

COMMUNITY SUPPORT NEWSLETTER

Issue 19: August – September 2025

Council continues to work with local, state and commonwealth partners to support the recovery of Gannawarra communities.

This newsletter outlines support events occurring for the community to enjoy and highlights some of the projects achieved.

SUPPORT CONTACTS

Mallee Family Care: 03 5032 4479

Rural Financial Counselling Service:
1300 735 578

Flood Recovery Hotline: 1800 560 760

Lifeline: 13 11 14

Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636

Northern District Community

Health: 03 5451 0200

National Reconciliation Week—Kerang Community Walk

On Wednesday, 28 May 2025, the Gannawarra Shire community came together in an inspiring show of unity and respect for the 11th annual Reconciliation Week Walk in Kerang. Organised by the Gannawarra Shire Council in collaboration with the Kerang Elders and Leaders Group, Mallee District Aboriginal Services (MDAS), and Northern District Community Health (NDCH). The event commenced with flag raising ceremony in Victoria Street in front of the largest crowd to date, drawing around 350 community members.

Over 250 students from 9 schools and the Gannawarra Children's Centre joined the walk and festivities. Thanks to flood recovery funding covering bus travel students from remote schools, Koondrook and Murrabit were able to attend.

The event was rich in Aboriginal culture featuring a Welcome to Country by Warren Hall Jnr and a Smoking Ceremony led by Hack Webster, who also shared his cultural knowledge of native plants used in the ceremony. Yorta Yorta singer Madi Colville Walker performed cultural storytelling through song, and Auntie Lil Murray read the picture book *Country*, with its pages projected on a large screen.

Art displayed at the event enhanced the cultural atmosphere with local Indigenous artworks—including pieces by children and youth groups, Kethawil Pembenguuk and Tyipen Kwe along with adult artists.

The event fostered cultural awareness, strengthened relationships, and provided a platform for Aboriginal voices. The Kerang Reconciliation Week Walk stands as a powerful example of how local communities can come together to honour

history, celebrate culture, and build a future of reconciliation — one step at a time.

Kerang's National Reconciliation Week celebrations were funded by the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments under the Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) as part of the Gannawarra Community Flood Recovery Program.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT NEWSLETTER

August – September 2025

REPAIRS TO FLOOD-DAMAGED ROADS COMPLETED

The Gannawarra's recovery from the 2022 floods has reached a key milestone, with repairs to all Gannawarra Shire Council-managed roads completed.

Work has occurred since late 2022 to repair the more than 600 kilometres of Council-managed roads damaged during major flooding along the Avoca and Loddon rivers, Pyramid Creek and their tributaries.

"Council thanks residents and motorists for their understanding as these works occurred throughout the municipality," Council Chief Executive Officer, Geoff Rollinson said.

"These works were funded thanks to joint Commonwealth and State Government-funded Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements; however, like many of the municipalities impacted by the 2022 floods, receiving State Government approval for repairs delayed our ability to roll out these works.

"Now these works are complete, residents and motorists will be able to travel to and from their properties via the quickest way possible, as well as provide greater connections between farming enterprises and services." Contractors completed the repairs to sealed and unsealed roads along with a number of culverts across the municipality that were damaged as a result of the flood event.

Meanwhile, Council continues to advocate for improvements along Regional Roads Victoria-managed roads in the municipality. These include the Loddon Valley Highway (B260), Murray Valley Highway (B400) and other local roads identified on maps or signage with a C2## prefix.

"These roads are important to the Gannawarra, as they connect residents and services to our major towns and other regional locations," Mr Rollinson said.

"It is important that these roads are maintained to a level our community expects, as it will ensure ease of mind for residents and visitors alike."



COMMUNITY CONNECTION THROUGH ART & CRAFT

Over the past two years, funding from Emergency Recovery Victoria through the Gannawarra Flood Recovery Program has supported a wide range of events, programs, and activities across the Shire, as part of a community-led recovery initiative.

Among these were a series of art and craft workshops coordinated by Kerang Neighbourhood House, held in Kerang, Koondrook, Murrabit, and Benjeroop. These workshops used creativity as a powerful connector, bringing residents together in a relaxed, welcoming environment to learn new skills and express themselves artistically. Activities included Kokedama making, mosaics, fluid art, weaving, and wreath making—each led by a talented local facilitator.

These creative sessions not only encouraged artistic exploration but also played an important role in strengthening community connections and supporting emotional wellbeing throughout the recovery period.

As the funding for this initiative has now concluded, the Gannawarra Shire Council extends its thanks to Emergency Recovery Victoria and all community members and facilitators who contributed to the success of the program. The positive impact of these activities will continue to be felt across the community for years to come.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT NEWSLETTER

August – September 2025



BUSH TUCKER GARDEN PROJECT

The bush tucker garden space named “Tyapa Kurra Kahl” meaning “*To plant on Country*” in Barapa Wamba language is nearing completion at Mallee District Aboriginal Services, Kerang.

The development of the garden is supported by Northern District Community Health, Loddon Mallee Public Health Unit and Gannawarra Shire Council. The garden is being funded by Emergency Recovery Victoria through the Gannawarra Flood Recovery Program.

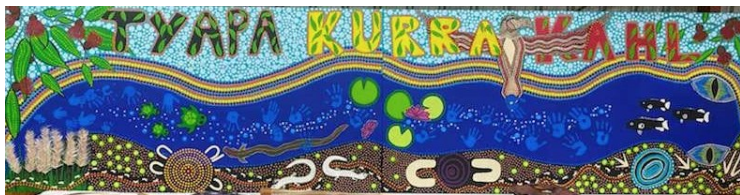
Designed as a space for the local Aboriginal community to connect with Country, the garden aims to strengthen cultural knowledge around native plants and traditional food practices.

Raised Redgum timber garden beds have been installed and planted with a variety of bush tucker species. Two mural artworks have also been completed, including one proudly displaying the garden’s name, “Tyapa Kurra Kahl,” which will be positioned at the garden’s entrance. Much of the landscaping has been finalised, with natural pathways, mulch, a firepit area, shade sail, and a yarning circle now in place.

Next steps will include planting a diverse selection of native species such as kangaroo grass, chocolate lilies, native violets, river mint, and pepper berries. Each plant will be accompanied by signage detailing its cultural significance, traditional uses, and care instructions. A section of native lawn will also be planted, alongside an area of turf.

A community celebration and official opening of the garden is planned for mid-Spring, giving time for the new planted garden to settle and flourish.

Enquiries on the activities and the cultural knowledge for the Bush Tucker Garden project can be made to emma.holland@ndch.org.au.



ABORIGINAL ART PROJECT ACKNOWLEDGED AT KERANG TECH HIGH SCHOOL

Kerang Tech High School marked the beginning of Term 3 with the official opening of its Aboriginal art mural project on July 22, 2025. This initiative was made possible through partial funding from the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments under the Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), as part of the Gannawarra Community Flood Recovery Program.

Led by local artist Tobie Cameron, the mural was developed in partnership with Aboriginal students throughout the school term. The sweeping artwork brings to life powerful cultural stories, including the Rainbow Serpent, Murray Cod, the local lakes, and the Murray River. The mural will be further enhanced with signage acknowledging Traditional Owners, along with a QR code linking to audio recordings that share the cultural significance of the stories depicted. Hack Webster from Mallee District Aboriginal Services delivered a Welcome to Country and conducted a smoking ceremony during the event. Hack also spoke to students about the meaning of NAIDOC Week and read a prepared presentation on behalf of Tobie Cameron, who was unable to attend.

The striking mural now stands as a special space for reflection, connection, and celebration—offering students and the broader community a place to gather and honour the rich cultural heritage of the region.



The project was supported by Gannawarra Shire Council, Northern District Community Health, and Victoria Police, all of whom attended the opening ceremony in a show of community collaboration.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT NEWSLETTER

August – September 2025

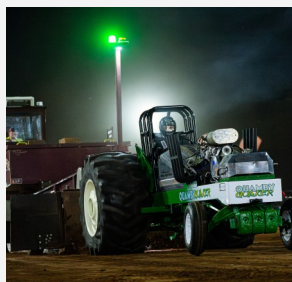
FLOOD RECOVERY FUNDED EVENTS

Thanks to funding from Emergency Recovery Victoria through the Gannawarra Flood Recovery Program, a variety of community-driven events and initiatives have taken place in recent weeks.

These activities have not only uplifted community spirits and strengthened social ties—positively impacting mental health and wellbeing—but have also provided a boost to local businesses and the tourism industry

Quambatook Tractor Pull

The 47th Annual Australian Tractor Pull Championships wowed crowds in Quambatook on Easter Saturday with one of the event's biggest-ever turnouts. Featuring modified and vintage tractors, 102 trophies were awarded across categories. The highlight was a dazzling night event under lights. With food, kids' entertainment, and a car show, the family-friendly day was a roaring success in perfect weather.



Kerang Street Party

Victoria Street in Kerang came alive on Easter Thursday as hundreds attended the official opening of the town's revitalised CBD. Families enjoyed live entertainment, food, music, and children's activities in a festive atmosphere. The \$3.47 million upgrade, supported by the Victorian Government, included safer crossings, wider footpaths, more greenery, and improved accessibility. Northern District Community Health also offered wellness activities as part of the celebrations. Council praised the strong community turnout and noted the project's success in creating a safer, more welcoming town centre for residents, visitors, and local businesses.

Cohuna's Garden Park Easter Event a Hit

Cohuna's Garden Park came alive on Easter Thursday with music, food, and family fun. Supported by the Lions and Leo clubs, the event featured live music from Jimmy Johnson, kids' crafts, food stalls, and a vibrant community turnout. Organised by the Cohuna Progress Association, the day was a great success, drawing locals and visitors for a memorable school holiday celebration.



Kerang Lawn Tennis Club Easter Tournament

Kerang Lawn Tennis Club marked its Easter centenary tournament with a record 420 entries and 750 matches played over the long weekend. The event is praised for its family-



friendly atmosphere with generations of families competing in the event. Many of the players and spectators celebrated the centenary with live entertainment provided by the rock cover band, Equalizer.

Murrabit Country Easter Market

The annual Easter Murrabit Market on Saturday, 19 April, was a festive morning for families. Kids enjoyed a free jumping castle and animal nursery with alpacas, goats geese, lambs and more, while the Easter Bunny delighted visitors with Easter eggs and photo opportunities. A few thousand visitors browsed around 100 stalls and were treated to live music by talented singer Kim Ritchie.



Murrabit Lawn Tennis Club Easter Tournament

The Murrabit Lawn Tennis Club celebrated its 78th annual Easter tournament with perfect weather and a fantastic turnout. Held over Good Friday and Easter Saturday, the event welcomed 210 entrants from across the state



and featured mixed and doubles competitions. Many participants dressed in matching costumes adding to the fun, social atmosphere of the small community event. Many of the players and families travel long distances and camp onsite and continue to return to play each year.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT NEWSLETTER

August – September 2025



GANNAWARRA ACTIVITIES

Activities supported by funding from the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments under the Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) as part of the Gannawarra Community Flood Recovery Program are drawing to a close. Kerang Neighbourhood House continue to hold their Soup Thursdays and the Morning Mates Men's BBQ breakfast each week on A Friday. For those wanting to discover upcoming events in Gannawarra, visit: www.gsc.vic.gov.au/events

Everyone Welcome. Just Come Along.

EVERY THURSDAY.

At Kerang Neighbourhood House.

SOUP

Meet New People.

Have a Chat Over a Meal.

Free Soup, Sandwiches and a Cold Drink.

12NOON -1PM.



LOOK OVER THE FARM GATE—COMMUNITY GRANTS



The National Centre for Farmer Health is currently delivering their Community Grants Program—

Look Over the Farm Gate. The grants program supports local organisations to deliver events and initiatives to support communities to connect and build resilience.



Grants of up to \$5,000 are available for eligible community organisations and groups in Victoria. Activities need to be completed by 31 October 2025.

For eligibility and terms and conditions scan the QR Code.

-Brought to you by -

KERANG NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE
11 Scoresby St, Kerang 3579
08451 6840 | www.kerangnhgsc.vic | www.facebook.com/kerangnh

7am - 9am
Fridays
At Kerang Neighbourhood House

-Free-
Men's BBQ Breakfast
-Morning Mates-
All Welcome

MURRABIT CRAFTY & CHATTY CLUB

Connect - Community - Create



Every Wednesday
Murrabit Family Hub
(formerly playgroup)
45 Gonn Avenue
10am to 12 noon

Bring along your own craft or just come along for a cuppa and chat. If you don't have a craft project, don't worry - some crafty ladies will provide supplies and crafty advice!

Gold Coin Donation

QUERIES: 5457 2205



Supported by Gannawarra Shire Flood Recovery Funding through the Gannawarra Community Resilience Committee

COMMUNITY SUPPORT NEWSLETTER

August - September 2025

NEW COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS DIRECTORY

The new Community Connections Directory promotes activities across the Gannawarra Shire to foster social connections and enhance mental health and wellbeing. The directory is an initiative and partnership with the local Neighbourhood Houses and Northern District Community Health (NDCH).

Copies of the directory are available in hard copy at Neighbourhood Houses in Kerang, Cohuna and Quambatook, NDCH and Gannawarra libraries, and online at Council's website. Scan the QR code to access:



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS Directory

Getting you connected!

April - September 2025



COHUNA NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE
KERANG NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE
QUAMBATOOK COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE



NDCH



BARAPA BARAPA CULTURAL WALK

Work is underway to redevelop signage for the Reedy Lake Cultural Walk, located along the edge of Middle Reedy and Reedy Lakes. Originally established in 2008, the walk has since fallen into disrepair. This important site showcases the deep cultural significance of the area to the Barapa Barapa people, including features such as culturally modified trees and evidence of traditional life, where the lakes provided food, tools, and a strong spiritual connection to Country. The 900-metre (one-way) walk offers visitors the chance to learn about Aboriginal heritage while enjoying the region's diverse native flora and fauna. Once restored, it will again serve as a valuable educational and cultural experience for the community and visitors alike. Funding for this project has been provided by FRRR and Emergency Recovery Victoria through the Gannawarra Flood Recovery Program.



Ask R U OK?® ANY DAY

You've got this! And we've got your back.

ruok.org.au

R U OK? Day is Thursday, 11 September 2025

We all go through life's ups and downs every day. That's why it's important for everyone to feel confident to check in with those they care about and Ask R U OK? Any Day