relation to this policy should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer on (03) 5450 9333.





COMMUNITY FLAG SCHEDULE

TO ACCOMPANY - COUNCIL POLICY NO. 148

This Procedure should be read in conjunction with Gannawarra Shire Council Policy No. 148 – Flags, which governs the flying of flags outside key Council assets in Kerang and Cohuna and establishes a mechanism to consider requests for the flying of other flags significant to the Gannawarra community.

KERANG COUNCIL BUILDING

	Flag pole 1 (far left of building)	Flag pole 2
Default	Australian National Flag	Aboriginal Flag
JANUARY		
FEBRUARY		
MARCH		
APRIL	25 April (ANZAC Day) Half-mast – Dawn to 12 noon	25 April (ANZAC Day) Half-mast – Dawn to 12 noon
MAY		
JUNE		
JULY		
AUGUST		
SEPTEMBER		
OCTOBER		
NOVEMBER	11 November (Remembrance Day) Half-mast – 10.30am to 11.02am	11 November (Remembrance Day) Half-mast – 10.30am to 11.02am
DECEMBER		

GARDEN PARK, COHUNA

	Flag pole 1 (flag pole next to Gateway)	Flag pole 2	Flag pole 3
Default	Australian National Flag	Aboriginal Flag	Torres Strait Island Flag
JANUARY			
FEBRUARY			
MARCH			
APRIL	25 April (ANZAC Day) Half-mast – Dawn to 12 noon	25 April (ANZAC Day) Half-mast – Dawn to 12 noon	25 April (ANZAC Day) Half-mast – Dawn to 12 noon
MAY			
JUNE			
JULY			
AUGUST			
SEPTEMBER			
OCTOBER			
NOVEMBER	11 November (Remembrance Day) Half-mast – 10.30am to 11.02am	11 November (Remembrance Day) Half-mast – 10.30am to 11.02am	11 November (Remembrance Day) Half-mast – 10.30am to 11.02am
DECEMBER			

COMMUNITY FLAGPOLE LOCATIONS

Town	Location/s	Number of flag poles
Kerang	Atkinson Park (near soundshell)	1
	Bendigo Road median strip (near intersection of Bendigo Road and Andrew Street)	1

FURTHER INFORMATION

Members of the public may inspect all Council policies at Gannawarra Shire Council's Kerang and Cohuna Offices, or online at www.gsc.vic.gov.au.

Any enquiries in relation to this policy should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer on (03) 5450 9333.

7.6 DRAFT GANNAWARRA URBAN GROWTH STRATEGY

Author: Kellie Burmeister, Manager Planning and Regulatory Services

Authoriser: Wade Williams, Acting Director Infrastructure and Development

Attachments: 1 Draft Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

- 1. Endorse the Draft Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy for community feedback for a period of 28 days; and**
- 2. Receive a further report to consider the final Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council is actively planning for population, housing and employment growth . This growth is being driven by the region's increasing appeal of its waterside towns and places to live, work and visit, rapidly evolving agriculture sector, strong manufacturing and construction sectors, natural environment and significant investments in mineral sands mining, electricity and renewal energy generation.

This draft strategy has found that Gannawarra's previous strategic planning has served well but there is now a need to refine and update these strategic plans to provide the additional support needed to those areas that are seeing higher demand and faster growth rates.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Urban Growth Strategy is to undertake evidence-based assessment of urban land supply and demand to prepare population forecast and reconcile them within a set of implementable strategic planning directions that support housing and employment growth in the Gannawarra Shire.

ATTACHMENTS

Draft Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy

DISCUSSION

The Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy has been commissioned to guide the future development of the municipality. The final strategy will feed into the Gannawarra Planning Scheme and update the Structure Plans.

Proposals for land development, industry investment and workforce attractions are being hindered through a lack of long term land use strategy for residential and employment land.

The Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy seeks to address this blockage by undertaking place based analysis that links population drivers in terms of future growth, key worker housing and meeting broader housing needs. Much of this detailed work will be advanced by the private sector in partnership with the Shire.

The strategy is primarily focussed on the townships of Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook and the Kerang Lakes area and provides clarity for long term strategic moves and enables alignment of infrastructure planning.

RELEVANT LAW

Planning and Environment Act 1987

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Nil

OPTIONS

1. Endorse the draft Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy as attached for public consultation prior to adoption; or
2. Amend the draft strategy prior to public consultation.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of the Gannawarra Planning Scheme is to provide a clear and consistent framework within which decisions about the use and development of land can be made, to express state, regional, local and community expectations for areas and land uses, to provide for the implementation of state, regional and local policies affecting land use and development and to support responses to climate change.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

It is intended to seek community feedback on the draft Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy for 28 days. Feedback will be presented to Councillors at a future meeting for consideration and adoption.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

One of the main purposes of this strategy is to ensure that the Gannawarra Planning Scheme is as up to date and accurate as possible ensuring that any proposed development can commence in accordance with the strategic direction of the Council.

COLLABORATION

Collaboration will occur with the relevant authorities including Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action (DEECA), North Central Catchment Management Authority (NCCMA), Department of Transport (DET) and water authorities.

In addition Council has been in collaboration with the Victorian Planning Authority throughout this process.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

This strategy is fully funded by the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) through the Streamlining for Growth Program.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Plan Melbourne, Loddon Mallee North Regional Growth Plan, priorities set by the Minister for Planning in the VPA's Statement of Expectations and Business Plan and Homes for Victoria.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

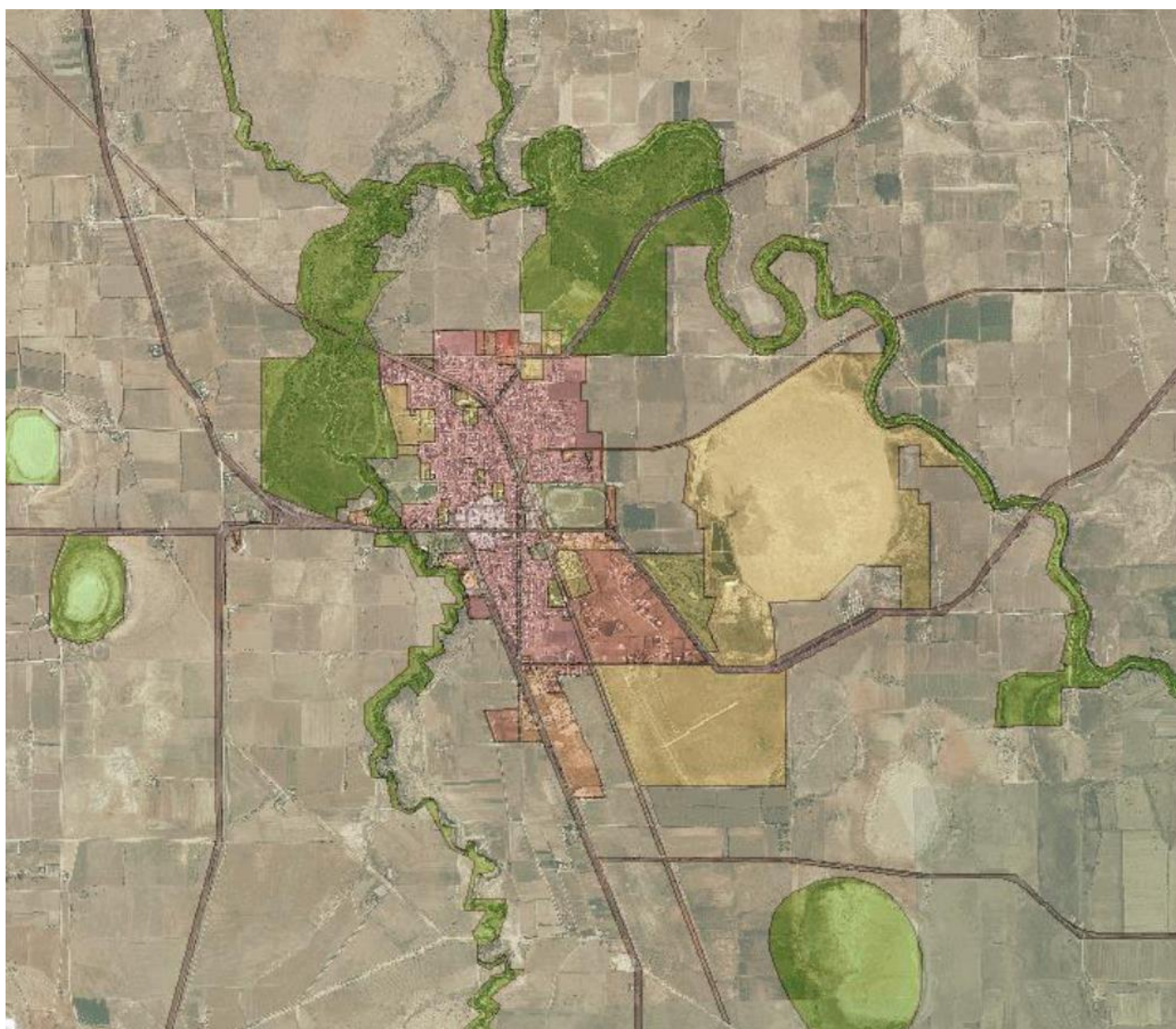
Gannawarra Shire Council Plan 2021-2025 – Goal 2 Growth – Continue to support existing agriculture and facilitate diversification to improve regional productivity through sustainable and planning and support growth through land rezoning for future rural residential development opportunities.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in regard to this matter.



Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy

Draft

Project undertaken for the
Gannawarra Shire Council
5 April 2023



GANNAWARRA URBAN GROWTH STRATEGY

Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy

This project has been conducted by REMPLAN

Project Team

Nick Byrne
Principal Consultant

Phil DeAraugo
Senior Consultant

5 April 2023

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GANNAWARRA URBAN GROWTH STRATEGY

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Glossary

The following acronyms and abbreviations are used in this report.

DPO	-	Development Plan Overlay
GSC	-	Gannawarra Shire Council
GPS	-	Gannawarra Planning Scheme
PPS	-	Planning Policy Framework
VIF 2019	-	Victoria in Future 2019 population projections
VPA	-	Victorian Planning Authority
GRZ		General Residential Zone
LDRZ		Low Density Residential Zone
IN1Z		Industrial 1 Zone
IN3Z		Industrial 3 Zone

Executive Summary and Key Recommendations

The Shire of Gannawarra is actively planning for population, housing and employment growth. This growth is being driven by the region's increasing appeal of its riverside towns as places to live, work and visit, its rapidly evolving agriculture sector, strong manufacturing and construction sectors, its natural environment, and significant investments in mineral sands mining and processing, electricity transmission and renewable energy generation and storage.

Previous estimates from the State Government had Gannawarra's population continuing to decrease over the next decade or so, something that is not uncommon in rural and regional areas. However recent trends and forecasts completed as part of this project indicate a more positive story. The historic decline in population experienced up to 2011 has reversed with the municipality experiencing a positive growth trend over the last 10 years. The population is forecast to grow, albeit relatively slowly, from its 2021 population of 10,612 to 10,929 people in 2046 (an increase of 317 people). Dwelling numbers are also forecast to increase from 5,385 in 2021, to 5,700 in 2046 (an increase of 315 dwellings).

The population and dwelling forecasts represent a 'base case' scenario and factor in many different variables of population growth to provide a robust and defensible set of projections. However, should the employment estimates that the Shire is targeting be delivered (through the large-scale projects and investments that are proposed), it may result in slightly higher growth rates and a faster uptake of land. While the full impacts of the proposed investments and projects are still to be seen, it is important that Gannawarra's Planning Policy Framework (PPF) is updated to reflect these possibilities and stand ready to facilitate well-designed, well-planned residential, commercial and industrial developments that will accommodate Gannawarra's future residents, workers and visitors.

This study has found that Gannawarra's previous strategic planning has served it well in terms of planning for future growth, but there is now a need to refine and update these plans to provide the additional support needed to those areas that are seeing higher demand and faster growth rates. While residential land supply is usually considered at a local government level, the size, unique characteristics, and drivers of demand have indicated that in the Gannawarra, this needs to be done at a localised level. Therefore, this project has focused on the towns of Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook. The Kerang Lakes area has also been included, as it has long been identified as having the potential to cater for a unique lakeside living option subject to it meeting a range of environmental and land management considerations.

Results of investigations

The result of the investigations undertaken as part of this strategy for each township are summarised below.

Kerang:

- Kerang is forecast to grow from 3,757 people in 2021 to 3,850 in 2046 (an additional 93 people requiring an extra 75 dwellings).
- There is sufficient zoned residential land to cater for current demand, however planning should commence (in the medium-term) for its next urban expansion area.
- Kerang has 16ha of vacant industrial land (28% of total industrial land) and needs to plan to expand its industrial land stocks in the short-term.

GANNAWARRA URBAN GROWTH STRATEGY

Cohuna:

- Cohuna is forecast to grow from 2,139 people in 2021 to 2,410 in 2046 (an additional 271 people requiring an extra 152 dwellings).
- In the short term, the Shire needs to facilitate comprehensive planning of its next urban expansion area.
- Cohuna has 32ha of vacant industrial land (35% of total industrial land). It is considered that there is an adequate stock of industrial land available, however consideration could be given to investigating a site suitable for a 'very large format' industrial use.

Koondrook:

- Koondrook is forecast to grow from 927 people in 2021 to 1,040 in 2046 (an additional 113 people requiring an extra 66 dwellings).
- In the short-term the Shire should assist landowners with vacant residential land to bring it to the market. In the medium-term, an incremental(residential) growth area will need to be planned.
- Koondrook has 8ha of vacant industrial land available (49% of total industrial land). The demand for industrial land is comparatively low, however a reconfiguration of the northern 'light industrial' precinct and some additional 'highway frontage' light industrial land to the south is recommended.

The Kerang Lakes:

- The Kerang Lakes area is forecast to remain relatively steady in terms of population and dwelling numbers.
- The priority for this area is to ensure that any new residential lots are meeting relevant environmental (and land management) standards and to investigate the potential of the eastern side of Kangaroo Lake for additional holiday / worker accommodation.

The Gannawarra Balance area:

- The Gannawarra Balance area (the remaining areas of Gannawarra) is forecast to decrease slightly in population from 3,431 in 2021 to 3,280 in 2046 but is expected to add a small number (12) of additional dwellings. This may change should some of the mining, renewable energy and agriculture developments proceed and be located close to other smaller towns.

GANNAWARRA URBAN GROWTH STRATEGY

Key recommendations

The key recommendations required to deliver the housing and industrial development needed to support Gannawarra's now growing community primarily relate to reviewing the Shire's key strategic land use planning documents and update the Planning Policy Framework (PPF) in the Gannawarra Planning Scheme (GPS). This will provide the development and construction sector with clear guidance on the location and type of development that the Shire wants and needs, and the community is expecting.

Once the statutory planning related actions are completed, they could be combined into an amendment to the GPS.

There are also a range of other important non-statutory related actions that are recommended to be pursued. All recommendations are shown in the following table.

Number	Recommendation
Planning policy recommendations	
1	Commencing a process to update the Structure Plan's for Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook as a priority (Structure Plans for Leitchville, Murrabit and Quambatook could be reviewed in the medium term).
2	Reviewing the Development Plan Overlays (DPO1 and DPO2) to ensure that they will facilitate coordinated development across multiple sites and ownerships.
3	Investigate several smaller sites recommended for rezoning (identified in Section 7 – Managing Future Growth).
4	Review the Planning Policy Framework and update (including updated Council adopted strategic plans, population and dwelling forecasts)
Non-statutory recommendations	
5	Assisting private sector led proposals that are consistent with the Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy 2023, where the Development Plan approach has been identified.
6	Assisting private sector led investigations into further lakeside living options, including worker accommodation, at Lake Charm and Kangaroo Lake.
7	Investigating opportunities for the Tate Drive Industrial Precinct to be extended to the east.
8	Facilitating discussions between large employers (needing worker accommodation), accommodation providers / developers and larger landowners in Kerang with a view to getting additional short-term / seasonal worker accommodation delivered to support large scale investments and seasonal worker shortages.
9	Engaging with VicTrack on options for underutilised land at the Kerang Train Station site (this may require a masterplan to be prepared for the site first, to ensure future transport needs can be accommodated).

1 Introduction

"The Gannawarra will be renowned as an Australian destination and home of choice for its liveability and unique opportunities in innovative agriculture, renewable energy and nature-based tourism." (Source: 2021-2025 Council Plan, Gannawarra Shire Council)



The Gannawarra Shire Council (GSC) has a clear vision and ambition and is pro-active in setting Gannawarra up for success. A key part of this is planning for population, housing and employment growth. Growth that is expected to be driven by the increasing appeal of its riverside towns as places to live, work and visit. This appeal is underpinned by the region's rapidly evolving agriculture sector, its natural environment, and significant investments in mineral sands mining and processing, electricity transmission and renewable energy generation.

Understanding the drivers of growth, in all its forms, and developing strategic responses that will facilitate and leverage further investment and growth is fundamental to the Shire delivering on its bold ambition and community vision. To assist, the Shire has engaged REMPLAN to work with them to develop an evidence-based assessment of population and residential growth and to identify a set of strategic planning directions that will inform an update of the Gannawarra Planning Scheme (GPS). In essence, this project will deliver a high-level Urban Growth Strategy designed to manage future population, housing and jobs growth. It will enable the Shire to get ahead of the game and set the scene to enable the private sector to play their part in this constantly evolving and unique part of regional Victoria.

This pro-active approach sits within the context of the official Victoria in Future 2019 (VIF 2019) population projections. When prepared, the VIF 2019 projections estimated a population decline of 560 people, reducing from an estimated 10,490 in 2021 down to 9,930 in 2036. Recent data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) indicates that the population is not declining as previously expected, and the official population estimate for Gannawarra in 2021 is 10,612. While the difference between the VIF 2019 estimate and the actual population in 2021 is not vast (the actual is 122 higher than the estimate), it is a positive sign that has now been incorporated into the new population forecasts prepared as part of this project. Considering these recent trends, REMPLAN's population forecasts now estimate that the Shire will continue to grow, albeit at a very manageable level, from 10,612 in 2021, to 10,851 in 2036 (923 more people than the VIF 2019 estimate), to 10,929 in 2046.

While population forecasts are a critical part of planning for the future, this Urban Growth Strategy departs slightly from a traditional land use planning strategy, in that it also seeks to integrate economic investment and employment data into its recommendations. As such, the Strategy considers the underlying factors influencing population change for the region, including the interplay

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between economic opportunities, lifestyle drivers, and demographic shifts – all of which influence aspects of urban growth. This Strategy incorporates knowledge provided by Gannawarra's Planning and Economic Development teams, who have worked closely with the business sector to identify future business expansion and job opportunities. To achieve these job numbers, it will need people to move to Gannawarra. Therefore, it becomes vitally important for planning to be slightly ahead of the game and ready to cater to and assist in driving future demand.

A snapshot of the latest population and economic statistics for Gannawarra include:

Summary

ABS 2021 Census Place of Usual Residence	10,683
Average Age	51 years
Number of Jobs	3,999
Number of Dwellings	5,326
Average Household Size (number of people per dwelling)	2.2
Land Area (ha)	373,760
Total Output (\$M)	\$1,215.317
Gross Regional Product(\$M)	\$588.650
Per Capita Gross Regional Product (\$K)	\$55.102
Per Worker Gross Regional Product (\$K)	\$147.199

The major contributors to employment are:

Industry Sector	Jobs	%
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	1,061	26.5%
Health Care & Social Assistance	524	13.1%
Retail Trade	360	9.0%
Construction	323	8.1%
Public Administration & Safety	287	7.2%
Manufacturing	273	6.8%
All others combined	1,171	29.3%

The major contributors to output are:

Industry Sector	\$M	%
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	\$322.739	26.6%
Manufacturing	\$182.863	15.0%
Construction	\$147.542	12.1%
Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Service	\$103.216	8.5%
Public Administration & Safety	\$69.857	5.7%
All others combined	\$389.100	32.1%

While Gannawarra is an important part of Loddon Mallee's economy, it is also home to some significant environmental assets that are vitally important to the local community, to their sense of place, and their



ability to grow and leverage 'nature-based' lifestyle, tourism and business opportunities. These issues don't always get picked-up in the statistics, but they are clearly stated in the Shire's strategic planning and have been considered when developing the Strategy's recommendations.

1.1 Purpose and Scope

The primary purpose of this project is to undertake an evidence-based assessment of urban land supply and demand, to prepare population forecasts, and reconcile them within a set of implementable strategic planning directions that are consistent with State, regional and local policies.

The project scope is limited to the preparation of a high-level Urban Growth Strategy for Gannawarra. It will provide the basis and guidance for further detailed work that will bring residential and employment land to the market. Much of this detailed work will be advanced by the private sector in partnership with the Shire.

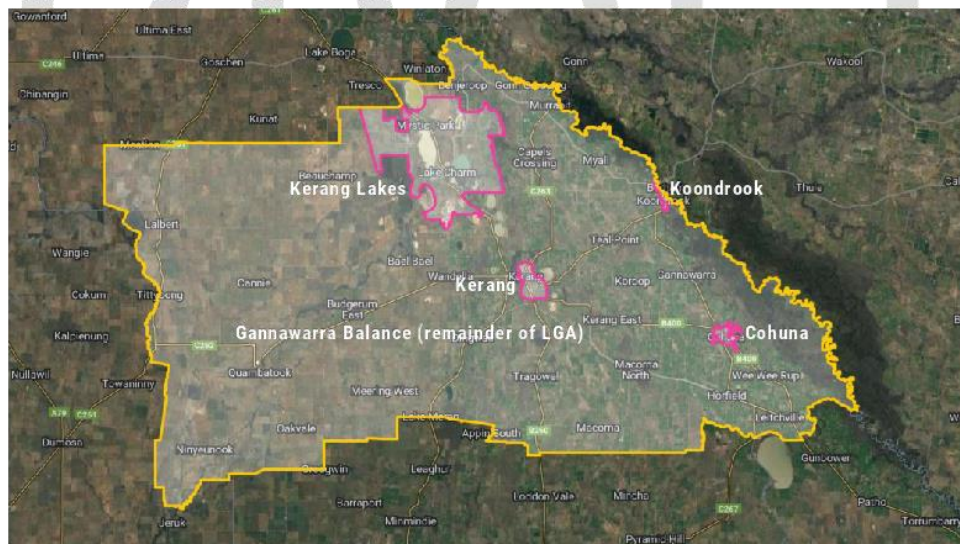
1.2 Region of Analysis

While the project relates to the Shire of Gannawarra, and in some cases to the broader region, the primary focus is on the four key areas of Kerang, Cohuna, Koondrook, and Kerang Lakes.

These four areas have been identified as being in specific need of review to enable them to plan and manage future growth in the coming decades. Each area has unique attributes and reasons for being investigated. Several of the townships have seen strong growth and development interest, while others are strategically located and are well positioned to leverage off the significant investments being made in the region. This should not be inferred that other parts of the Shire are not important, as they are, but rather, that a targeted approach is needed that will result in shire-wide benefits.

The Shire of Gannawarra and the four planning areas are shown in the following maps.

Figure 1: Shire of Gannawarra and the planning areas



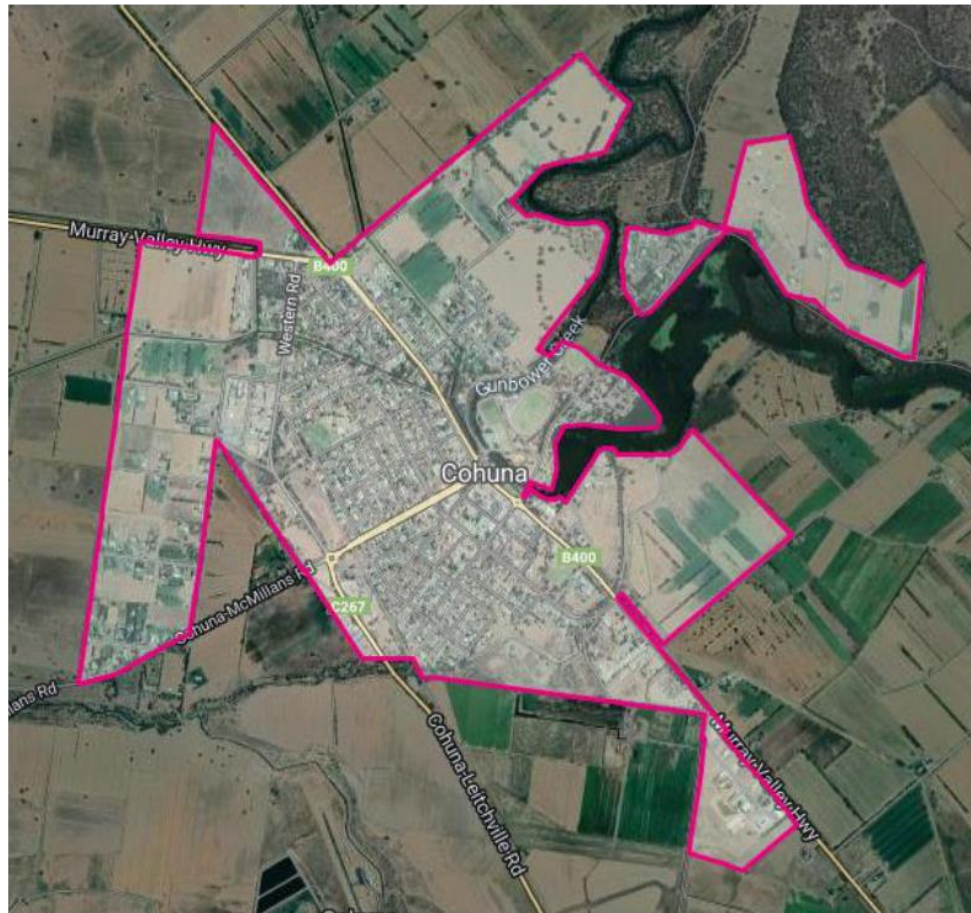
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Figure 2: Planning Area 1 – Kerang

The Kerang planning area is home to 3,781 people (Census 2021), or around 35% of the Shire's total population. It is the main service centre for the Shire with good transport links. The area is dotted with lagoons, wetlands and lakes, many of which are protected under the Ramsar Convention.

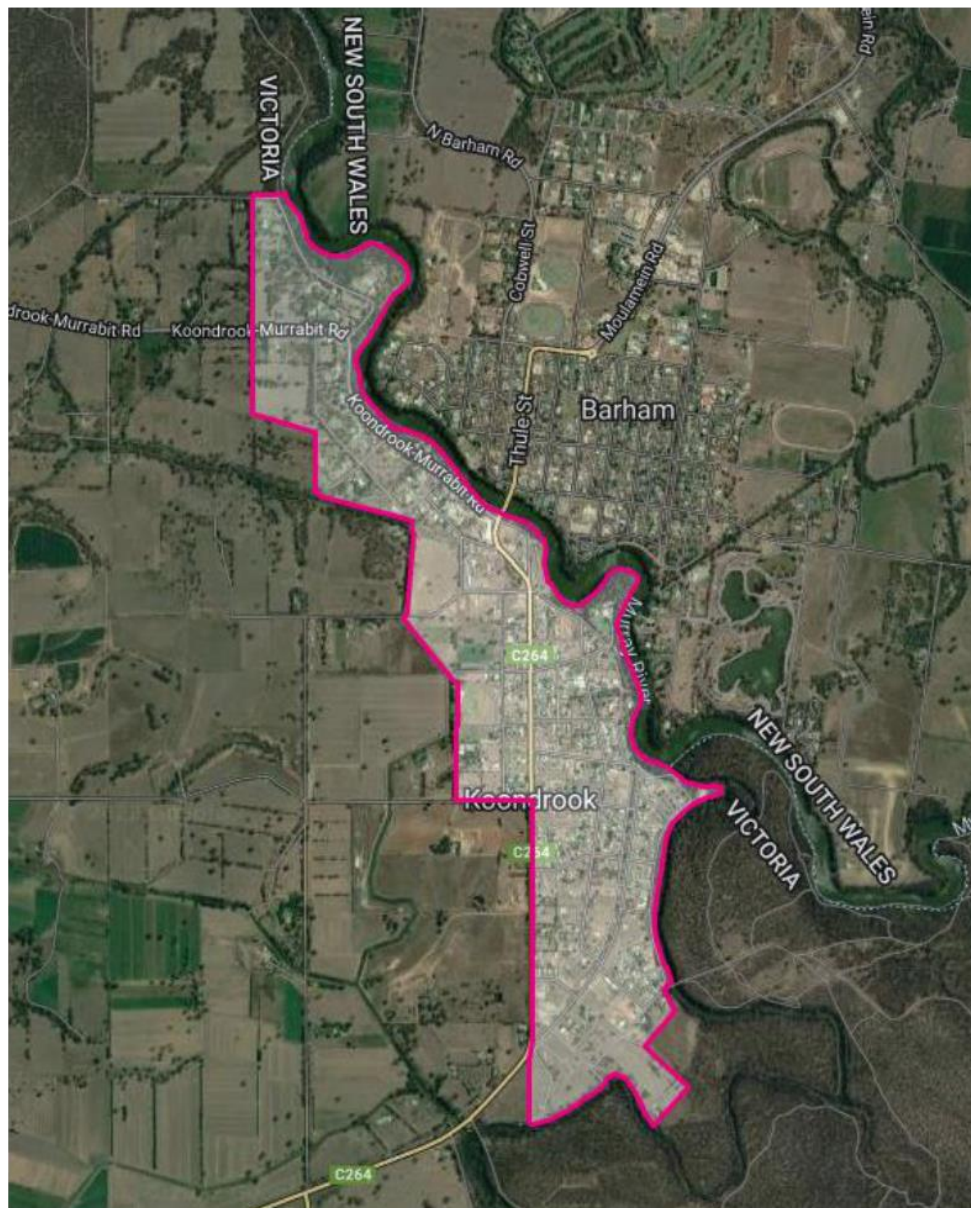
With the completion of the Victorian NSW Interconnector West (VNI West or KerangLink) later this decade, the region is expected to become a hub for renewable energy projects, which will be able to connect to the transmission line at Kerang.

Figure 3: Planning Area 2 – Cohuna



The Cohuna planning area is home to 2,151 people (Census 2021), or around 20% of the Shire's total population. Cohuna is located on the Gunbower Creek, an anabranch of the Murray River, and is the second largest town in Gannawarra.

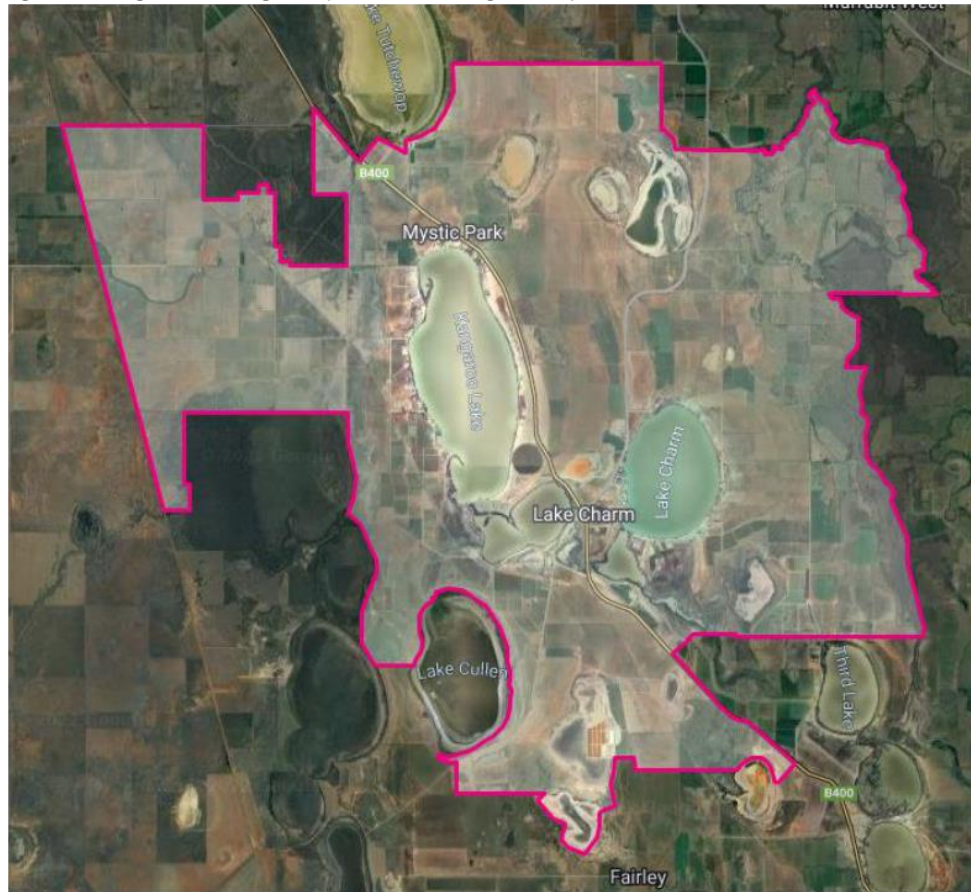
The town has a strong and attractive commercial centre and is a popular spot for river-based outdoor activities. Many of the towns sporting facilities are clustered centrally, along Cohuna Island Road. The area is also known for its dairy production and is becoming increasingly popular as a place to live.

Figure 4: Planning Area 3 – Koondrook

The Koondrook planning area is home to 931 people (Census 2021), or just under 9% of the Shire's total population. It is located on the Victorian side of Murray River, opposite is its NSW twin-town of Barham.

The area is well known for its redgum timber, which features throughout the town centre in numerous urban design elements. The town is evolving towards nature-based activities that are focused on Gunbower Island and along its rivers and creeks.

Figure 5: Planning Area 4 – Kerang Lakes (Lake Charm and Kangaroo Lake)



The Kerang Lakes planning area is the largest geographic area of the four planning areas, but it has the smallest population, with much of the housing / accommodation flanking the eastern sides of the two main lakes. In 2021 the population was 361, or just over 3% of Gannawarra's total population.

The area is 19 kilometres to the north-west of Kerang and is a popular destination for water skiing, boating and fishing. It is also the closest of the planning areas to the mineral sands exploration, mining and processing projects proposed to its west. The Lakes area has been identified as having the potential to provide a unique residential offer, subject to addressing the environmental issues arising from its lakes and wetland location.

1.3 The Study Process

At the commencement of the project, a Project Team was formed that was led by senior staff at Gannawarra Shire Council. This included the Director Infrastructure & Development, Manager Economic Development and Manager Statutory Planning. REMPLAN team members included the Principal Planner and a Senior Consultant.

Several visits and meetings have been held, including two days of site visits and assessments of township structure, navigation, wayfinding and place-making initiatives across Kerang, Cohuna, Koondrook and the Kerang Lakes area. This has allowed for an in-depth understanding of how these towns and areas operate and what opportunities might be present. This 'ground truthing' has also contributed to the rigour of land supply assessment, which traditionally is a combination of desktop analysis combined with local knowledge from town planners.

Consultation has been deliberately targeted during the drafting of this strategy, primarily as it is seeking to implement existing adopted plans and strategies, and that it is based on technical assessments and good planning practice. Discussions have taken place with several key stakeholders and large landowners, which will be supplemented by further consultation on the draft strategy and its recommendations. More formal community consultation will take place during the process of actioning the strategy's actions, such as when structure plans are being reviewed or planning scheme amendments are being proposed.

Strategic plans constantly evolve throughout their preparation, and community and stakeholder engagement ultimately make for better plans that can be implemented. However, care needs to be taken to ensure that the right questions are asked at the right time, that we avoid consultation fatigue (by asking the same questions time after time), and that we seek to integrate and implement what has already been heard and agreed to (in adopted plans and strategies).

2 Background

2.1 Policy Context

At a regional level, the **Loddon Mallee North Regional Growth Plan 2014** provides a high-level analysis of the region and includes the following future land use strategies and actions for Gannawarra:

- Recognise and reinforce Kerang's role as the main service centre for the Gannawarra community of interest
- Support the growth of Kerang through planned development, incremental expansion and infrastructure investment
- Recognise and support Cohuna to continue its role as a town that services its local community and surrounding rural settlements
- Recognise and support the future role of Quambatook to provide services to surrounding rural areas
- Support walking and cycling in urban areas to enhance accessibility
- Support public transport connections between towns within the Gannawarra community of interest, Kerang and Bendigo
- Support the Gannawarra Urban and Rural Strategy (2007).

Implementation of the Regional Growth Plan's key planning considerations is primarily undertaken through their inclusion in the Gannawarra Planning Scheme, which ensures that they receive due consideration in the preparation of strategic studies and in the assessment of planning applications.

At a local government level, there are many Council adopted strategies and plans that are relevant to this project, with the four most important being:

- Gannawarra Shire Council 2021-2025 Council Plan (incorporating the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan)
- Gannawarra Shire Council Economic Development Strategy 2019-2024
- Urban and Rural Strategy Plan, Parsons Brinckerhoff, November 2007
- Lake Charm, Kangaroo Lake and Gunbower Creek Environs Strategy, Parsons Brinckerhoff, 2013.

The **Council Plan 2021-2025** is a high level integrated strategic document that is designed to help guide the Shire and its community to reach its potential. It identifies the following three goals:

1. Enhance the wellbeing and liveability of the Gannawarra through creative infrastructure and access to services
2. Grow the Gannawarra by developing a diverse and broad economy
3. Supporting long-term financial and environmental sustainability.

Each goal includes numerous strategic priorities; the most relevant being Goal 2. Goal 2 actions relate to facilitating infrastructure, programs and policies that support economic development and productivity, whilst considering our natural environment; facilitating the implementation of new energy infrastructure and energy projects; supporting the creation of destinations to attract visitors to the region; and to support growth through land rezoning.

The **Economic Development Strategy 2019-2024** has been prepared to respond to the current economic conditions and align with Council's vision and present a clear and achievable strategy and action plan. It includes the following four strategic directions, each with its own set of actions:

1. Facilitate the development of a diverse agricultural sector
2. Drive population growth through lifestyle and employment attraction
3. Facilitate the development of the Gannawarra as an environmental leader
4. Develop the tourism sector through improvements in product and infrastructure.

The **Urban and Rural Strategy Plan (2007)** has laid the foundations for planning and managing growth in Gannawarra for the past 15 years. It is included in the Gannawarra Planning Scheme as a Background document at Clause 72.08. While much of the document is still relevant, and has informed this project, there are elements that are no longer appropriate and would be unlikely to proceed due to new and revised planning rules, regulations and requirements. For example, following the bushfires and floods that have occurred in Victoria since 2009, there are now much stricter requirements around building in bushfire prone areas and areas that are subject to inundation. There is also a stronger focus on protecting the 'right to farm' in rural areas, and a greater emphasis placed on consolidating residential development into areas where they can be easily serviced and contribute to the creation of diverse (with a range of dwelling types) and accessible (walkable) places.

Implementing elements of the **Lake Charm, Kangaroo Lake and Gunbower Creek Environs Strategy (2013)** are still of relevance, however once again they must be considered within the current planning framework, particularly addressing issues such as potential impacts on agricultural activities and the protection of the environment and internationally recognised wetlands.

Overall, Gannawarra's policy setting is very clear and direct. There is an ambition for growth and development that is complementary to, and leverages off, its unique natural environment and environmental setting. It promotes growth that will benefit both existing and future residents of the Gannawarra. The existing policy setting provides a great basis on which to consider a new Urban Growth Strategy; a strategy that will set out how future growth and development will be facilitated and managed over the coming decades.

2.2 Gannawarra Planning Scheme

The current Planning Policy Framework is contained within the Gannawarra Planning Scheme (GPS). While many parts of the GPS will be relevant at different stages of the planning process, the key clauses that relate to planning for future residential and employment growth are:

- **Clause 11.01-1R Settlement – Loddon Mallee North.** This clause identifies Kerang as a town where growth will be supported and shows both Cohuna and Koondrook as towns. The Loddon Mallee North plan highlights that land to the north, east and south of Kerang is within an irrigation district (and therefore highly productive agricultural land), and that much of Gannawarra contains high value terrestrial habitat. Urban flood and urban bushfire considerations are important in Kerang.
- **Clauses 11.01-1L-01, 11.01-1L-02 and 11.01-1L-03** contain one-page structure plans for Cohuna, Kerang and Koondrook respectively. All plans were prepared around 2006 and are due to be reviewed, however all plans contain elements that remain relevant to this project.
- **Clause 11.01-1L-07 Settlement in Gannawarra,** includes strategies that seek to support development that helps generate employment and economic activity, particularly in Kerang and Cohuna, and strategies that support residential development where it can be easily serviced and limits impact on the environment.
- **Clause 11.02-1S Supply of urban land,** seeks to ensure a sufficient supply of land is available for residential, commercial, retail, industrial, recreational, institutional and other community uses. Notably, the clause includes a strategy to plan to accommodate projected population growth over at least a 15-year period and provide clear directions on locations where growth

should occur. The clause states that residential land supply will be considered on a municipal basis, rather than a town-by town basis. *Note: This project argues that the differences and distances between the four planning areas demonstrates the need to consider land supply at a more localised level.*

- **Clause 11.03-6S Regional and local places**, seeks to facilitate integrated place-based planning by integrating relevant planning considerations to provide specific direction for the planning of sites, places, neighbourhoods and towns, and to consider the distinctive characteristics and needs of regional and local places in planning for future land use and development.

For each of the planning areas, there will also be a unique mix of planning zone and overlay controls that have influenced the directions of the project. However, a common issue across the Shire that is worthy of extra attention is that of flooding and inundation. Following the 2011 floods, significant levee infrastructure (both upgrades and new) was constructed and has been tested during the recent 2022 floods. This infrastructure successfully protected many properties that may have been inundated without it. Kerang was surrounded by flood waters during the height of the recent flood, but the levees were successful in protecting the urban area. Gannawarra Shire has worked closely with the North Central Catchment Management Authority (NCCMA) to ensure that its flood mapping is accurate and planning controls have been updated.

The key planning controls are listed adjacent to the planning area maps in the Managing Future Growth section of this report (Section 7).

2.3 Other Strategic Planning Matters

This project is supported by the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA), who are responsible for providing strategic planning advice and guidance to regional councils. Recognising the need for a simplified version of the Precinct Structure Plan guidelines that are used in Victoria's growth areas, the VPA have prepared **PSP 2.0 Guidance Note: Applying the PSP Guidelines in regional areas (PSP 2.0)**. PSP 2.0 provides a replicable approach and a framework to prepare place-based plans that are tailored to reflect the scale and complexity of the planning task at hand.

A review of PSP 2.0 indicates that the type and scale of future growth in Gannawarra is classified as 'incremental growth areas' or 'urban expansion areas'. These are undeveloped areas either within existing township boundaries, or on the fringes of towns that may be able to utilise existing township infrastructure. Once the broader strategic planning directions have been identified and endorsed, it is expected that incremental growth and urban expansion growth areas can be planned by taking a Development Plan Overlay and Section 173 Agreement (for any infrastructure provision or required upgrades) approach.

Suitable locations are shown on maps in Section 7 - Managing Future Growth, as 'Incremental Growth Area' or 'Urban Expansion Area'. The planning pathway is still through the preparation of a Planning Scheme Amendment. This includes the preparation of background technical documentation, a Development Plan Overlay Schedule and ultimately the preparation of concept plans for the site. Council, landowners, or the VPA could lead the planning scheme amendment process, however it is expected that in most cases it will be led by the private sector and the process will be managed by the council.

3 Population and Housing trends in Gannawarra

The following section details some of the most important elements of Gannawarra's existing population and housing trends. The size and structure of the population is an important factor when considering future housing needs. For example, young families will generally have different housing needs and preferences to those of retirees, which again will differ from young single adults. While households (the people living in a dwelling) are very adaptable and will often live in a dwelling that is smaller or larger than what is needed, a well-performing housing market will try to cater for this by having a supply of diverse housing and tenure options available. Households will have the *opportunity* to match their dwelling with their housing needs and preferences.

In a well-performing housing market, supply and demand work together to drive the construction of new housing that caters to market demand, but it also tries to 'get ahead of the game' and plan for demographic change, unmet demand and changing preferences. However, in practice there are a range of human and policy factors that don't necessarily align with the theory. For example, older people often prefer to stay in their family home, even when it is much larger than what they need. Staying allows residents to remain connected to their local community, close to the services they need, and to have additional space should friends or family come to visit. Another reason might simply be that it is their 'family home' and they have a strong sentimental connection to it. In some cases, it could be that there is no alternative (smaller or affordable) homes in their neighbourhood. All are important factors, and all make it difficult to predict how an individual will respond, but overall demographic trends do assist in understanding housing demand.

Policy factors such as planning controls and building regulations can also, inadvertently, or deliberately, favour the delivery of one form of housing over another. Current policy settings tend to facilitate the construction of single detached dwellings on relatively large lots on the edge of existing settlements (greenfield development), compared to the construction of smaller or medium-density dwellings in established areas (infill development). This is not to say that medium-density housing cannot be delivered at the same time, but rather it may need other settings to change, such as a more supportive planning policy framework, or improved property economics, before the property and construction sector will adequately respond to the latent demand that is likely to be there.

Policy changes can often have long lag periods before they have any effect. However, this is not always the case. During the recent pandemic many communities experienced first-hand how quickly some things can change. The 'working from home' directives and the greater flexibility that resulted for many office-based employees and employers is believed to have impacted on some peoples' home purchasing and rental decisions. Distance to the office became less critical, while having a dedicated working from home space became more important. It will be interesting to see how it plays out in coming years, but in general it appears to have had a positive impact on regional areas, particularly places with high levels of amenity where people want to live, and in areas where there was housing stock available. In areas where there wasn't housing stock available, prices tended to increase significantly, which has created its own set of issues.

The rate of growth is also an important consideration. In locations with low, slow, or even negative population growth, new homes are often still needed due to a declining household size (more houses are needed just to accommodate the same number of people). Slow growth can also make it difficult for new subdivisions to be progressed. Successful land development is complicated and requires expertise to do well. There are large upfront costs, holding costs, risks relating to creating an over-supply, and challenges in ensuring that there is an ongoing pipeline of work for sub-contractors. Land banking can be an issue, but in most cases it is more about balancing supply with demand at a price point that makes the development viable (if it isn't profitable, it doesn't happen, as lenders will not

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finance it). Developers and builders are at the pointy end of the strategic planning process and it is therefore important to get the policy and planning right so that they are clear on what they are expected to deliver when it comes to building the places that the community is expecting, and more importantly, want to live in.

The following sections include some of the key demographics that influence population and dwelling forecasts.

3.1 Population and Age Structure

The ABS **Estimated Resident Population (ERP)** for Gannawarra Shire on 30 June 2021 was 10,612. During the period 2016 to 2021 Gannawarra's population increased by 45 people. This represents a growth rate of 0.1% per year. While small, this positive rate of growth is a sign that the longer-term trend of population decline is likely to have reversed. Figure 6 below shows that much of the population decline coincided with the Millennium Drought. The severity of the drought had major implications on much of rural and regional south-east Australia and its townships. The end of the drought, the evolution of the agricultural sector, improvements to irrigation networks, the interest in water-based and nature-based activities, and recent investments in renewable energy production are expected to be contributing to this shift.

Figure 6: Gannawarra ERP 2001 – 2021

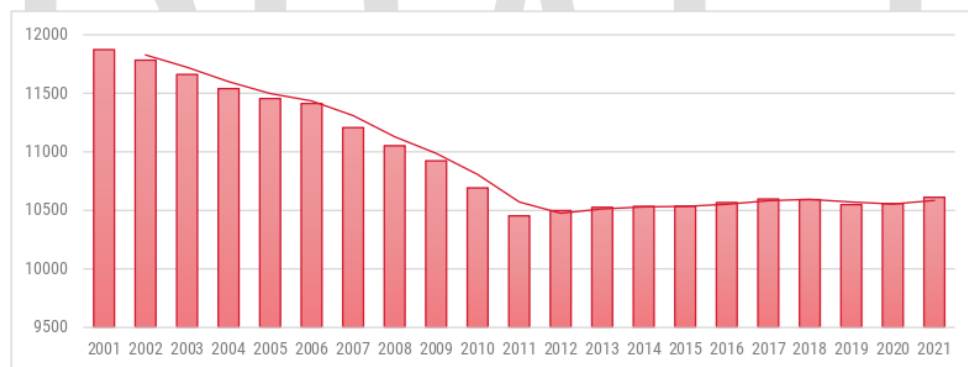
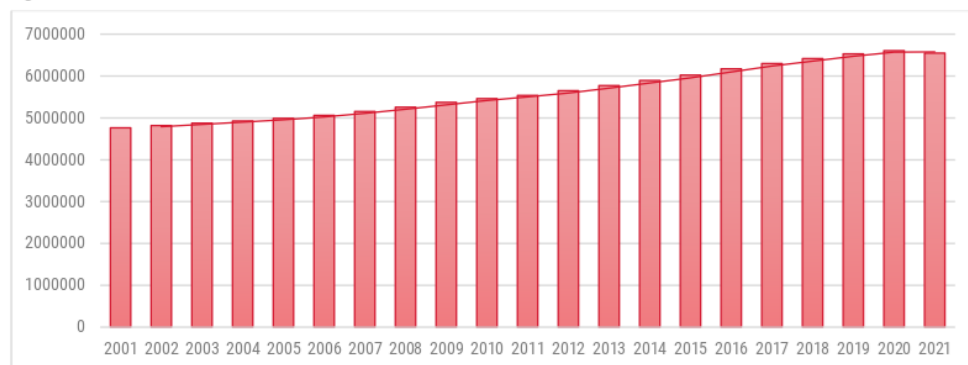


Figure 7: Victoria ERP 2001 - 2021



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When looking specifically at the four key planning areas, three of them have grown. Koondrook has been a standout, increasing its population by over 21% over the 10-year period and accounting for around half of Gannawarra's total growth. Koondrook's rate of growth has also increased slightly during the last five years compared to the first five-year period.

Table 1: Gannawarra Planning Areas Population Change 2011 - 2021

	2011	2016	2021	2011-21 Change (no)	2011-21 Change (%)
Gannawarra	10,366	10,548	10,683	+317	+3.0%
- Kerang	3,638	3,712	3,781	+143	+3.9%
- Cohuna	2,027	2,149	2,151	+124	+6.1%
- Koondrook	769	828	935	+166	+21.6%
- Kerang Lakes	375	354	361	-14	-3.7%
- GSC Balance	3,543	3,531	3,472	-71	-2.0%

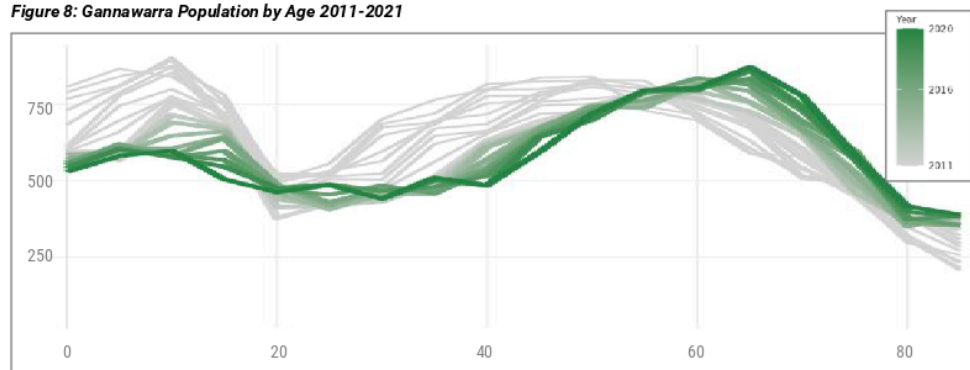
Cohuna has also been a strong performer over the 10-year period, however most of its growth occurred in the first five-year period between 2011 and 2016. This may be a result of the drought and people moving from nearby rural areas into Cohuna at that time.

The data suggests that Kerang has experienced slow and steady growth, just above the average for the Shire, while the Kerang Lakes area has seen a slight decrease in its population. Given the numbers are quite low in the Kerang Lakes area, they could be expected to fluctuate a little more than larger areas.

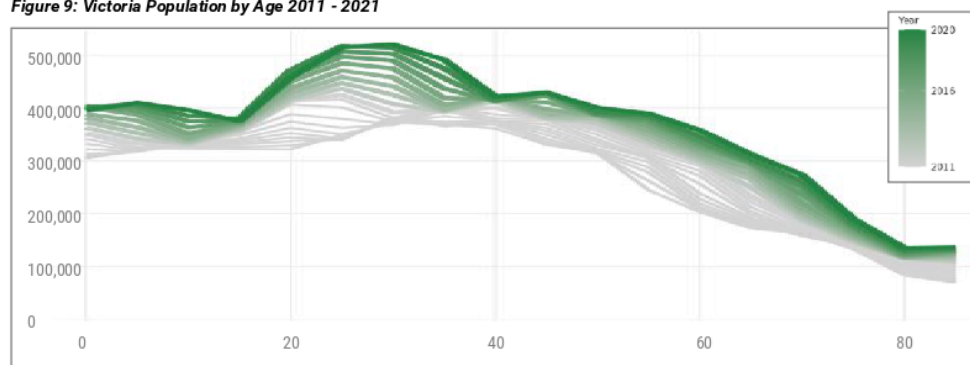
Outside of the main population areas of Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook, much of the Shire (referred to as the 'GSC Balance area') has been declining in population. While some people will have left the municipality, it is expected that many will have moved to Gannawarra's bigger towns and have contributed to their growth.

While the **total population** paints one part of the picture, the **population by age** adds a little more detail on how a population has changed over time. Twenty-year data is presented at a Shire wide scale (Figure 8) and is compared to Victoria's total population (Figure 9).

Figure 8: Gannawarra Population by Age 2011-2021



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Figure 9: Victoria Population by Age 2011 - 2021

As can be seen in the graphs above, Gannawarra's population profile is noticeably different to that of Victoria's. Gannawarra's population is older and is aging (the median age is 51 years compared to 38 years for Victoria).

Figure 8 also shows that Gannawarra has been losing younger people and gaining older people (indicated by the vertical difference in the light grey and dark green lines). The aging of the population can also be seen as the light grey lines move horizontally left to right and become darker green lines. Much of this is due to the Baby Boomer generation moving through the age profile and 'aging in place'. This trend is not uncommon in regional areas as young people tend to move to larger cities to pursue educational and employment opportunities while older people settle into retirement.

Another way to view population structure is to flip the axis and compare the **age profile** by 5-year age cohorts. Figure 10 and 11 confirm that Gannawarra has a smaller percentage of its population in the Young Workers (25-34) and Workers (35-49) age cohorts, and a higher percentage of its population in the 60 to 79 (Retirement) and 80+ (Elderly) age brackets when compared to Victoria. Figure 10 also shows that there has been a small increase in the number of people in the 20-24 and the 25-29 age cohorts over the past 10 years.

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Figure 10: Gannawarra age profile 2011 – 2021

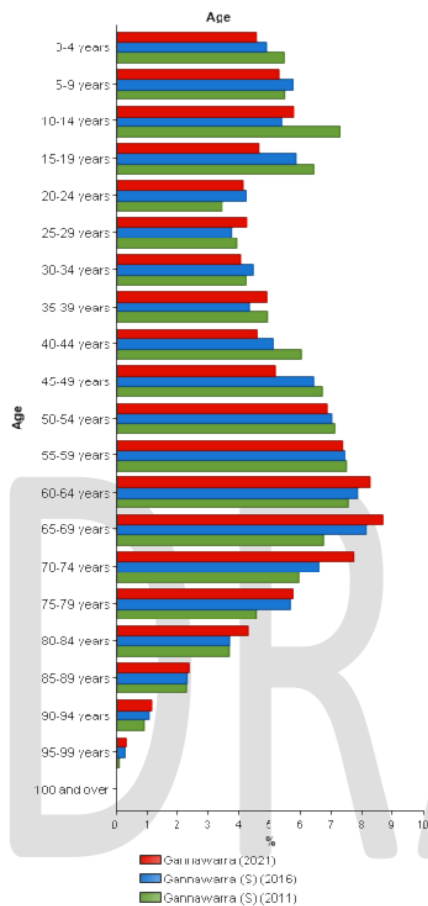
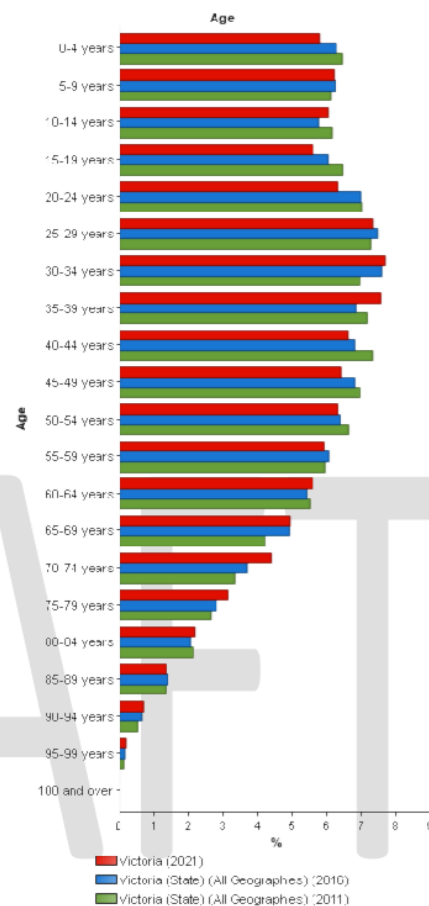


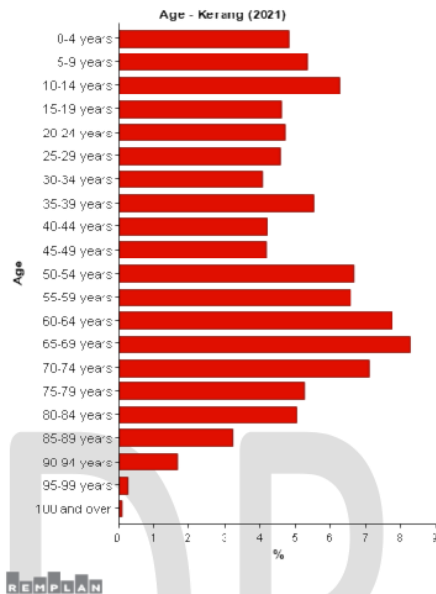
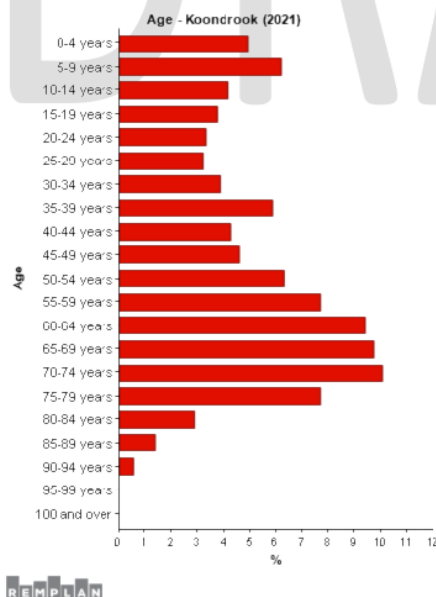
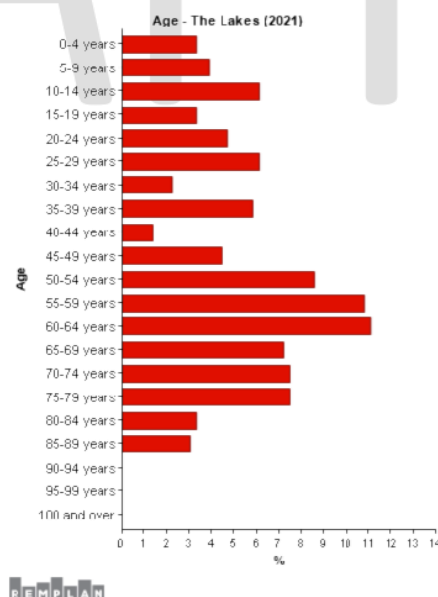
Figure 11: Victoria age profile 2011 – 2021



Drilling down a little deeper into the data and looking at the current age profile for the four planning areas, we can see some subtle differences starting to emerge.

As might be expected, due to its larger size and regional service centre role, the age profile for Kerang is the most balanced, with a higher proportion of people in younger age cohorts than other townships. Cohuna and Koondrook tend to have an older population profile, which may be explained in part by their appeal as retirement locations with excellent access to popular retirement activities such as fishing, golf and bowls. Both places are also only a short drive away from healthcare facilities (in Kerang and Barham). Kerang Lakes has an interesting age profile, with a noticeable bump in the 50 to 64 age group, but still with a good percentage of people under the age of 18. These could be families that have prioritised living lakeside with easy access to active water sports over living in a larger town. It is likely to also include a few early retirees that have moved to the area and people who are able to work from home.

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Figure 12: Kerang age profile 2021**Figure 13: Cohuna age profile 2021****Figure 14: Koondrook age profile 2021****Figure 15: Kerang Lakes age profile 2021**

3.2 Household Mobility

When it comes to household mobility, over 61% of Gannawarra's residents did not move during the previous 5-year period. This is higher than the Victorian average (54.34%), but in all areas there has been a general trend towards moving more frequently. In places such as Koondrook, where there has been strong growth, household mobility is likely connected to new people moving to town, but in the Kerang Lakes area, it may be a little more complicated and relate to a generational change that is linked to the era of when the area was developed, or it could simply be related to people moving into what were once holiday homes (during the pandemic).

Table 2: Same Address as Last Census

	2021	2016	2011
Gannawarra	61.22%	64.20%	66.87%
- Kerang	58.71%	60.88%	62.00%
- Cohuna	62.74%	61.76%	66.75%
- Koondrook	58.83%	64.70%	68.71%
- Kerang Lakes	61.03%	73.16%	74.65%
Victoria	54.34%	54.12%	57.59%

3.3 Household Composition

Gannawarra's population of 10,683 can also be viewed as 4,700 different households. A household is the person, or group of people, living in a dwelling. Households are often referred to as a 'family', but this is not always the case as some households are single people, while others are made up of a group of unrelated people ('group households'). Regardless of the **household composition**, it is particularly useful when it comes to understanding the services and housing needs that different towns might have.

Table 3: Gannawarra Household Composition 2021

	Number	%	Victoria %
Couples with children	938	20.0	30.9
Couples without children	1,459	31.0	24.6
One parent families	364	7.7	10.2
Other families	46	1.0	1.2
Group household	100	2.1	3.8
Lone person	1,453	30.9	24.7
Other not classified household	246	5.2	3.7
Visitor only households	94	2.0	1.0
Total households	4,700	100.0	100.0

When comparing Gannawarra's household composition to that of Victoria's, there are several notable differences – 'Couples with children' (20.0% compared to 30.9%), 'Couples without children' (31.0% compared to 24.6%) and 'Lone person' (30.9% compared to 24.7%). While these are not unexpected, due to the older age profile and regional location of Gannawarra, more importantly for this project it starts to raise questions on how well matched the housing stock is to the population. For example, with 61.9% of households having only one or two people living in them it might be assumed that there

will be a strong demand for smaller dwellings. Section 3.6 includes further detail on dwelling size and housing suitability.

3.4 Household Size

Household size relates to the average number of people living in each dwelling. Across Australia, household size has been declining for several decades. This trend has also occurred in Gannawarra, where household size has declined from 2.48 persons per dwelling in 2001 down to 2.21 in 2021. While the rate of decline has slowed, once again it is something that is expected given the older age profile and the high levels of 'Lone person' and 'Couple without children' household types mentioned above. For comparison, Victoria's average household size has dropped over the same 20-year period from 2.61 to 2.52.

The outcome of declining household sizes is that more houses are required to accommodate the same number of people. While this is an obvious conclusion, it is an important one. Even areas with no population growth will require new dwellings. For areas with growing populations with accompanying decline in average household size, the issue is compounded.

3.5 Dwelling Type

Across the Shire there are 5,326 dwellings. Over 88% of these are 'occupied private dwellings' and around 11.5% are 'unoccupied private dwellings'. The remaining 0.32% are classified as 'non-private dwellings'. These percentages align closely with the Victorian averages.

While in all planning areas the amount of unoccupied private dwellings decreased between 2016 and 2021, the Kerang Lakes area has seen a significant shift declining from 27.3% in 2016 down to 14.6% in 2021. This is likely to be related to the pandemic, where dwellings were often taken off the holiday market as people moved permanently into their holiday home or the dwelling was placed on the long-term rental market (where better returns were possible). Regardless of the reason, it is a noticeable change, and one replicated (but perhaps not to this extent) in other holiday home locations.

Table 4: Dwelling composition 2021

	Dwellings	% of GSC dwelling stock	Occupied private dwellings	Separate house	Owned outright / mortgage	Rented
Gannawarra	5,326	100%	88.2%	92.3%	71.5%	17.2%
- Kerang	1,892	35.5%	89.8%	87.0%	67.9%	22.2%
- Cohuna	1,093	20.5%	89.3%	91.8%	73.6%	17.4%
- Koondrook	472	8.8%	87.7%	95.9%	81.2%	11.5%
- Kerang Lakes	171	3.2%	85.3%	92.4%	72.9%	9.4%
- GSC Balance	1,715	32.2%	85.4%	97.8%	72.5%	13.5%
Victoria	6,472,911	-	89.2%	71.5%	65.4%	27.5%

Just over 92% of Gannawarra's dwellings are 'separate houses' (i.e. a fully detached dwelling), with 5% listed as 'medium density'¹ and another 1.9% being 'caravans, cabin or houseboat'. The percentages of separate houses and medium density are noticeably different to that of Victoria, where 71.5% are recorded as separate houses and 27.9% are either medium or high density. This is not unexpected, as most of Victoria's medium density housing can be found in metropolitan Melbourne and in Victoria's larger regional cities. Not surprisingly, given Gannawarra's extensive river

¹ A medium density dwelling is a combination of ABS categories being any single or double storey semi-detached, row or terrace house, a flat or apartment in a 1 or 2 storey block, and any flat or unit attached to a house.

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and lake frontages, it has a greater percentage of caravans, cabins and houseboats when compared to Victoria as a whole (1.9% compared to 0.3%).

Over the 2011 to 2021 period, there has been an increase of 116 dwellings, 88 of them being in Kerang. Percentage wise, Koondrook has seen the biggest growth, increasing its number of dwellings by 6.0% over this period, while there has been a decrease in the Kerang Lakes area. This is believed to relate to the classification of cabins in caravan parks for permanent residents. There will have been slightly more dwellings built than the increase indicates, with some having been replacement dwellings following the demolition of an existing one.

Table 5: Dwelling Change 2011 - 2021

	2011	2016	2021	2011-21 Change (no)	2011-21 Change (%)
Gannawarra	5,210	5,290	5,326	+116	+2.2%
- Kerang	1,804	1,878	1,892	+88	+4.9%
- Cohuna	1,065	1,076	1,093	+28	+2.6%
- Koondrook	445	449	472	+27	+6.0%
- Kerang Lakes*	205	205	171	-34	-16.6%
- GSC Balance	1,693	1,705	1,715	+22	+1.3%

* The drop in number in the Kerang Lakes is understood to relate to changes to classifications in caravan parks

3.6 Dwelling Size / Number of Bedrooms

Almost half (just under 49%) of all dwellings in Gannawarra are 3-bedroom homes. This is higher than the Victorian average, where 3-bedroom dwellings account for around 40%. Once again, this is to be expected due to the low percentage of medium density homes in Gannawarra (medium density homes tend to have fewer bedrooms). It is also not surprising given most homes would have been built at a time when Gannawarra's age profile was much younger, with more families with children, and being built on larger lots that would not have constrained building size.

Table 6: Number of Bedrooms in Private Dwellings 2021 (% of total)

	1	2	3	4	5+	Not-stated
Gannawarra	2.26%	13.13%	48.85%	24.05%	3.24%	8.21%
- Kerang	1.66%	15.44%	48.70%	20.83%	4.02%	9.35%
- Cohuna	3.17%	13.92%	54.96%	19.55%	1.13%	7.06%
- Koondrook	2.89%	12.05%	60.00%	17.35%	1.93%	5.54%
- Kerang Lakes	2.74%	9.59%	43.84%	28.77%	2.74%	12.33%
- GSC Balance	2.12%	10.61%	42.37%	32.24%	4.18%	8.08%
Victoria	5.02%	18.43%	39.90%	25.96%	5.25%	5.08%

Gannawarra currently has 3.92% fewer 4 and 5+ bedroom dwellings compared to Victoria. The proliferation of large homes (4+ bedrooms) as the preferred size is a relatively recent phenomenon. They are often constructed in new growth areas by young and expanding families, where the cost to add an extra bedroom is minimal compared to the overall cost of land and building. Despite Gannawarra's population profile suggesting that there may be a low demand for large homes, the construction of 84 new 4-bedroom dwellings between 2016 and 2021 (46% of all new dwellings built)

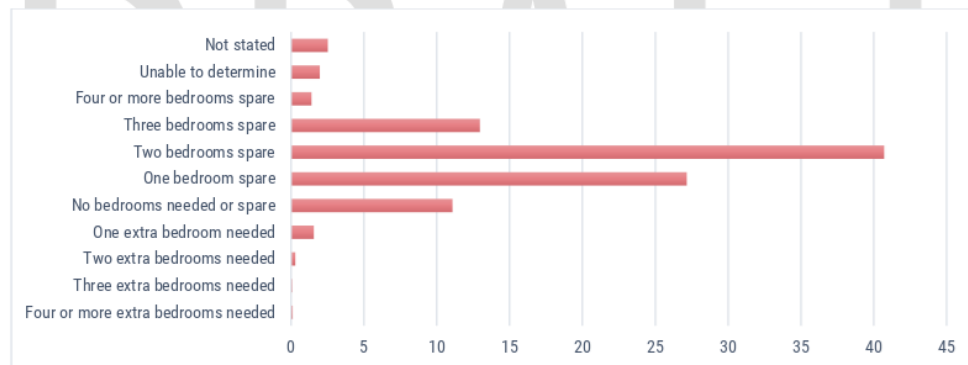
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suggests the opposite. It will be interesting to see if this is a blip in the data, or if it is an ongoing trend. It may also be a result of the financial opportunity cost that large homes can provide (the higher re-sale value generally exceeds the construction cost, so it is seen as a good investment to build larger). Alternatively, it could reflect the typical new home builder (being younger families).

Another measure that can be used to analyse how well-matched housing is to its population is to assess the number of bedrooms that are 'needed' or are 'spare', as recorded by each household. Overcrowding can occur when a household needs more space but is unable to expand or move to a larger home. The impacts of overcrowding are beyond the scope of this project, but it is positive to note that the percentage of households in Gannawarra that need more space is relatively low (1.56%). This is not to diminish the impact that it may be having on those households, however.

Figure 16: Gannawarra Housing Suitability (% of families indicating the number of bedrooms spare or needed in 2021) indicates that there is significant spare bedroom capacity. Once again, this is to be expected given the average household size and number of bedrooms per dwelling mentioned earlier. This is also a 'point in time' assessment and does not account for the flexibility that additional space provides, for example, space for a new child or elderly family member to move into, or a space to work from home.

Figure 16: Gannawarra Housing Suitability (% of families indicating the number of bedrooms spare or needed in 2021)



3.7 Housing Approvals

Housing approvals are typically considered a lead indicator for supply of new dwellings but can also indicate levels of demand within a region. While not all dwelling approvals translate into completed dwellings, approvals are often used as an indicator of the strength of consumer and investor confidence.

Figure 17 and Table 7 illustrate the number of new dwelling approvals within Gannawarra over the past decade. As indicated in the chart, there was a substantial increase in the number of approvals during the Federal Government's *HomeBuilder* grant period which ran from June 2020 to March 2021. It is expected that approvals will return to trend once updated data becomes available. Regardless, housing approvals have been growing over the past decade. Extrapolating this trend using a 3-year moving average suggests that by 2030/31 the average housing approvals will be around 63 per annum. If we exclude the 2020/21 spike, this reduces to around 54 per annum in 2030/31, which is still a large increase on current approvals.

At a local scale you can once again clearly see the HomeBuilder Grant program spike in the 2020-21 in Kerang and Cohuna. In 2022 approvals dropped slightly, but it will be another year or two before we

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see the full impact of recent interest rates rises, labour supply challenges and if the cost of materials settles down.

Figure 17: Gannawarra New Dwelling Approvals 2011/12 - 2021/22

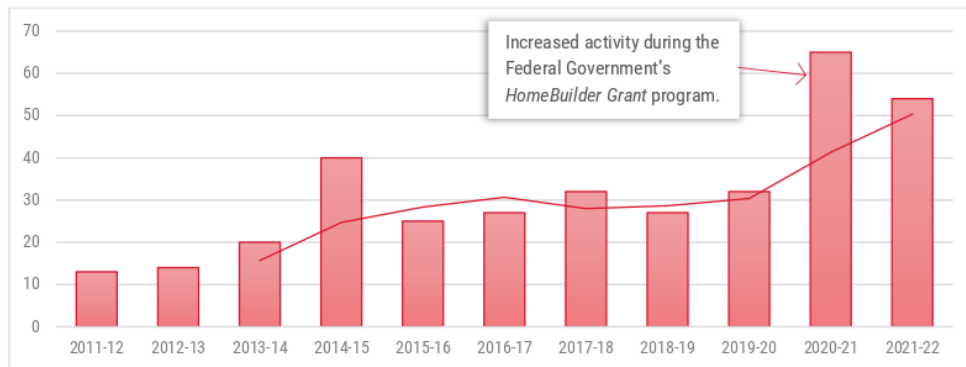
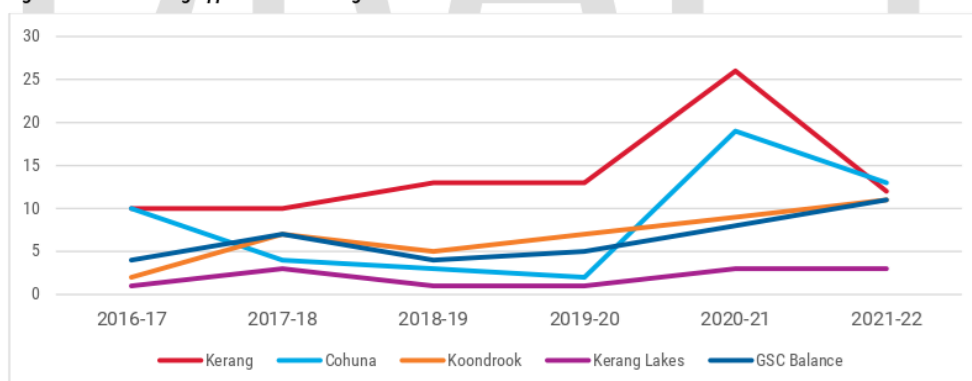


Table 7: Gannawarra New Dwelling Approvals 2011/12 - 2021/22

	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22
New Houses	13	14	20	40	25	25	32	27	32	62	52
New Other Residential	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	2
TOTAL	13	14	20	40	25	27	32	27	32	65	54

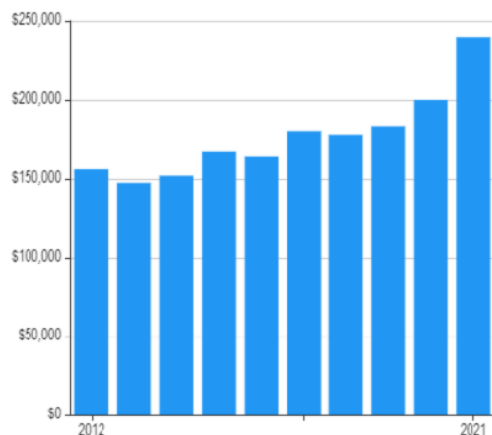
Figure 18: New Dwelling Approvals in Planning Areas 2016-2022



3.8 Housing Market – Sales and Rentals

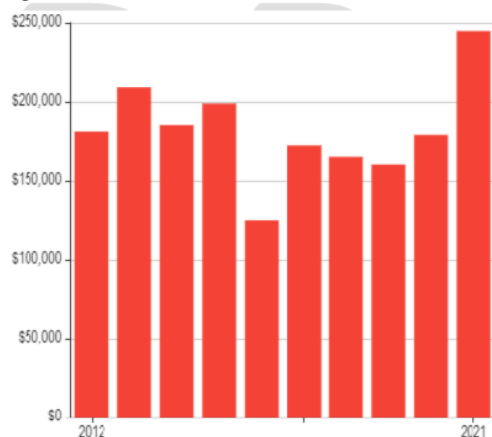
Median sale price is an important metric and indicator of the housing market and its affordability. The median sale price, being the middle value of all recorded sale prices in ascending order, helps to explain trends in property markets through trends in prices. It should be noted that in some circumstances the data is based on very low number of sales and is more of a reflection of the houses that were on the market during that year and may not represent the average house for that area. As with dwelling approvals above, the impact of interest rate rises will no doubt have an impact on sales prices, sales volume and issues such as rental affordability and availability.

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Figure 19: Gannawarra Median Price of Houses sold 2012-2021

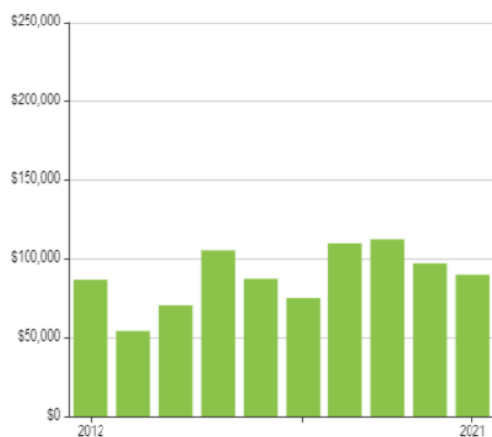
In 2021, Gannawarra's median **house** price was \$240,000. This represents an increase of 37% (using a 3-year moving average) over a 10-year period.

In 2021 there were 245 house sales recorded.

Figure 20: Gannawarra Median Price of Units sold 2012-2021

During the same 10-year period, the 3-year moving average of the median **unit** price increased by 2%. In 2021, Gannawarra's median unit price was \$245,000.

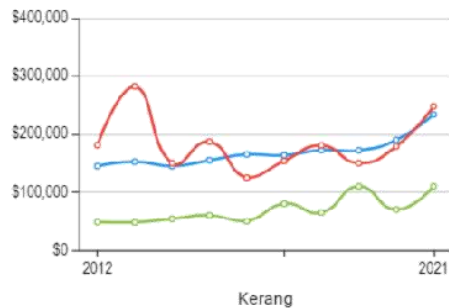
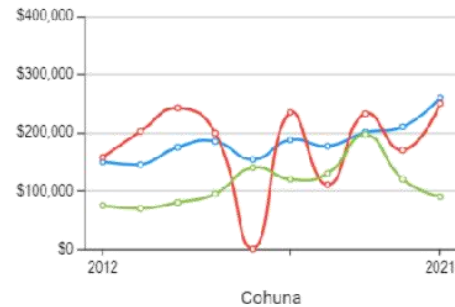
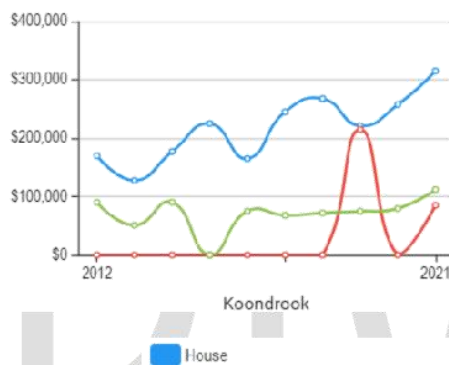
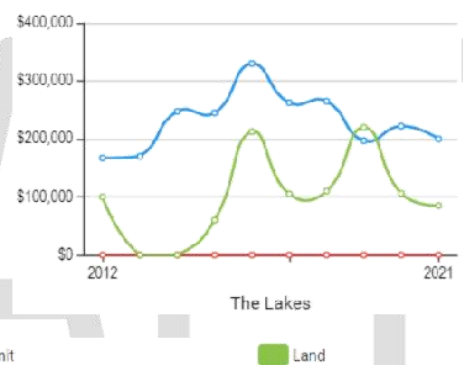
In 2021 there were 19 unit sales recorded.

Figure 21: Gannawarra Median Price of Land sold 2012-2021

The median **land** price has increased by 43% across the 10-year period. The median land price in 2021 was \$90,000.

In 2021 there were 87 land sales recorded.

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Figure 22: Kerang median price trend 2012 - 2021**Figure 23: Cohuna median price trend 2012 -2021****Figure 24: Koondrook median price trend 2012 – 21****Figure 25: Kerang Lakes median price trend 2012-21**

As mentioned above, the median house price across the Shire was \$240,000. Kerang's median house price was slightly lower at \$234,000, while Cohuna's median house price was slightly higher at \$260,000. Koondrook's median house price is the highest of the planning areas at \$315,000. The Kerang Lakes data is based on only three sales, so may not be a true indication of the average house in the area.

Using a 3-year moving average, we can see that the highest increase in median house price across the 10-year period was Koondrook which increased by 68%. Cohuna was next with an increase of 42%, Kerang's 3-year average median price increased by 34% and Kerang Lakes by 6%.

Looking at median prices for land, once again using a 3-year average, we can see that although Cohuna and the Kerang Lakes areas have the highest current median price (\$136k and \$137k respectively), it was Kerang that saw the highest increase over the period with prices increasing by 94% (from \$50k to \$97k). Cohuna increased by 81% (\$75k to \$136k), Kerang Lakes increased by 37% (\$100k to \$137k) and Koondrook increased by 16% (\$77k to \$89k). The balance of the Shire experienced a decrease in land prices by 25% (\$118k to \$88k).

While not as important as property prices, the number of property sales can provide some useful insights into what is happening in different locations. Across Gannawarra there has been a steady rise in sales in recent years, particularly for houses and for land. Given the low number of units in the

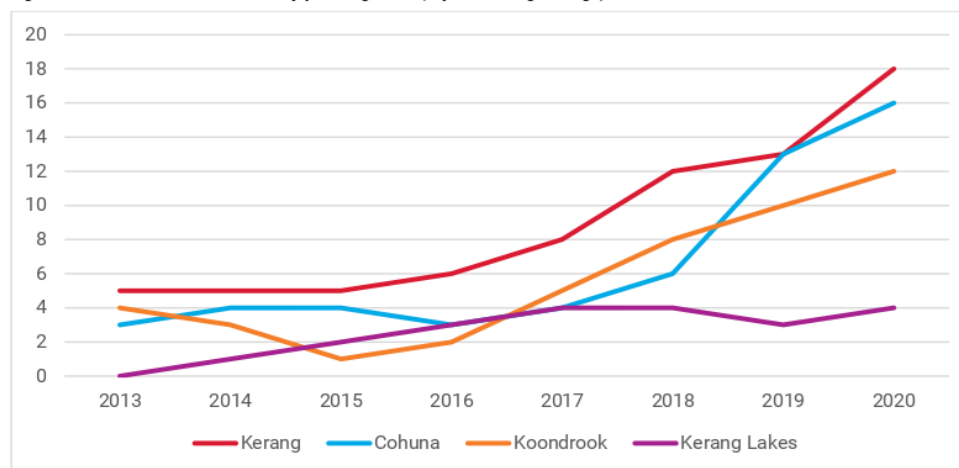
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Shire, it is not surprising that there haven't been many unit sales. A similar issue is present in the Kerang Lakes area, where there is a low number of properties and very few new parcels of land being created. In this instance, the sales data is interesting, but of limited use.

Of all sales data, the information relating to **land sales** is of most importance to this project as people cannot move to a place if there isn't housing to move into, and if all the houses are occupied, then land is needed to build upon. Land sales also tend to be a good indicator of future dwelling construction.

Figure 26 below shows that Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook have all seen strong growth in land sales. All three towns have had new lots created in recent years, with both Kerang and Cohuna having a number of zoned and serviced sites that are likely to be subdivided in the near future. Koondrook relies a little more on the sale of existing vacant lots, but it too has had a number of smaller scale subdivisions developed in recent years.

Figure 26: Number of land sales in key planning areas (3-year moving average)



Rising sales prices are important indicators of market demand and general economic conditions. While rising housing prices can make it harder for some people to buy a house in a certain area, the issue of rising cost of **rentals** can have more immediate issues on households, particularly those on lower incomes. This is not only a social issue but can have flow-on impacts for businesses and service delivery if key workers cannot find affordable housing close to their employment, particularly in areas where public transport is not a viable option for commuting to work.

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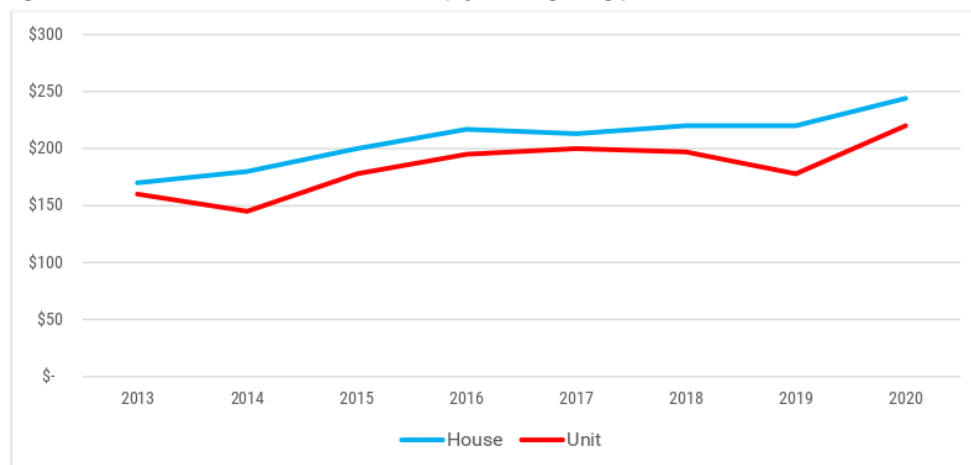
Figure 27: Gannawarra Rental Prices of houses and units (3-year moving average)

Figure 27 shows the median rental price of listings for both houses and units across Gannawarra using a 3-year moving average. The graph indicates an increase in the cost of rentals in recent years, with a further jump in rental prices between 2019 and 2020, where house rental prices increased by 11% and unit rental prices increased by 24%. Once again, the data is based on a small number of listings, and it is based only on the listings that were advertised and therefore does not include all rental properties. It can only provide a general indication of the rental market. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there is a significant shortage of rental properties, almost to the point of there being no supply available. This is a trend being witnessed in many regional areas, where access to rental housing is causing issues across all sectors – from seasonal farm workers to more permanent health and education workers. This is a potential challenge for the impending construction work needed for both the mineral sands mine and the electricity interconnector (although that is likely to be a short-term peak). Given the challenges facing the domestic housing construction sector (staff, approvals and supplies), it is likely that an alternative form of short-term worker accommodation is going to be needed.

3.9 Population and Housing Trends Summary

Recent years has seen Gannawarra's population exceed the Victoria in Future population projections and has been growing at a slow and steady rate. While the population also continues to age, there is a positive sign with growth in the number of younger 'working age' people. This is coming from a low base, but it is an important demographic to have as these are the age cohorts that will start forming families in the coming years and will drive the demand for other community assets such as early learning centres and schools.

The past decade has also seen the number of people living in each dwelling decline, but that trend too is slowing. Regardless, there is a high percentage of dwellings with only one or two people living in them. This might point to a demand for more smaller dwellings to be built in the future, particularly close to town centres where residents are able to easily access services and a slight increase in dwelling density can make better use of existing infrastructure. Given the size of existing residential

lots, this can be done sensitively and if delivered can reduce the amount of additional residential land that needs to be 'created' on the fringes of towns.

Regardless of the expected demand for more smaller houses, the data is very clear that there is a current demand for larger houses. The steady increase in dwelling approvals and the high percentage of them being for 4-bedroom homes supports this. While some may be in established areas, many have been built in the newly created subdivisions, which is a particularly attractive product for those looking to bring a family to a new town. Larger homes also have the potential to cater for some of the expected demand for worker accommodation associated with the construction phase of major projects, which can then revert to more traditional family homes once the peak construction period has passed.

Following a brief analysis of employment and economic trends, this report moves into the population and dwelling forecasts and land supply. Those sections build on the current profile of the community and identify how future growth can be planned and managed.

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4 Economy and Employment Profile

This section provides a summary of the key economic and employment characteristics of the Shire. In short, it is heavily reliant on the agricultural sector, has a strengthening construction sector, and has a lot of small family owned and operated businesses with people working longer than average hours. This section highlights that there may be some challenges in meeting the workforce needs of planned major projects and investments.

4.1 Economic Output

With 137,000 hectares of irrigated land and extensive areas of dry land farming, Gannawarra's economy is strongly linked to the agricultural sector. As can be seen in Table 8, *Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing* accounts for over 26.5% of employment (1,061 jobs) and 26.6% of economic output (\$322M); much of it related to dairy and grain production. However, there is considerable opportunity for value added processing and economic diversification, some of which has already started through investments in cotton, organic grain and tomatoes, medicinal cannabis, poultry and new plantings of wine grapes. Renewable energy production and storage opportunities are also expected to increase once investments in electricity transmission are complete. Gannawarra's rural areas have demonstrated their resilience and ability to evolve to enable them to leverage their locational and natural assets and advantages.

Table 8: Gannawarra Economic Output 2021

	\$M	%
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	\$322.739	26.6%
Manufacturing	\$182.863	15.0%
Construction	\$147.542	12.1%
Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services	\$103.216	8.5%
Public Administration & Safety	\$69.857	5.7%
Health Care & Social Assistance	\$64.468	5.3%
Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services	\$55.398	4.6%
Retail Trade	\$40.027	3.3%
Wholesale Trade	\$35.654	2.9%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	\$30.466	2.5%
Transport, Postal & Warehousing	\$30.150	2.5%
Education & Training	\$29.625	2.4%
Financial & Insurance Services	\$26.632	2.2%
Mining	\$24.543	2.0%
Other Services	\$22.769	1.9%
Accommodation & Food Services	\$16.378	1.3%
Administrative & Support Services	\$10.260	0.8%
Information Media & Telecommunications	\$1.858	0.2%
Arts & Recreation Services	\$0.874	0.1%
Total	\$1,215.317	100.0%

In addition to *Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing*, the *Manufacturing* (\$183M) and *Construction* (\$148M) sectors round out the top three industry sectors for economic output. Combined, these three sectors account for 53.7%, or \$653M, of output.

4.2 Employment Profile

In 2021 there were 3,999 jobs in Gannawarra. The largest employment sector was *Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing*, which employed 1,061 people, or 26.5% of the workforce. The next largest industry sector is *Health Care & Social Assistance* which employed 524 people (13.1%). *Retail Trade* rounded out the top three employment sectors with 360 people, or 9.0% of the workforce.

Given the future jobs focus on mining and the electricity sector, it will be important to track this over time. In 2021 there were 50 people listed as employed in *Mining* and none (0) employed in *Electricity Generation and Electricity Distribution* (all 81 listed in the table below in *Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services* are employed in the sub sector classification of *Gas, Water & Waste Services*). Employment growth in these sectors will be coming off a low base, but they have the potential to contribute positively to the broader economy. Several case studies are provided later in this report to demonstrate the likely beneficial flow-on effects that could be realised by the planned projects and investments.

Table 9: Gannawarra Employment Profile 2021

	Jobs	%
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	1,061	26.5%
Health Care & Social Assistance	524	13.1%
Retail Trade	360	9.0%
Construction	323	8.1%
Public Administration & Safety	287	7.2%
Manufacturing	273	6.8%
Education & Training	247	6.2%
Other Services	155	3.9%
Accommodation & Food Services	139	3.5%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	121	3.0%
Transport, Postal & Warehousing	119	3.0%
Wholesale Trade	109	2.7%
Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services	81	2.0%
Administrative & Support Services	71	1.8%
Mining	50	1.3%
Financial & Insurance Services	43	1.1%
Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services	27	0.7%
Arts & Recreation Services	6	0.2%
Information Media & Telecommunications	3	0.1%
Total	3,999	100.0%

4.3 Labour Force Characteristics

The employment status of residents within a region helps provide an understanding of the local job market and, in turn, broader economic conditions. The analysis below provides data on the three key metrics of Labour Force Participation, Employment Status and Unemployment.

Broadly speaking, when considering the first and third metrics, a high participation rate combined with low unemployment is representative of a strong job market. It is important to note that labour force data refers to the people living in the region with no regard to where they work.

Labour Force Participation

The participation rate is expressed as the labour force (people in work or looking for work) as a percentage of the working-age population (those aged 15 years and over). As the participation rate includes both employed and unemployed persons, it is an important indicator of the actual pool of labour.

In 2021 Gannawarra's Labour Force Participation Rate was 50.5%. This has decreased slightly over the past 10-years, down from 52.0% in 2016 and 53.7% in 2011.

When compared to Victoria's relatively steady participation rates of 62.4% (2021), 60.5% (2016) and 61.4% (2011), you can see that Gannawarra's participation rate is lower than Victoria's, and the gap has increased. This may reflect Gannawarra's older age profile, but it could also reflect the greater housing affordability of the region and ability of households to live on a single income. The current cost of living pressures may impact on this comparative advantage as regional areas have not been buffered from higher energy and food costs, like they might have been previously with housing costs.

Employment Status (full-time and part-time employment)

Workers are defined as part-time if they usually work less than 35 hours per week. Full-time workers are any worker who is not classified as part-time and is not actively looking for work. While many part-time workers are likely to be working part-time hours voluntarily, there is likely to be a pool of part-time workers who want to, and can, work additional hours.

In 2021, the percentage of employed full-time workers in Gannawarra was 57.0% and employed part-time workers was 33.0%. Over the past 10-years this has changed very little, with the employed full-time rate decreasing from by 1.3% (from 58.3%) and the employed part-time rate increasing by 1.7% (from 31.3%).

While overall, the proportion of full-time and part-time workers is very similar to the Victorian averages (Victoria was 56.2% and 32.3% respectively in 2021), it is interesting to note that the trend away from full-time employment to part-time appears to be happening faster at a Victorian level compared to Gannawarra. Over the past 10-years Victoria's employed full-time rate has decreased by 3% and the employed part-time rate has increased by 2.7%.

Delving a little deeper into the hours worked data, over 18% of people in Gannawarra work 49 hours or more each week. This is significantly higher than the state average, where just over 11% of people indicated that they work similar hours. This may relate to the high percentage of small / family businesses and sole traders, particularly in the agriculture sector who work the hours that are needed, rather than being employed to work a set number of hours.

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Unemployment Rate

Gannawarra's unemployment rate has been consistently lower than the Victorian average, although the gap has narrowed as we reach what is essentially full employment. The September 2022 quarter unemployment rate for Gannawarra was 3.2%, which is 0.2% lower than Victoria's (3.4%). For comparison, in 2016 the rate was 4.7% compared to 6.6% for Victoria, and in 2011 it was 3.9% compared to 5.4% for Victoria.

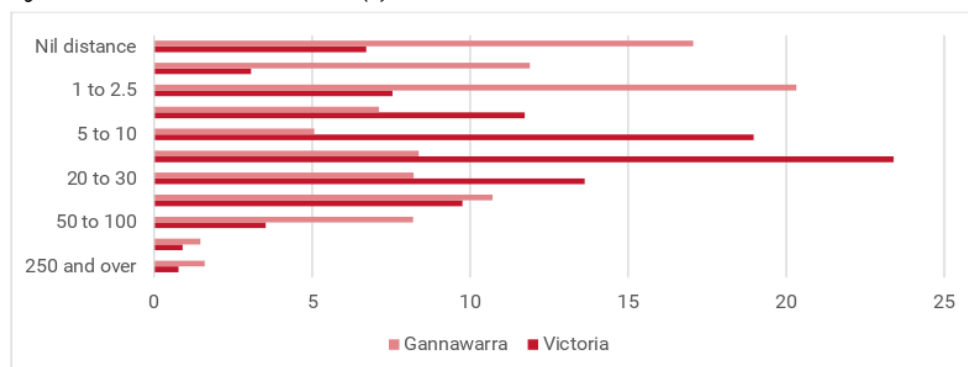
As mentioned earlier, a high participation rate and low unemployment is representative of a strong job market. In Gannawarra's case, the participation rate is lower than the State average, as is the unemployment rate. This may mean that there is capacity within the existing population to absorb some of the new jobs that are expected, or it may mean that the population is content with their working situation and that future employment opportunities will need to be taken up by new people coming to live in the region. If it is the latter, then the demand and supply of housing becomes even more important, as people cannot move to an area if there is nowhere for them to live.

4.4 Live-Work Relationships

The relationship between where people live and where people work is an important factor in the efficient functioning of a region. While settlement patterns evolve to provide options for where people can choose to live, a major consideration is the existing and future location of employment and other population serving functions. As a town gets bigger, it usually starts to provide a greater range of employment options and services. We can see this in Kerang as it has grown, but it is not always the case. In some locations it makes sense for nearby towns to support one another rather than duplicate services. Koondrook and its twin town of Barham is a good example of this where cross-border collaboration ensures efficient delivery of services.

While the live-work relationship has been disrupted to varying degrees due to the pandemic, it is not completely broken. The ability to work remotely (away from the office) is restricted to a select number of occupations and industries. It is therefore unlikely that pre-COVID live-work patterns will fundamentally change for most of the working population. Already people have been returning to pre-COVID commuting patterns and those that are able to are hybridising work so that employees only need to commute a few days a week. As such, access to employment will continue to be a key determinant in where people live. Regardless, it is often assumed that those living in regional communities accept longer commutes when compared to those living in large cities. Figure 28 demonstrates that this may not actually be the case in Gannawarra. Note: Relevant 2021 Census data has not yet been released. As such, the following figure and paragraphs are based on 2016 data.

Figure 28: Gannawarra Distance to Work 2016 (%)



In 2016, over half of Gannawarra's workers travelled less than 2.5km from home to work. Across Victoria, only 17% of workers travelled a similar distance. The most common distance for Victorians to travel to get from home to work was in the 10-to-20-kilometre range (23%). It is only when you get beyond the 50-kilometre travel distance to work that you start to see Gannawarra workers proportions being noticeably higher than the Victorian average, however these are relatively low percentages overall.

With over 17% of people not needing to travel to get to work at all, and the high amount of hours worked, it further reinforces the notion that many jobs in Gannawarra are 'working from home' jobs, but perhaps not in the same way that we have become familiar with during the pandemic (likely to be more traditional working from home jobs in agriculture rather than desk based jobs).

4.5 Economy and Employment Summary

The Gannawarra economy has a strong focus on *Agriculture, Manufacturing and Construction*. However, the *Public Administration & Safety*, and *Health Care & Social Assistance* sectors are starting to play a bigger role in the local economy. As a regional LGA that is remote from large cities, there are strong inter-dependencies that naturally occur, meaning that other parts of the local economy benefit to a larger degree when compared to metropolitan areas. The large investments proposed in electricity transmission, generation and storage, and mineral sands mining, are likely to flow on to other parts of the local economy and lay the foundations for even more growth. Given the demographic and employment profile of the Shire, there will be a need to focus on retaining more of the younger generation in the Shire and reskilling those that want to re-enter the workforce to enable them to, while also attracting new people to the region to take-up these job opportunities.

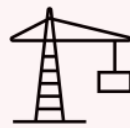
4.6 Future Employment Case Studies

To help understand the potential scale of future job numbers, the following case studies have been prepared based on information provided by the proponents. While future job numbers cannot be guaranteed, there is a high level of confidence that many will be realised. Given Gannawarra's high percentage of sole traders and small businesses, and a low unemployment rate, it may be that there is limited capacity for the existing population to take up these new roles and a significant number will have to be filled by people moving to the area. In some cases, this will be temporary during construction (which are likely to require a specialised workforce for a short period), but for others it will result in permanent ongoing jobs. From a housing perspective this will create both challenges and opportunities, as if there isn't anywhere for someone to live or stay, then roles may remain unfilled, and the local economy misses out on the benefits. This is part of the reason why an updated Urban Growth Strategy is needed, as the Shire seeks to 'get ahead of the game' to leverage the best outcomes for its community. Further detail on the case studies can be found in Appendix X.

Case Study 1 – VHM Mineral Sands

VHM Limited (VHM) is an Australian based mineral sands and rare earths mining company that seeks to develop and operate the Goschen Project, located near Lalbert northwest of Kerang. Economic impacts, as modelled by Deloitte, are expected throughout the wider Loddon-Mallee region and Victoria.

Gannawarra is expected to benefit from the development and operation of the mine directly and indirectly via local employment opportunities. Construction of the mine site is expected to occur over two years, requiring an estimated 100 direct jobs annually. Operating the mine is expected to require 270 direct jobs at full capacity. An estimated 30% of jobs for both construction and operation are assumed to be filled by local workers.



Construction over two years.
100 annual jobs, 30 being local.
Heavy civil, buildings, and plant and equipment.



Operation ongoing
270 annual jobs, 81 being local.

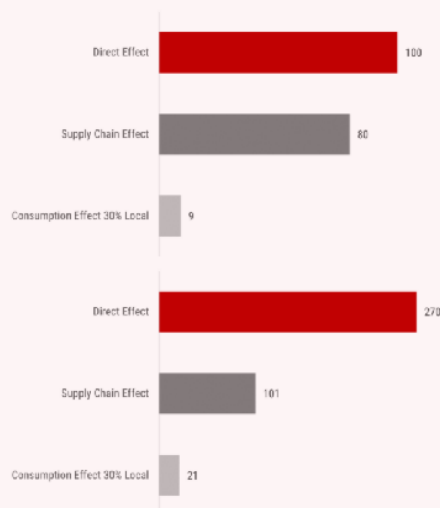


■ Total Annual Jobs
■ Total Local Jobs

Total employment impacts of both construction and operational phases:

Construction: 100 direct jobs, 80 jobs throughout the supply chain and 9 jobs via consumption activity.

Operation: 270 direct jobs, 101 jobs throughout the supply chain and 21 jobs via consumption activity



The construction industry is the most impacted with 100 direct and 40 indirect supply chain jobs supported.

Other industry throughout the supply chain more impacted include professional, scientific & technical services (8) and manufacturing (7).

Operation is likely to require 270 direct mining jobs.

Throughout the supply chain, construction (22), transport, postal & warehousing (12), professional, scientific & technical services (10) and other services (10).

Construction of the mine will impact the local economy in the short term. Ongoing jobs during operation will continue to grow the capacity of the local economy and workforce skills.

Case Study 2 - KerangLink

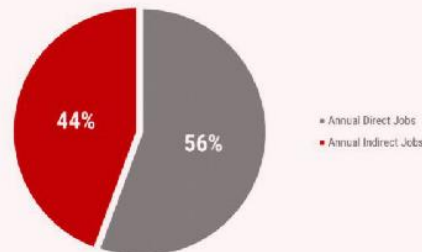
The Victoria to NSW Interconnector West (VNI West, or more commonly known as KerangLink) is a large-scale electricity grid investment that will connect Victoria and New South Wales. Kerang will be one of the few locations where connections to the electricity grid will be possible, which is expected to result in significant future investment in renewable energy generation and storage sector.

Gannawarra's local economy will benefit from the construction phase directly and indirectly via local employment opportunities. Construction of the infrastructure is expected to occur over three years, requiring an estimated 267 direct jobs annually. While no local operation jobs are expected, and all construction workers are assumed to be filled by non-local workers, the real benefits of this project will be realised following its completion.



Construction over two years.
100 annual jobs.
Specialist energy infrastructure

Enabling infrastructure for new
renewable energy projects.



Total employment impacts throughout the construction period include 267 direct and 213 indirect jobs.

Enable large-scale renewable energy projects to be constructed within the municipality and across north-western Victoria.

Supports subsequent renewable energy projects that are also modelled.



The local construction industry is the most impacted from supply chain activity with 106 indirect jobs supported Annually.

Other impacted industry throughout the supply chain includes professional, scientific & technical services (20) and manufacturing (17).

No consumption effect is measured as all construction jobs are expected to be filled by non-local workers.

Construction of the KerangLink will impact the local economy in the short term. Subsequent investment and business development that utilise the infrastructure will continue to grow the capacity of the local economy and workforce skills.

367 direct construction jobs are expected for both the VHM mine and KerangLink in year 2.

Case Study 3 – Small Business Expansion

Many local businesses have indicated that are likely to expand in the coming years, and new businesses have indicated their intent to establish in Gannawarra. These range across sectors including Agriculture, forestry & fishing, Manufacturing, Construction, and Accommodation & food services.

Jobs estimates include: 85 jobs in Agriculture, forestry & fishing, 50 jobs in Manufacturing, 10 jobs in Accommodation & food services, and 50 jobs in Construction. All jobs are considered ongoing and local, requiring full participation from the supply chain and benefit from consumption activity.



Agriculture, forestry & fishing 7 businesses = 85 annual ongoing direct jobs.



Manufacturing 1 business = 50 annual ongoing direct jobs.



Accommodation & food services 1 business = 10 annual ongoing direct jobs.

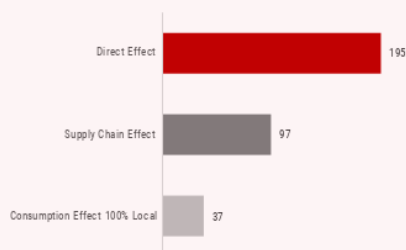


■ Total Annual Jobs
■ Total Local Jobs



Construction 2 businesses = 50 ongoing annual direct jobs.

Total employment impacts throughout the ongoing operation of the business includes 195 direct and 134 indirect jobs.



The agriculture industry impacts include 85 direct and 15 indirect jobs supported.

Other impacted industry throughout the supply chain includes Construction (24) and Professional, scientific & technical services (9) and Manufacturing (8).

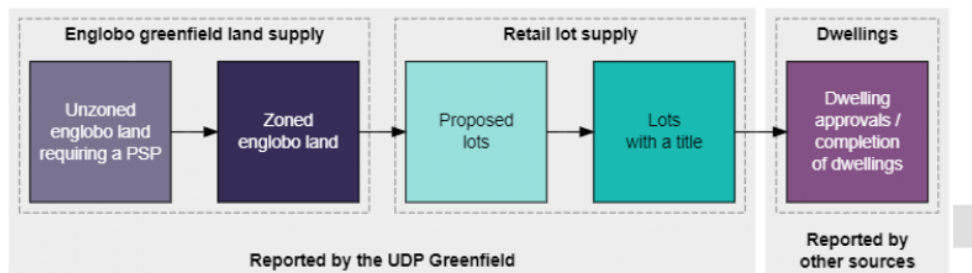
Establishment and ongoing success of new businesses such as those identified will have an ongoing impact to the local economy, deepening the capacity of local supply chains and improving job and export opportunities for the Shire.

5 Land Supply – Residential and Industrial

5.1 Residential Land Supply

An audit of vacant land in the four planning areas has been undertaken to identify the amount of existing and potential residential lots available. The process used aligns with the Victorian governments Urban Development Pipeline process, where land is identified, lots estimated and dwelling approvals monitored over time.

Figure 29: DELWP Urban Development Pipeline



A brief explanation of the key components of the Urban Development Pipeline includes:

Unzoned englobo land (englobo means large lots with subdivision potential): This is land that has been identified for future residential development by council through the Planning Policy Framework or through an adopted housing or settlement strategy. It is land that is expected to go through a precinct structure planning process before being rezoned and ultimately, subdivided and developed with housing. In Gannawarra, this is the land that has previously been identified for future residential development in the Shire's Structure Plans (Clause 11.01 of the Gannawarra Planning Scheme), and it may also include land identified through this project (noting that the status of such land is still subject to the rigours of a detailed planning assessments and amendment processes). As mentioned earlier in this report, it is likely that the comparatively small scale of development and lower level of planning complexity for future residential land in Gannawarra may be more appropriate to use the 'Development Plan' process rather than the more complex 'Precinct Structure Plan' process.

Zoned englobo land: This is land that is zoned for residential use and is available for subdivision into retail lots. In Gannawarra, this land is primarily in the General Residential Zone, with some in the Mixed Use Zone. It includes several larger remnant parcels of vacant land either within or adjacent to existing residential development. It may also include land set aside for future stages of subdivisions. In larger settlements, this is limited to lots that are larger than one hectare. In the Gannawarra context, a vacant lot that is noticeably larger than the surrounding lots and is highly likely to be further subdivided has also been included.

Retail lots (proposed lots and lots with a title): Proposed lots are shown in the Vicmap Property dataset, but some changes may occur prior to tiles being issued. Lots with a title are simple, in that they are the lots that have been registered and are ready to be sold and built on. While some may have further limited subdivision potential, it is assumed that they won't be, as it is difficult to know the motivations of every property owner.

This project provides an estimate of lots based on the following assumptions. For unzoned and zoned englobo land, lot yields are based on a simple '10 dwellings per hectare' calculation and for lots with a

title it is based on the number of vacant lots observed. As 'proposed lots' are small in number these have been incorporated into the 'Retail lots' column rather than as a stand-alone figure.

While it is accepted that the 10 dwellings per hectare calculation may result in a slight under-estimate of lots that might be created in the future, it is based on the distinct preference for single detached dwellings on larger lots in regional Victoria and in the planning areas for this project. When road reserves and open space requirements (often interfaces with creek or rivers) are factored into subdivision design, it results in lots being delivered that are around 700-800sqm in size. The lot yield that is ultimately delivered will of course be subject to future council planning approval, and in some circumstances, such as close to town centres, the lot yield should be higher.

Within the four planning areas, it is estimated that there is potential for up to 2,028 residential lots that could hypothetically be created. This includes around 1,172 lots on unzoned Future Urban land, 621 lots on zoned Large Infill land, and 235 lots with a title. Table 10 below provides further detail on the location across the four planning areas. It should be noted that the unzoned numbers for Cohuna include a large parcel of land that is not in the 2006 Cohuna Structure Plan, but given its attributes is recommended to be investigated as a future urban expansion area.

Table 10: Residential Lot Supply

	Unzoned Greenfield	Zoned Infill	Retail Lots (with Title)	Total
Kerang	633	318	90	1,041
Cohuna	539	230	53	822
Koondrook	-	73	67	140
Kerang Lakes	-	-	25	25
Total	1,172	621	235	2,028

The high number of potential lots listed above indicates that there should not be any constraints when it comes to residential land supply. However, not all lots will be developed during the life of this strategy. There are a range of reasons why land will not come to market, including landowner intentions / motivations, development costs / access to services, lack of awareness around planning and development requirements. In a regional location where there isn't the presence of large-scale land developers, many landowners underestimate the complexity and cost of subdividing and developing land. Much of the land that could be developed will likely need to change ownership before it will be developed. Land that is in the ownership of developers, or those with development experience (or access to it), has a much higher chance of being successfully developed and delivering a residential product that exceeds basic planning requirements and standards. We have seen this recently in Cohuna with the Murray Sound development. For these reasons, if there is land that is of a scale that it can be designed, staged and developed by professional land developers, then it is assumed that it will have a greater chance of actually being delivered than some other sites that are owned by non-developers.

For the reasons mentioned above, identifying a simple "years supply" figure is not sophisticated enough and would estimate that there is much more land available than is likely to be the case. This Strategy therefore relies more on the actual need, demonstrated through forecasts and sound planning practices to identify the land that is needed and should be the focus of future planning work.

5.2 Industrial Land Supply

Ensuring there is an adequate supply of zoned and serviced industrial land is important to ensure that opportunities can be accommodated to expand existing businesses, and for new businesses to establish or to be attracted to the Shire. While it is important to balance demand with supply, in the case of industrial land, a slight oversupply is beneficial as it does allow opportunities to be leveraged when they arise, which often is with little notice. A slight oversupply of vacant land also assists in keeping prices in check, which once again is very important for facilitating industrial / commercial development and encouraging business development and expansion. However, having too much zoned industrial land available may impact on the ability for it to be converted into developed land (as it is not financially viable to develop). The Shire understands this issue well and has been proactive to ensure that quality industrial estates are delivered – Tate Drive in Kerang and Gibbins Drive in Cohuna are excellent examples. It is likely that this approach will need to continue, to a degree, until such time as the private sector is able to make similar projects economically viable.

Across the planning areas most of the industrial land is located in Kerang and Cohuna. Both towns have around 40ha of industrial land currently occupied. Kerang has numerous pockets of industrial land, however, has a strong focus in the south centred on Tate Drive. Cohuna has three main industrial areas located in its south, west and north of the town. Koondrook has a small industrial estate in its south and a larger one in its north. Kerang Lakes does not have any industrial land, however some industrial activities may be legitimately taking place in conjunction with and/or on agricultural land.

The following table provides a snapshot in time of how much zoned industrial land each planning area has, how much of it is occupied, how much is vacant, and how many lots might be created based on a 3,000sqm average lot size. These figures provide a starting point for considering the need for future industrial land. Across the planning areas, the industrial precincts each have their own character and focus, and while a 3,000sqm lot is large enough for many businesses, lot sizes will vary depending on the needs of businesses. For very large businesses looking to relocate or expand, there is the opportunity to co-design future industrial subdivisions to ensure they can secure a site that meets their needs. For recently created industrial estates, such as the latest stage of Tate Drive, there is also the potential to consolidate adjoining parcels.

Table 11: Industrial Land Supply

	Total zoned (ha)	Occupied zoned (ha)	Vacant zoned (ha)	(%)	Potential lots (at 0.3ha)*
Kerang	57.8	41.6	16.2	28	54**
Cohuna	70.8	39.0	31.8	45	106*
Koondrook	16.4	8.3	8.1	49	27
Total	145	88.9	56.1	39	187

* This is the maximum number of potential lots

** This includes the latest stage of Tate Drive, which is seeing strong take-up

The demand for industrial land is not as linear as it can be for residential land. There are a range of macroeconomic factors influencing business investment and trading conditions. This can make it difficult to know if recent activity is likely to continue at the same pace, or slower or faster. This is no doubt part of the reason the Shire has taken an active role in the planning and development of several industrial precincts. It knew there was latent demand, but there wasn't enough for the private sector to step in and meet it. Gannawarra's Economic Development team work closely with their business

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community and have a good understanding of current and likely demand. The industrial estates that they are facilitating are well designed, flexible and can be easily staged. With the large investments being made in supporting infrastructure in the region, particularly around electricity generation and transmission, the decision to release the next stages of Tate Drive and Gibbins Drive should enable more business expansion and relocation. Once again, it is not overly useful to determine a “years supply” figure for industrial land in a regional context, therefore the figures below refer more to the scale of zoned land and how much of it is occupied and how much is vacant. The figures indicate that there is a need to start planning the next phase of industrial development in Kerang due to the diminishing amount of zoned land available.

Figure 30: Vacant Industrial Land in Koondrook (Briar Street)



Figure 31: Partly developed industrial estate in Cohuna (Weinberg Street)



6 Population and Dwelling Forecasts

6.1 Population Forecasts

Population forecasts completed as part of this project indicate that Gannawarra will continue its recent growth, albeit at a slow and steady pace over the next two decades. Gannawarra's 2021 population of 10,612 is forecast to grow to a total of 10,929 people in 2046 (an increase of 317 people).

Figure 32 and Figure 33 show the forecast population and forecast annual growth rates. Figure 32 includes the previous VIF 2019 estimates through until 2036. There is quite a divergence between the VIF 2019 estimates and the new forecasts. Given the growth that occurred since the 2016 Census, on which VIF 2019 is based, and the comprehensive bottom-up methodology used for the current forecasts, there is a high degree of confidence that this new set of population estimates can be relied on, particularly in the short to medium term. All forecasts become less reliable the longer the planning horizon.

Figure 32: Gannawarra Population Forecast

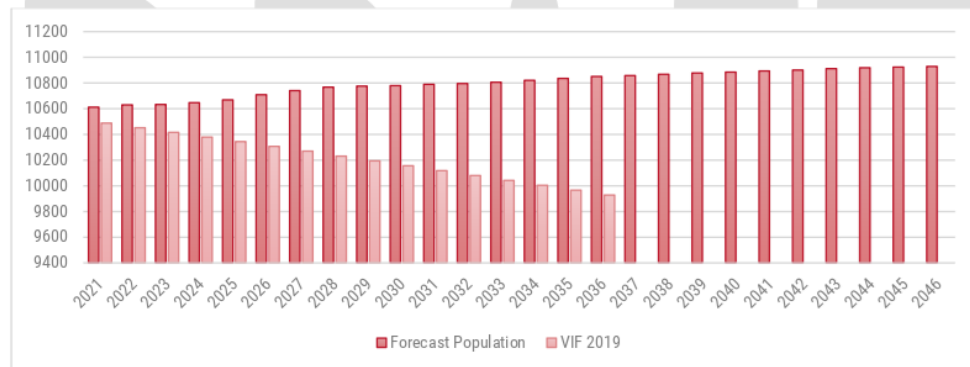


Figure 33: Gannawarra Population Annual Growth Rate (%)



The most notable point to be made is the relatively slow and steady growth trajectory that Gannawarra is now on. The declines of the early part of the 21st century have reversed and the population is slowly increasing. Growth rates are expected to be slightly higher during the middle years of the 2020s, which is due to expected demand, particularly in Cohuna and Koondrook.

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While these forecasts are mindful of the large-scale investments that are planned for Gannawarra in the coming years, they have taken a conservative approach and assumed that most of the construction workers associated with them will be transient and not result in permanent residents (which has been the case with similar sized projects in other parts of Australia). The forecasts are also aware of the potential new and expanding business ventures that are likely to be established in Gannawarra in the coming years, but once again they have been careful not to overstate the impacts of those on population numbers. It is assumed that some of the jobs will be filled by the existing population, while others will be offset by the loss of existing jobs and people moving from the area.

In this respect, the forecasts provided are a robust 'base case' scenario. Should all of the proposed investments and expected jobs be realised in the future, then the population growth rate may increase slightly and bring forward the need for additional housing and services. Regardless, this is not expected to be significantly different to the scenario presented in this report.

Figure 34 and Figure 35 below show data from 2001 right through until the forecast horizon of 2046. Looking at Figure 34 you can get a sense of how the population is forecast to continue to age, shown by the green 'wave' moving left to right across the graph and ending up above the grey lines in the final right hand third of the graph. There is growth in the 65+ age cohorts and a decline in the 24 and under age groups. However, there are positive signs in that the decline in the under-25s is clearly slowing and there are some small increases in the Young Workers (25-34) and Workers (35-49) age groups. These working age cohorts are important as they are the ones that are starting to form families and have (or already have) children, that will be important to sustain local schools and community activities.

Figure 34: Gannawarra Population by Age

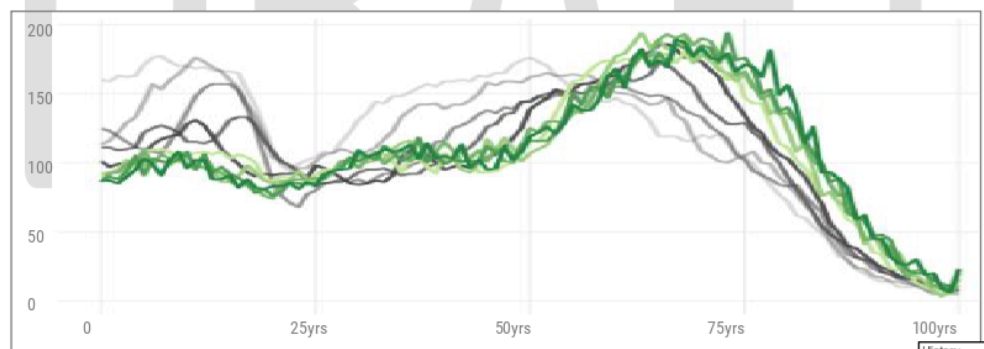
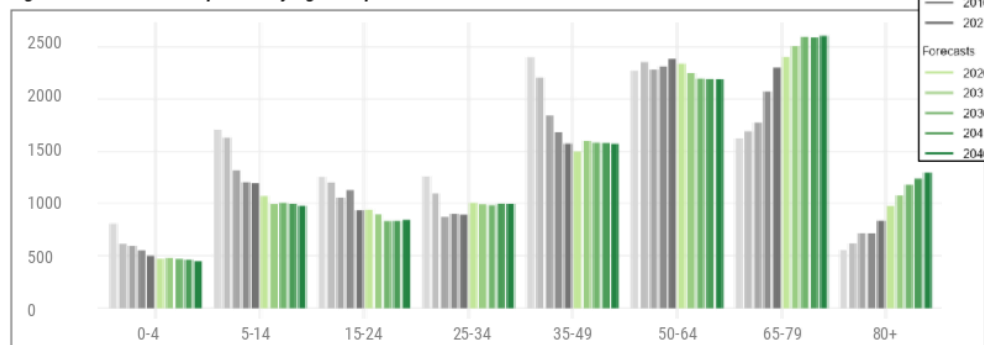


Figure 35: Gannawarra Population by Age Group



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While the overall growth trajectory is positive, the growth will not be spread equally across the Shire. Most of the growth is forecast to occur in Cohuna (+271 people), Koondrook (+113 people) and Kerang (+93 people). The Kerang Lakes area is expected to remain relatively steady (-9 people), and the remaining parts of the Shire will decrease by 151 people.

Table 12: Gannawarra Population Change 2021 - 2046

	2021	2046	2021-46 Change (no)	2021-46 Change (%)
Gannawarra	10,612	10,929	+317	+3.0%
- Kerang	3,757	3,850	+93	+2.5%
- Cohuna	2,139	2,410	+271	+12.7%
- Koondrook	927	1,040	+113	+12.2%
- Kerang Lakes	358	349	-9	-2.5%
- GSC Balance	3,431	3,280	-151	-4.4%

Further detail on the forecasts and the forecast methodology can be found in the [Appendices](#).

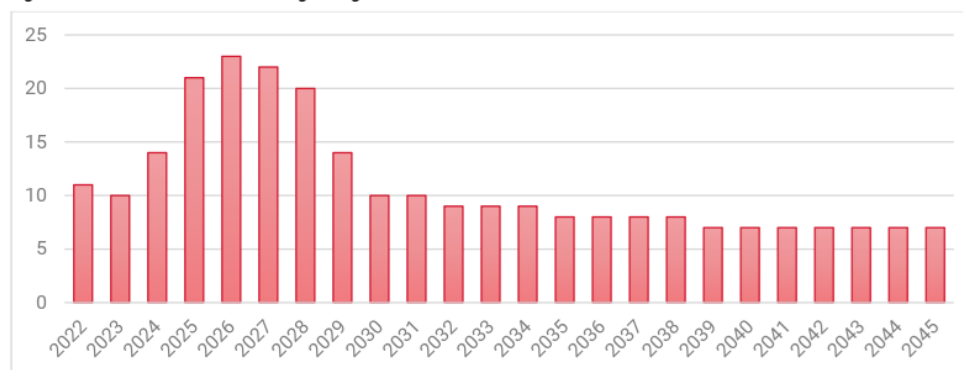
6.2 Dwelling Forecasts

Dwelling numbers are forecast to increase by roughly the same number as the population (315 compared to 317). However, as there are twice as many people as dwellings, the growth rate for dwellings will be much higher than that of the population. Dwelling numbers are forecast to increase from 5,385 in 2021 to 5,700 in 2046 (an increase of 315).

A major contributor to the dwelling growth rate is the forecast drop in household size. This is expected to drop from 2.21 people per dwelling in 2021 to 2.15 people per dwelling in 2046. While the drop itself is quite small, when factored across the entire population, it contributes to the increased dwelling growth rate (compared to the population growth rate). Even in those areas where population growth is forecast to be steady, or even decline, more dwellings will still be needed to meet the demand for housing.

Coinciding with the similar graph for population growth, the following graph indicates that there will be a bump in dwelling numbers during the second half of this decade. As mentioned earlier, this is due to recent land development activity and expected new developments that are likely to come online.

Figure 36: Gannawarra Annual Dwelling Change 2021/22 – 2045/46



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Table 13 details the forecast change in dwelling numbers across Gannawarra's planning areas. As you can see, growth is expected to be strongest in Cohuna, Kerang and Koondrook.

Table 13: Gannawarra Dwelling Change 2021 - 2046

Dwelling Change 2021 - 2046	2021	2046	2021-46	2021-46
			Change (no)	Change (%)
Gannawarra	5,385	5,700	+315	+5.9%
- Kerang	1,909	1,984	+75	+3.9%
- Cohuna	1,123	1,275	+152	+13.5%
- Koondrook	473	539	+66	+14.0%
- Kerang Lakes	173	184	+11	+6.4%
- GSC Balance	1,707	1,720	+13	+0.8%

Construction and Seasonal Worker Accommodation

While not being counted in forecast population and dwelling numbers, the challenge of finding accommodation for seasonal and temporary workers in the Shire is significant. There is already a shortage of rental accommodation, and with the construction of KerangLink expected to commence in the coming years, combined with the construction workers needed to establish the proposed mineral sands mine, there will come a time when the demand for worker accommodation is expected to be strong enough to support a temporary housing solution such as the one that has recently been completed in the Huon Valley in Tasmania (primarily to service backpackers and seasonal workers).

There may be an opportunity to consider locations such as the Kerang Lakes, where this type of accommodation could service the short-term need, and have the added advantage of becoming holiday accommodation in the future, tapping into the recreational activities of the nearby lakes. From a planning perspective there would still be many approvals to obtain, but it is recommended to investigate this style of accommodation, rather than a more conventional residential product which brings with it much more complicated infrastructure and servicing needs.

Image: Example of backpacker and seasonal worker accommodation in Huonville, Tasmania



(Further information: <https://huonflashpackers.com.au/>)

6.3 Population and Dwelling Forecast Summary

In summary, Gannawarra is forecast to grow by an additional 317 people and 315 dwellings between 2021 and 2046. This 'base case' scenario provides a solid foundation on which to plan, however there may be a need to bring forward some strategic planning projects (for new residential areas) if the large number of significant infrastructure investments and major projects are delivered and are translating into a faster growth rate than envisaged.

Forecast growth is also not likely to be spread evenly across the Shire, with the majority expected to occur in Cohuna, Kerang and Koondrook. Dwelling growth is expected to be faster than population growth, and even in areas where the population is forecast to decline, new dwellings will still be needed to house the population as household size continues to decline.

With an aging population, it may be that some additional planning needs to take place to ensure people can 'age in place' or have access to a range of housing suited to older people.

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7 Managing Future Growth

Building on the work of the last couple of decades, the approach to accommodating and facilitating future residential and employment growth will continue to be focused on the existing townships of Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook. The Kerang Lakes area will accommodate some additional growth, but it will be relatively minor compared to the amount of growth expected in Gannawarra's three main towns. How future growth is recommended to be accommodated is provided below, with annotated maps for each of the four planning areas included in sections 7.1 Kerang, 7.2 Cohuna, 7.3 Koondrook and 7.4 Kerang Lakes.

Future **residential growth** will be made up of a combination of infill development and greenfield development (Urban Expansion and Incremental Growth). **Infill development** will focus on getting existing residentially zoned large vacant lots subdivided and new lots onto the market. Coordination between adjacent property owners of large vacant lots will be important to ensure optimal development outcomes are realised. This will not only benefit those undertaking the development, but it will also ensure that new development is well-planned and integrated into the existing urban form. To assist, it is recommended that the relevant Development Plan Overlays in the GPS be reviewed to ensure that they include relevant objectives, conditions and requirements. This way, the planning system can be used to guide future development in a way that informs landowners and developers on the type of development that the Shire and community want to see happen in particular areas.

Figure 37: Settlers Key, Kerang – an example of a larger scale new subdivision



Infill development will also play an important role in getting some smaller lots and homes onto the market. With an ageing population and a growing number of homes having only one and two people living in them, there is likely to be a market for well-designed smaller, low maintenance homes that are close to town centres and services. While some developments will be strata-titled (with common property and shared space / facilities), there is also the opportunity to make use of corner sites and properties with wide frontages or rear laneways to create additional lots without strata-titles. In town centres there is the opportunity for some shop-top apartments or 'live-work' developments, where a business might occupy the street level / shopfront of a property and a dwelling is located above it or behind it. Some rear-loaded townhouses could also be possible, where car parking is accessed from a rear laneway or accessway. The location of these should be carefully considered so as to not take away viable commercial floorspace, however in most cases the property market will be able to

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accurately determine the highest and best use of a site based on its likely financial returns. The key is getting additional population close to town centres and offering a housing typology that is not currently available in the housing market. Having additional people living close to town centres is a proven way to help activate and support existing and future businesses with increased local trade.

Figure 38: Little Wellington Street, Kerang – opportunities to develop the rear of existing large lots



Figure 39: Channel Street, Cohuna – a potential infill site with laneway access



Figure 40: East Street, Kerang – a potential infill site with dual street access



Figure 41: Forest Street, Koondrook – example of a new build in an existing residential area



Another option for increasing the number of smaller homes without subdividing or impacting on the character of a street is through construction of secondary dwellings. In Victoria this type of housing is currently classified as a Dependent Person's Unit, and commonly referred to as Granny Flats. Currently, buildings must be moveable and can only be occupied by a person who is dependent on a resident of the existing dwelling. In an acknowledgment of the potential of secondary dwellings, the Victorian government recently piloted a 'Secondary dwelling code' in four municipalities using the simplified VicSmart assessment pathway. Applications had to meet certain criteria to qualify, such as a height of less than 5m, a maximum floor area of 60sqm, meeting the minimum garden area, siting and design requirements. But perhaps more importantly, the requirements for a building to be moveable and occupied by a dependent was not included. A simple and quick approvals process with less restrictions has proven to be the key to success in other locations. While the pilot program is still under review, it could be expected that a version of the Secondary dwelling code will be progressed in Victoria at some stage. For regional towns that are serviced and where existing residential lots are large, adding a secondary dwelling could be an easy way to add small, affordable housing into the

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mix. This style of housing could also assist in addressing the seasonal worker housing shortage that many regional towns face. With the advances in prefabrication and modular construction, the design quality and environmental performance of this type of housing has improved significantly. New forms of secondary housing are a far cry from the granny flats that many people might be familiar with, and importantly, they do not impact on established streetscape character (where this is important to retain).

Greenfield development (Urban Expansion and Incremental Growth Areas) in Gannawarra will be limited to a handful of locations and will be required to go through rigorous planning assessments and rezoning processes before the final boundaries of new urban expansion areas are determined. At this high-level strategic stage, the locations are based on where the demand for housing is strongest, where it is free from significant environmental and planning constraints, where it can be easily serviced, and where it can best integrate with existing town layouts.

In **Kerang** this will be in the area identified in the 2006 Kerang Structure Plan in the southwest corner of the town, nestled between the Loddon River (east of the levy) and the Murray Valley Highway, and opposite existing residential land north of Airport Road. See Section 7.1 for a map showing Kerang's Urban Expansion Area.

Figure 42: Potential growth area in Kerang's south-west (between Collins Roads and the Loddon River)



In **Cohuna**, there are two greenfield Urban Expansion Areas proposed. One is to the north and the other is to the south of Gunbower Creek. Both are adjacent to existing residential development. The site to the north was previously identified as a fully serviced residential expansion area in the 2006 Cohuna Structure Plan. The site to the south is a new site that is located east of Barr Creek, adjacent to the Murray Sound development. There are excellent opportunities for this site to be connected to the Cohuna Town Centre with walking and cycling paths along the Gunbower Creek (it is only 700m from the middle of Cohuna). See Section 7.2 for a map of Cohuna's Urban Expansion Areas.

Figure 43: Recommended Urban Expansion Area for Cohuna (north of Gunbower Creek)



Figure 44: Recommended Urban Expansion Area for Cohuna (south of Gunbower Creek)



In **Koondrook**, the recommended greenfield option (Incremental Growth Area) is on the southwest corner of Grigg Road and Koondrook West Road. This site has previously been identified in the 2006 Koondrook Structure Plan as a future residential growth opportunity. The site has potential to be incrementally developed, starting with a 2–3-hectare parcel. In addition, there are opportunities to consider rezoning some parcels of Low Density Residential Zone land, and potentially some Industrial 3 Zone land north and south of the Koondrook Recreation Reserve to the General Residential Zone. These should be tested through the Structure Plan review process. Section 7.3 shows Koondrook's Incremental Growth area.

At this stage it is not recommended that large scale residential development be encouraged for the **Kerang Lakes** area. While some small scale, incremental infill is acceptable, it is considered important to ensure that the surrounding highly productive agricultural activities are protected and that growth be planned to ensure efficient service delivery. However, there may be the opportunity to expand holiday accommodation and potentially develop worker accommodation. There is likely to be strong

demand for worker accommodation over the next decade, and there has long been a challenge in meeting seasonal worker accommodation needs. One of the main challenges relates to cost. It is therefore worth investigating the potential of modular or prefabricated housing that can be easily built off-site and transported to site. Servicing needs to be done at a development scale, but can be coordinated to service the development in one go, rather than incremental connections as is done for a standard residential development. See Section 7.4 for a map of the Kerang Lakes.

Future **industrial growth** is recommended to be a combination of infill in existing industrial precincts, consolidation / reconfiguration of one industrial precinct and several expansions of industrial precincts.

Tate Drive in **Kerang** is a very successful industrial precinct (zoned IN1Z) that is very well located, has good buffers resulting from compatible surrounding land uses (apart from to its north), and has room for expansion to its east, and longer term potentially to its south. Tate Drive primarily provides lots in the 3,000 to 5,000sqm size range, with opportunities to consolidate adjacent lots if required. These lot sizes cater to the bulk of industrial enterprises, with perhaps the exception of the smallest and largest of industrial businesses. To the north there is a small section of low density residential development, separated from Tate Drive by a landscaped buffer. This may restrict some uses and activities (with potential adverse impacts) from establishing in the northern section of Tate Drive, however this is not likely to be a major constraint given the types of industrial uses that have already been developed.

Kerang also has several small industrial pockets including Murphy Street (west of the Murray Valley Highway), along the Kerang – Koondrook Road (south of the racecourse), along parts of the rail corridor (Park Road), between Wills and King Streets, and several sites along Ninth Street. Some of these smaller pockets of industrial zoned land are the result of historic land uses and are not strategically located. A detailed review of these smaller sites should be done as part of an updated structure plan process for Kerang, noting the high likelihood of contamination from former uses.

Future industrial land in Kerang is recommended to focus on an expansion of the Tate Drive industrial park, ideally to its east, and longer term to its south. This land is currently zoned and used for agricultural purposes. Converting viable agricultural land to another land use needs to be carefully considered and done in collaboration with willing landowners. Another option for some light industrial land may be along the northern edge of the Kerang Airport site. Ideally this would be aviation related and could be combined with hangar space to support general aviation activities.

Figure 45: Tate Drive, Kerang – an excellent example of local government facilitated development



Gibbons Drive in **Cohuna** is another successful investment that the Shire has made to facilitate economic and industrial development in the region. This 20ha industrial estate is not as advanced as Tate Drive, however it has provided a slightly more diverse range of lot sizes, with one close to 2ha. Gibbons Drive is one part of Cohuna's southern industrial precinct, with another 13ha of partially developed industrial land immediately to its north situated between the Murray Valley Highway and Hester Avenue. Barr Creek provides a natural buffer along the northwest edge of the industrial precinct, where land use changes to residential and education. While not considered necessary at present, should a very large industrial site be needed in the future, it may be worth exploring an expansion on land south of Bradys Road and west of Keelys Roads. Once again, this is currently viable agricultural land and care needs to be taken when considering changing land use controls. Collaboration and cooperation with landowners is essential. Other options are always available. As mentioned above, this is not needed at present and discussions may only be required should a very large site be necessary in the future.

Flanking the western edge of Cohuna's urban area is a large strip of industrial zoned land. While it is contiguous, it almost operates as three discrete industrial precincts. The northern most sub-precinct is centred on Weinberg Street, and it contains a variety of smaller lots. It is well established, with only limited growth potential. The central precinct is made up of two very large parcels and is home to the Cohuna Saleyards and an equestrian centre. The southern sub-precinct is along the Cohuna – Leitchville Rd and it has several larger businesses (with an irrigation focus) and several smaller sheds (that are actually still relatively large). There is capacity for further subdivision and new development.

On the northern edge of Cohuna is a recently created industrial / mixed use precinct. Construction of the roads and lots has not yet commenced. This precinct will provide another 15ha of serviced industrial and mixed use land.

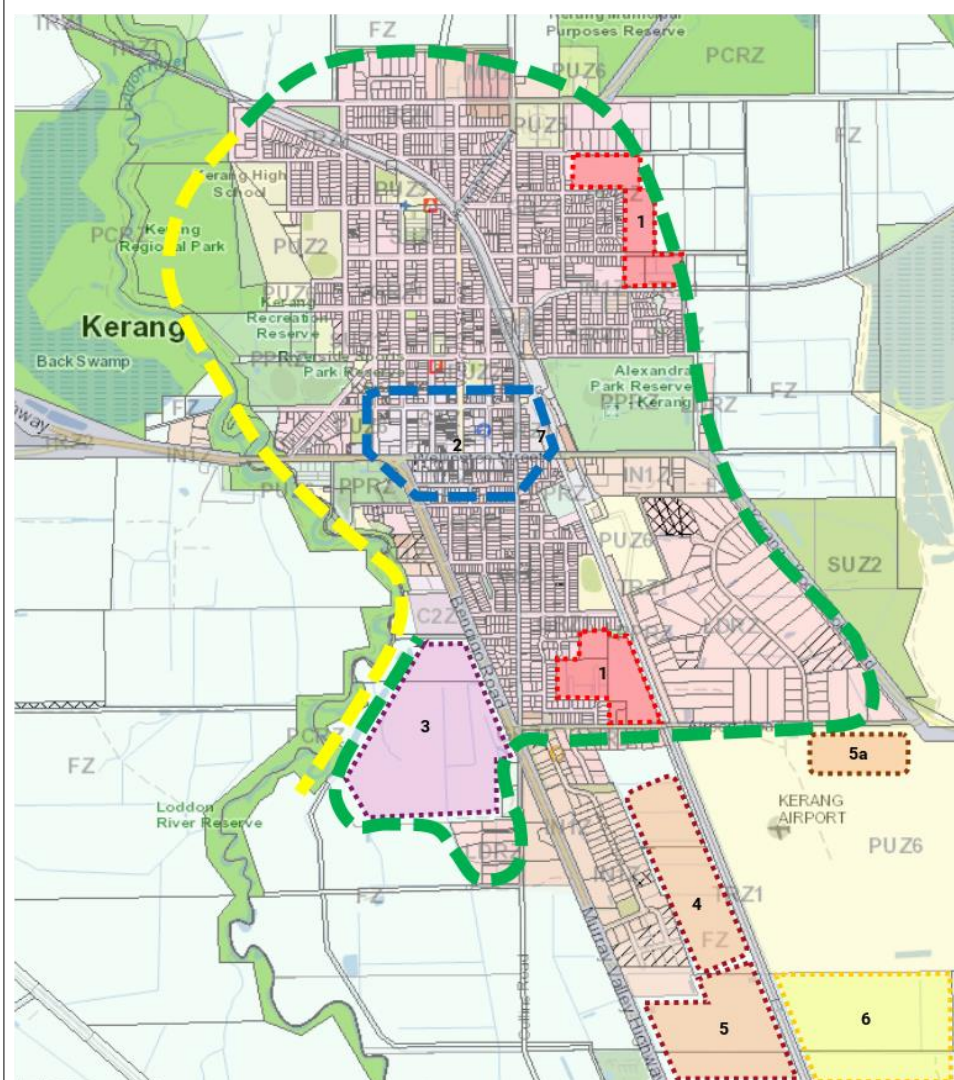
Koondrook has two industrial precincts. The larger of the two precincts is located in the northern part of the town, just south of the bridge crossing to Barham on the western side of the Koondrook – Murrabit Road. It is an interesting precinct which has evolved over time and includes a pocket of around 10 dwellings in the middle of it. The main businesses include an orange juice processing plant, a livestock feed store and a truck and silo yard. Much of the precinct is undeveloped and requires servicing before new lots could be created. There may be an opportunity to rationalise the size and layout of the precinct as part of the Koondrook Structure Plan review. In particular, it may be worth investigating if the parcels along the western and southern parts of the precinct might be better zoned for residential uses. All the necessary investigations will be required, but given the previous use has been for light industry, the risk of contamination might be lower compared to other industrial areas.

The southern industrial precinct is a triangular shape that is bounded by Main Street, Briar Street and Grigg Road. This precinct is zoned to allow heavy industry, however given its relatively small size and residential interface to the east, it is worth considering an Industrial 3 zoning (light industry). The Structure Plan review should also consider the need for replacement industrial or highway frontage commercial land directly opposite this precinct on land currently zoned PPRZ. It would be preferred for the site to be limited to around 3 hectares on the south eastern corner of the site and align with Briar Street at its northern end, however it is understood that this section of the site may have drainage issues. This land might be suitable for the development of a petrol station, should one be needed (this has been raised as missing from the towns services).

On the following pages, specific sites that are of particular interest have been identified and annotated. These will need further detailed investigations completed to fully justify a change to the current planning controls, which is beyond the scope of this project, however they clearly are of strategic interest to the Shire for their potential to accommodate future residential and industry growth.

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7.1 Kerang Future Growth Directions

**Strategic Directions:**

1. Facilitate coordinated subdivision and residential development on infill sites identified with the DPO1 (revise DPO1)
2. Consolidate commercial and 'mixed-use' development in the town centre
3. Commence planning for future Urban Expansion Area (residential), starting with a review of the Structure Plan
4. Commence planning for future industrial precinct expansion
5. Investigate the site for long term industrial expansion.
- 5a. Consider aviation related light industry on northern part of airport site
6. Facilitate the airport expansion to the south (currently under consideration)
7. Work with VicTrack on redevelopment options south of the station building (potential aged care / medium density / worker accommodation)

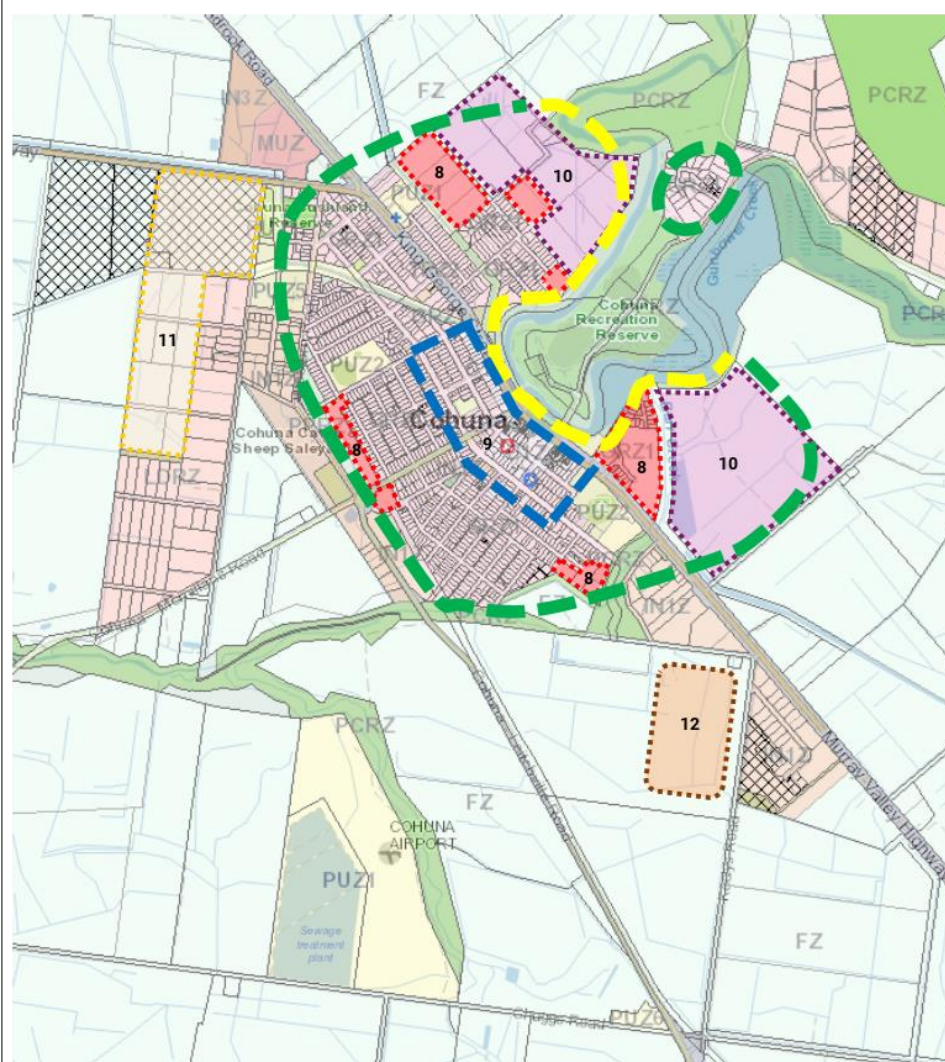
Extent of residential growth

High amenity / sensitive interface

Key planning issues & overlay controls:

- Helicopter flight path / Bushfire / Potential inundation / Cultural Heritage Sensitivity
- VPO2, DD01, DD02, DD03, DD04, DP01, DP02, DP03, FO, LSIO, BMO, SC01, SC02

7.2 Cohuna Future Growth Directions



Strategic Directions

8. Facilitate coordinated subdivision and residential development on infill sites identified with the DP01 (revise DP01)
9. Consolidate commercial and 'mixed-use' development in the town centre (using current zone controls)
10. Commence planning for future Urban Expansion Areas (residential) to the north and south of Gunbower Creek, starting with a review of the Structure Plan and/ or based on detailed planning investigations completed by landowners
11. Consider expanding the Low Density Residential precinct in the west
12. Investigate interest in a long term 'very large format' industrial use

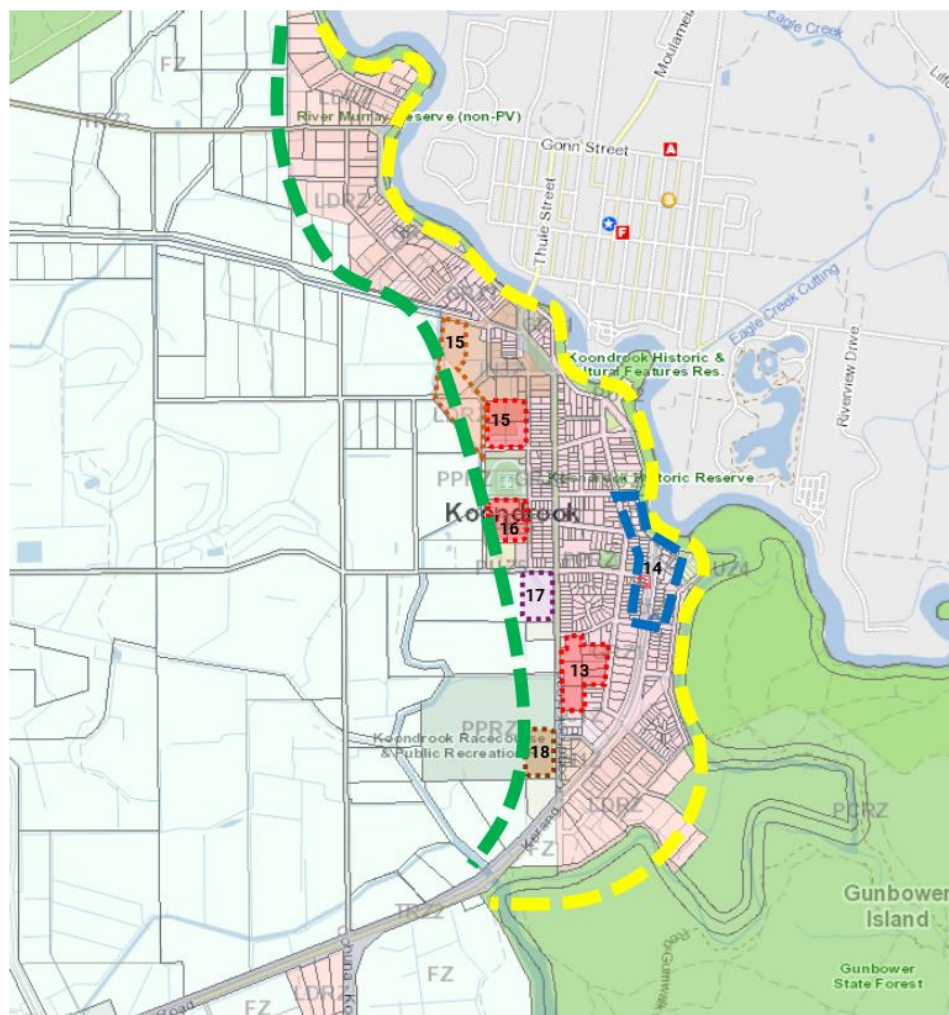
- Extent of residential growth (General Residential)
- High amenity / sensitive interface

Key planning issues & overlay controls:

- Helicopter flight path / Bushfire / Potential inundation / Cultural Heritage Sensitivity
- ES04, DD02, DD03, DD04, DP01, BMO, SC01, SC02

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7.3 Koondrook Future Growth Directions

**Strategic Directions**

13. Facilitate coordinated subdivision and residential development on infill sites identified with the DP01 (revise DP01)
14. Consolidate commercial and 'mixed-use' development in the town centre
15. Investigate rationalisation of IN3Z by rezoning parcels in southern section to GRZ and a parcel in the north west to LDRZ (apply DP01 & DP02)
16. Facilitate additional residential land by investigating rezoning LDRZ parcels to GRZ and applying DP01
17. Commence planning for future Incremental Growth Area (residential) on the south west corner of Koondrook West Road and Grigg Rd (around 3ha), starting with a review of the Structure Plan
18. Investigate potential for IN3Z / C2Z 'Highway Frontage' development opposite IN1Z precinct in south (opposite Briar St) to offset rationalised IN3Z precinct in the north

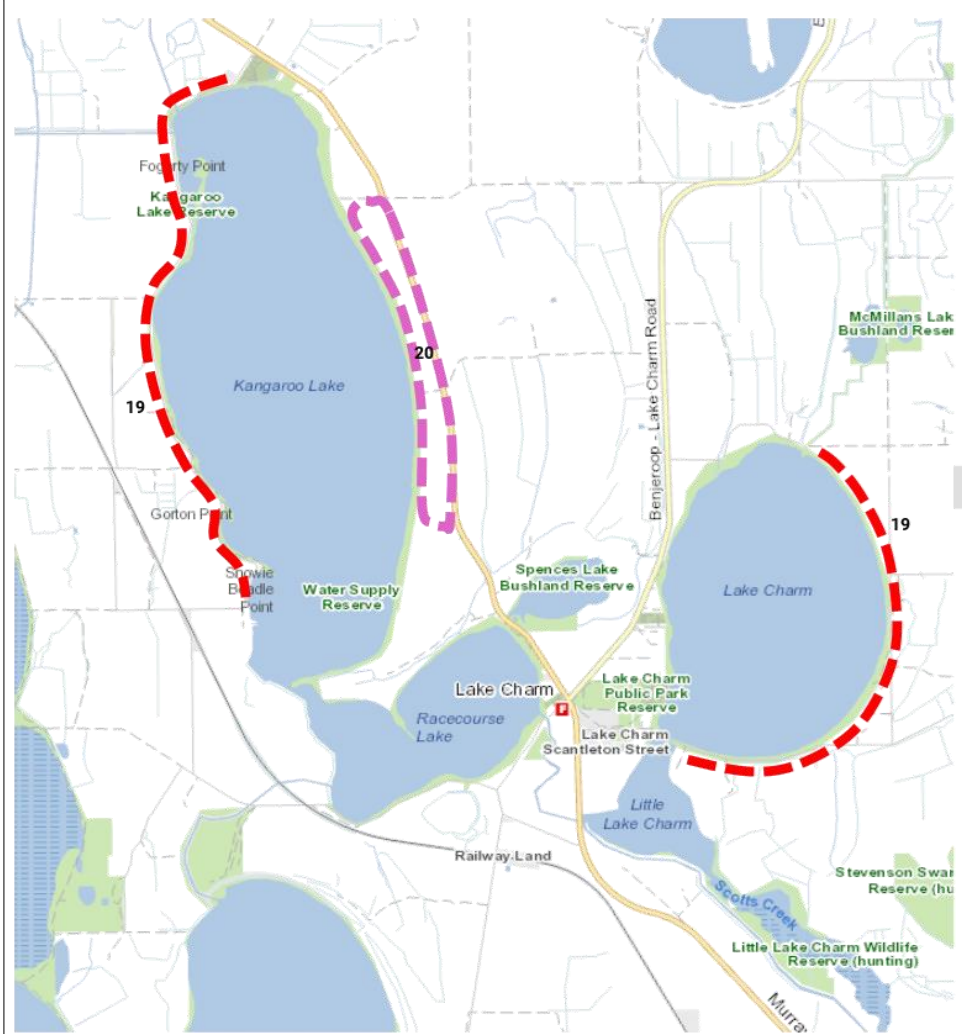
- Western extent of growth / transition to rural
- High amenity / sensitive interface

Key planning issues & overlay controls:

- Bushfire / Potential inundation / Cultural Heritage Sensitivity
- ES04, LSIO, BMO, SC02

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7.4 Kerang Lakes Future Growth Directions

**Strategic Directions**

19. Small scale incremental residential lot creation around lake frontage, where impacts on water quality and agricultural practices can be managed
20. Support private sector led investigations into the potential of a lakeside Worker Accommodation Village (classified in the GPS as a Camping & Caravan Park) on the eastern side of Kangaroo Lake

Key planning issues & overlay controls:

- Bushfire / Potential inundation / Cultural Heritage Sensitivity / Kerang Wetlands Ramsar site
- ES03, ES04, LSI0, SC02

8 Conclusion and Recommendations

This draft Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy 2023 seeks to implement the Shire's clear vision and direction when it comes to supporting the growth and development of its community, its towns and settlements. The Shire's pro-active approach to economic development has laid some solid foundations on which to leverage future investment and jobs growth, and this Strategy is one of the first steps in updating the strategic planning framework to ensure that it too is able to get 'ahead of the game' and plan for future residential and industrial growth, to cater for the demand that revised population and dwelling forecasts have predicted for coming decades.

This draft Strategy has found that overall, the planning for Gannawarra's main towns of Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook is sound, however with changing demographics (the population is getting older, and there are more smaller households), changes in the way people live and work, the experience of several floods and fires, there is now a need to review the 2006 Structure Plans that currently guide development, to ensure that they are up to the task of guiding growth well into the future. This draft Strategy makes recommendations that respond to these issues and provides direction on how the Shire's main towns could grow into the future. These recommendations are based on proven planning principles and support the continued evolution and development of towns. In some regards, they support the approach of 'keep doing what you are doing', but go one step further and develop a planning policy framework that supports and guides the private sector to deliver the type of development that the Shire and community wants. Aligning the visions of the Shire and the development sector is the most efficient way to achieve the outcomes that everyone is after – places that people want to live in.

The following actions are recommended to achieve this:

Number	Recommendation
Planning policy recommendations	
1	Commencing a process to update the Structure Plan's for Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook as a priority (Structure Plans for Leitchville, Murrabit and Quambatook could be reviewed in the medium term).
2	Reviewing the Development Plan Overlays (DPO1 and DPO2) to ensure that they will facilitate coordinated development across multiple sites and ownerships.
3	Investigate several smaller sites recommended for rezoning (identified in Section 7 – Managing Future Growth).
4	Review the Planning Policy Framework and update (including updated Council adopted strategic plans, population and dwelling forecasts)
Non-statutory recommendations	
5	Assisting private sector led proposals that are consistent with the Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy 2023, where the Development Plan approach has been identified.
6	Assisting private sector led investigations into further lakeside living options, including worker accommodation, at Lake Charm and Kangaroo Lake.

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7	Investigating opportunities for the Tate Drive Industrial Precinct to be extended to the east.
8	Facilitating discussions between large employers (needing worker accommodation), accommodation providers / developers and larger landowners in Kerang with a view to getting additional short-term / seasonal worker accommodation delivered to support large scale investments and seasonal worker shortages.
9	Engaging with VicTrack on options for underutilised land at the Kerang Train Station site (this may require a masterplan to be prepared for the site first, to ensure future transport needs can be accommodated).

DRAFT

Appendix

To be completed

- Forecast methodology
- Economic Impact Assessment of Case Studies

DRAFT

8 URGENT BUSINESS**9 NOTICES OF MOTION**

Nil

10 QUESTION TIME

Question Time provides an opportunity for members of the public to submit questions, in advance, to gain a response at the Council meeting.

QUESTIONS FROM THE GALLERY

Completed Question Time forms must be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer via email council@gsc.vic.gov.au no later than 8:30am on the day prior to the Council meeting.

A maximum number of two questions may be submitted in writing by any one person.

Questions will be read by the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer.

The Mayor or Chief Executive Officer may indicate that they require further time to research an answer. In this case, an answer will be provided in writing generally within ten (10) business days.

Questions will be answered at the meeting, or later in writing, unless the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer has determined that the relevant question seeks confidential information defined in Section 3 of the *Local Government Act 2020* such as:

- Council business information
- security information
- land use planning information
- law enforcement information
- legal privileged information
- personal information
- private commercial information
- confidential meeting information
- internal arbitration information
- Councillor Conduct Panel confidential information
- an issue outside the Gannawarra Shire Council core business

or if the question is:

- defamatory, indecent, abusive or objectionable in language or substance
- repetitive of a question already answered (whether at the same or an earlier meeting)
- asked to embarrass a Councillor or Council officer.

No debate or discussion of questions or answers shall be permitted and all questions and answers shall be as brief as possible.

11 DELEGATES REPORTS

11.1 DELEGATES REPORTS

Author: Mel Mathers, Executive Assistant - Chief Executive Office

Authoriser: Geoff Rollinson, Chief Executive Officer

Attachments: Nil

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council has memberships with peak Local Government associations, local and regional forums along with statutory committees. Some memberships require that a Councillor be appointed to act as a delegate to formally represent Council; typically in a voting capacity. This Agenda item provides an opportunity for Council appointed delegates to present a verbal update on any pertinent matters arising from Council's membership on the following associations.

Association	Appointed Council Delegate
Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance	Cr Stanton
Community Halls Community Asset Committee	Cr Burt
Loddon Campaspe Group of Councils	Mayor
Municipal Association of Victoria	Cr Collier
Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee (MFMPC)	Cr Link
Murray River Group of Councils (MRGC)	Mayor
Rail Freight Alliance	Cr Stanton
Rural Councils Victoria	Cr Smith
Timber Towns Victoria	Cr Smith

NB: * Audit and Risk Committee - no delegate report is required as the Audit and Risk Committee formally reports back separately to Council in accord with the Audit and Risk Committee Charter.

8 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

RECOMMENDATION

That Council considers the confidential report(s) listed below in a meeting closed to the public in accordance with Section 66(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020*:

12.1 Future of Community Care Services

This matter is considered to be confidential under Section 3(1)(a) of the Local Government Act, and the Council is satisfied that discussion of this matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest as it deals with Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released.