

# GANNAWARRA *CONNECT*



**GANNAWARRA**  
*Shire Council*

*April-June 2026*

## IN THIS EDITION

<b>From the Mayor</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Your Councillors</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Council Meetings</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Contacting Council</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Community News</b>	<b>3-6</b>
<b>Economic Development</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>What's On</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Immunisation Sessions</b>	<b>8</b>

## FROM THE MAYOR

The start of the year has seen Council advocate for our communities regarding water management and transmission infrastructure, as well as respond to another major rain event.



A review of the Murray Darling Basin Plan is currently occurring, with Council working with fellow Murray River Group of Councils (MRGC) members to develop a joint position. These discussions have focused on the lack of focus on the socio-economic impacts of the Plan on affected communities and how and how we are paying the price for poor government management of both the Northern and Southern Basins.

Cr Daniel Bolitho, Council Chief Executive Officer, Geoff Rollinson and I also recently met with the Victorian Minister for Climate Action, Energy and Resources, Lily D'Ambrosio MP regarding the compulsory access and acquisition of farmers land regarding VNI West. Our message was that compulsory powers are unacceptable and only needed because of a lack of the project's social licence. Our solution was providing cheap electricity for Gannawarra residents, businesses and industry from the renewables we produce with no transmission or distribution charges.

Unfortunately, the Minister did not mention at this meeting the government's plans to fast-track legislation to speed up compulsory power usage. Omitting this plan during our discussions was disrespectful to Council's delegation and raises the question of how much respect those responsible for the development of VNI West have for our farmers and the community.

Finally, recent rainfall has been welcomed, but storms and rain that impacted the Gannawarra have again highlighted our flood risk. Council continues to plan and invest in improving flood resilience, and while there is still much to be done, the recent rain has provided an opportunity to assess what worked and didn't work. Councillors will also receive a presentation regarding lessons learned from these events.

Regards,

**Mayor Garner Smith**



## NATIONAL BAREFOOT WATERSKI CHAMPIONSHIPS

Hundreds of people will converge on Cohuna from 11-18 April when the Gannawarra hosts the 64th Australian Barefoot Waterski Championships.

**READ PAGE 3 FOR MORE INFORMATION  
ABOUT THIS MAJOR EVENT**

# COUNCIL INFORMATION

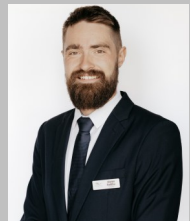
## YOUR COUNCILLORS



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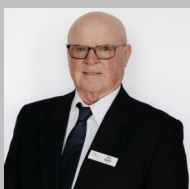
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## COUNCIL MEETING DETAILS

The **April 2026 Meeting of Council** will be held on **Wednesday, 15 April**, starting at 6pm.

The **May 2026 Meeting of Council** will be held on **Wednesday, 20 May**, starting at 6pm.

The **June 2026 Meeting of Council** will be held on **Wednesday, 17 June**, starting at 6pm.

All meetings are held at The Glasshouse, Kerang (2 Shadforth Street).

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

Agendas for Meetings of Council are available online at [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/meetings](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/meetings) two days prior to each meeting. All Council Meetings are recorded, with a recording available to view 24 hours after the meeting at [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/meetings](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/meetings).

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

## CONTACTING COUNCIL

### IN PERSON

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

### BY PHONE

(03) 5450 9333 during business hours

### BY EMAIL

[council@gsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@gsc.vic.gov.au)

### BY MAIL

PO Box 287  
Kerang VIC 3579

### ONLINE

Report an issue at [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/request](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/request)

### SOCIAL MEDIA

**Facebook** – [www.facebook.com/gannawarra](http://www.facebook.com/gannawarra)

## COHUNA TO HOST NATIONAL BAREFOOT WATERSKI CHAMPIONSHIPS

Waterskiing enthusiasts from across Australia will converge on Cohuna from 11-18 April when the town hosts the 64th Australian National Barefoot Waterski Championships.

Eight days of events will be held on Gunbower Creek at the Cohuna Ski Run Reserve, highlighted by five days of competition from Tuesday, 14 April to Saturday, 18 April.

Teams will familiarise themselves with the creek and course setup prior to the five-day competition, with an Australian Open Invitational event to showcase some of the nation's best skiers occurring on Sunday, 12 April from 12 noon.

For more information about the championships, visit [www.vicbarefootclub.com](http://www.vicbarefootclub.com) or visit the 2026 Australian National Barefoot Waterski Championships Facebook page.

*Residents are advised that Gunbower Creek will be closed to all vessels, apart from those competing, between the Cohuna Island Road and Dalton's Road bridges from 7am Friday, 10 April to 7pm Sunday, 19 April.*



### CHAMPIONSHIP PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

**Sunday, 12 April:** Australian Open Invitational (12 noon-4pm) and Opening Ceremony.

**Tuesday, 14 April: to Saturday, 18 April:** Days 1-5 of competition.

### HAVE YOUR SAY ON COUNCIL'S DRAFT BUDGET

Council will soon be seeking your feedback regarding the 2026/27 Draft Budget. One of Council's important financial documents, the Draft Budget will outline how income from municipal rates, fees and charges, and government grants will be used to deliver key services to residents, maintain key infrastructure assets and deliver major projects.

The Draft Budget includes a 2.75 per cent increase on property rates and the municipal charge. This is in line with the legislated cap set by the Minister for Local Government. Council is also proposing to raise kerbside waste charges by this 2.75 per cent, ensuring a cost neutral position for this service.

For more information regarding how you will be able to have your say, look out for future editions of *Gannawarra News*, follow Council's Facebook page or visit the Have Your Say section of Council's website.

**NOTE:** This information was correct at the time of publishing.

### CHAT WITH A COUNCILLOR

Residents will be able to discuss their concerns with Councillors and staff thanks to the Chat With a Councillor program, which begins this month.

Gatherings will be held monthly throughout the Gannawarra, enabling residents to meet with Councillors and staff to raise concerns and discuss other matters.

The first of these sessions will be held in Victoria Square, Kerang later this month, with planning underway for similar events in all communities across the municipality. Details regarding all sessions will be promoted on Council's website. Facebook page and editions of *Gannawarra News*.



## SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM APPLICATIONS OPEN 1 MAY

Applications for Council's Small Grants program will open 9am Friday, 1 May.

Community groups will be able to apply for up to \$5,000 for projects, programs, events and activities that meet the program's essential criteria, align with the community vision outlined in the *Gannawarra Shire 2025-2029 Council Plan* and must be delivered by 31 July 2027.

In previous years the program has helped support major community events, equipment purchases, facility maintenance and initiatives that have improved social connectivity.

Groups considering applying for funding are encouraged to read the program's guidelines, which are available online at [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/grants](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/grants) and from Council's Customer Service Centres at Cohuna and Kerang.

Council's grants website, [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/grants](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/grants) also features advice on how to craft an application, obtain supporting information such as letters of support and quotes, guidance on completing a budget and advice on what assessors may look for when it comes to a successful application.

Applications will close midnight Monday, 1 June.

## DETOX YOUR HOME COMING TO KERANG

Residents needing to dispose of household chemicals will be able to do so for free this April.

Sustainability Victoria is bringing its free Detox Your Home service to the Kerang Transfer Station on Sunday, 19 April from 1pm-4pm.

Toxic household chemicals, such as cleaning products, pool chemicals and pesticides, will be accepted for disposal, ensuring these items do not end up in landfill.

There is no limit on the volume of materials you drop-off, however the maximum acceptable weight or size of any single container is 20 kilograms or 20 litres.

To assist with organising this event, residents looking to drop off items are encouraged to register by visiting the Detox Your Home page at <http://sustainability.vic.gov.au/detoxyourhome>. This page also features a list of items that can be accepted for disposal.



## KEEP RECYCLING YOUR GLASS BOTTLES

Residents are encouraged to continue taking their household glass bottles to any of Council's transfer stations at Cohuna, Kerang, Lalbert and Quambatook, or the Koondrook depot, for recycling.

Not only are all bottles handed in for recycling turned into new products such as roads and construction material, this process reduces instances where contents from yellow household recycling bins are redirected to landfill due to broken glass materials.

For more information regarding Council's waste services, including transfer station locations and how to sign up for green waste services for households in Cohuna, Kerang and Koondrook, please visit [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/waste](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/waste)

## ANIMAL REGISTRATION RENEWALS DUE 10 APRIL

Residents who have animals registered with Gannawarra Shire Council are reminded that registration payments are due Friday, 10 April.

As outlined in the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, all dogs and cats over three months of age must be registered with their local Council and microchipped.

Registration fees cover Council's pound expenses and support key domestic animal-related services, including reuniting lost cats and dogs that are registered and microchipped with their loved ones.

Reduced registration fees are applicable for pets aged over 10 years; dogs kept for working stock; animals that are registered with an Applicable Organisation; and animals that are desexed.

For more information regarding pets and animals, please visit [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/pets\\_and\\_animals](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/pets_and_animals)



## KEEP ACTIVE AT THE KERANG EXERCISE POOL

Residents wanting to keep active during the cooler months can do so by visiting the Kerang Exercise Pool.

Located in Kerang's Patchell Plaza, this small but welcoming facility is heated to between 30-34 degrees.

Whether you are a parent with a young child, recovering from an injury, have a disability or even if you just want to keep active; the Kerang Exercise Pool is for you!

The Kerang Exercise Pool is open 7am-12 noon Mondays, 11am-2pm Tuesdays and Thursdays, and 7am-2pm Wednesdays and Fridays.

For more details regarding Council's pools please visit [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/pools](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/pools)

## LET US KNOW WHEN ROADS, BUILDINGS NEED FIXING

Did you know Council is responsible for maintaining close to 2,500 kilometres of roads, 71 bridges and around 74 kilometres of footpaths within the municipality?

Council is also responsible for looking after many buildings and places residents and visitors rely on, including recreation reserves, playgrounds, halls, public toilets and swimming pools.

If you notice a road that needs repairing, a footpath that has a trip hazard or any repairs that need to occur to any Council-managed building, you can let us know anywhere, anytime in the following ways:

- By visiting [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/request](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/request) at any time;
- By phoning (03) 5450 9333 during business hours;
- Visiting Council's Customer Service Centres at Cohuna (25-25 King Edward Street) and Kerang (Patchell Plaza, 47 Victoria Street) during business hours;
- By visiting [www.gsc.vic.gov.au](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au) and chatting live with a staff member during business hours; and
- Emailing [council@gsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@gsc.vic.gov.au) at any time.

Any issues that may cause harm or serious damage should be reported to Triple Zero (000) immediately.

Please note that concerns regarding local highways or main roads identified with green signage with a gold B### or C2## prefix should be reported to Regional Roads Victoria on 133 778.

## HAVE YOUR SAY ON DRAFT THRIVING TOGETHER PLAN

Residents are encouraged to have their say on the draft *Thriving Together 2026–2030* – a plan for a diverse, inclusive and resilient Gannawarra document.

The draft plan outlines Council’s commitment to ensuring every resident—regardless of age, ability, cultural background, income, gender identity, or circumstances—can feel valued, welcomed, safe, and connected.

Developed using feedback provided during the *Gannawarra Shire 2025-2029 Council Plan* engagement period held between December 2024 and February 2025 and the Let’s Talk About the Weather program held during late 2024, the document builds on the previous *Social Inclusion Strategy 2019-2023*, strengthening its foundations with updated community priorities and insights.

The draft plan can be downloaded online at [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/yoursay](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/yoursay) and viewed at Council’s Customer Service Centres.

You can have your say before 5pm Friday, 17 April by:

- Completing a Have Your Say form, available online under the “Draft Thriving Together 2026-2030 plan” heading at [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/yoursay](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/yoursay)
- By phoning Council on (03) 5450 9333.
- By emailing [council@gsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@gsc.vic.gov.au)
- By writing to Gannawarra Shire Council, PO Box 287 Kerang VIC 3579.



## LALBERT DRINKING WATER TRAILER UPDATE

Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water (GMMWater) has confirmed it will continue to provide a free drinking water trailer in Main Street, Lalbert opposite the town’s former café, subject to use.

The water service provider sought feedback from residents late last year regarding the trailer, which has been available thanks to a historical water quality agreement.

Feedback received highlighted the importance of retaining the service in its current location, as well as the need for better signage so visitors can find drinking water easily.

As a result of the engagement program, new signs promoting the drinking trailer will be installed around the town, whilst a flow logger will be installed on the trailer to record the volume of water used.

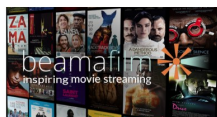
For more information regarding the water trailer, phone GMMWater on 1300 659 961 during business hours.



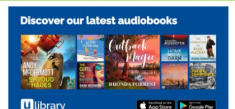
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- Regular children’s programs including Story Time, School Holiday activities and after-school programs
- Books on Wheels home delivery for those unable to physically visit our branches due to illness or incapacity
- Book Chat, author talks, activities and events for adults through to seniors including exhibitions
- Basic IT and computer help with our staff
- Wi-Fi, scanning, public internet computers and access to computer Pods at Kerang (for small online/ in-person meetings, quiet study, podcast creation etc.)
- Printing and photocopying (charges apply)

Scan the QR code below to become an online member and have instant access to our E-Library, or drop in to one of our branches at Kerang, Cohuna and Leitchville or the Quambatook Agency and fill out a membership application



ancestry library edition



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## AUSTRALIAN GEOGRAPHIC TOURS SAFES LAGOON

Safes Lagoon, located on Gunbower Creek, may receive national exposure thanks to the *Australian Geographic* magazine.

A photographer and journalist from the popular nature magazine visited the area in late February, with Council's Economic Development team assisting with the dawn photo shoot.

A small group of residents also participated in the paddle, which enabled the magazine's team to learn about the lagoon and its attractions.

Safes Lagoon forms part of the Gunbower Island Canoe Trail, a five-kilometre route that take approximately two hours to complete.



## EXPLORE YOUR BACKYARD

Residents are encouraged to explore the Gannawarra over the coming months.

Highlights include the Kerang Lakes for water-based activities, Gunbower Island for fishing, camping and kayaking, the Murray River at Koondrook, and the Gannawarra's small towns.

For more information, visit [www.thegannawarra.com.au](http://www.thegannawarra.com.au) or drop into the Gateway to Gannawarra Visitor Centre at Cohuna or Kerang's Sir John Gorton Library.

## THE GANNAWARRA'S TOURISM GROWTH

The Gannawarra is forecast to experience a tourism boom during Easter, with accommodation bookings for the four-day period 75 per cent full as of mid-March.

This increase follows on from a bumper October-December period, which saw a 44.39 per cent occupancy rate. This was a 20 per cent increase compared to the same period 12 months earlier.



## SMALL BUSINESS BUS COMING TO COHUNA THIS MAY

Business Victoria's Small Business Bus is heading to the Gateway to Gannawarra Visitor Centre, Cohuna in May.

Bookings are now open to visit the bus on Monday, 25 May, where you will be able to receive business guidance and financial counselling to help you thrive in your entrepreneurial journey.

To book your free 45-minute session or for more information, visit the Small Business Bus website, located at <https://business.vic.gov.au/learning-and-advice/workshops-and-small-business-bus>

**64th Australian BAREFOOT WATERSKI CHAMPIONSHIPS**  
Cohuna 2026

**OZ BAREFOOT OPEN 1PM SUNDAY APRIL 12**

**COHUNA SKI RUN RESERVE**

**INVITATIONAL INVERT JUMP COMPETITION**

Catch all the action with Australia's elite barefoot waterskiers on the water from 1pm-5pm. Catering onsite.

# COMMUNITY EVENTS

## IMMUNISATION SESSIONS BY APPOINTMENT

### APRIL 2026

**Wednesday, 15 April**  
Cohuna (10.30am-12 noon)  
Kerang (4pm-5.30pm)

### MAY 2026

**Wednesday, 6 May**  
Kerang (10.30am-12 noon)

**Wednesday, 20 May**  
Cohuna (10.30am-12 noon)  
Kerang (4pm-5.30pm)

### JUNE 2026

**Wednesday, 3 June**  
Kerang (10.30am-12 noon)

**Wednesday, 17 June**  
Cohuna (10.30am-12 noon)  
Kerang (4pm-5.30pm)

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

For more details, visit [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/immunisation](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/immunisation)



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

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

**NOTE:** All information that features in this edition of Gannawarra Connect was correct at the time of publishing.

## WHAT'S ON - APRIL-JUNE 2026

**7 APRIL**  
AFL school holiday program, Cohuna

**14 APRIL**  
Bar-Rook Koondrook Probus Club

**25 APRIL**  
ANZAC Day commemorations, shirewide

**26 APRIL**  
Cohuna Farmers & Makers Market

**2 MAY**  
Murrabit Country Market

**10 MAY**  
Still Life Painting Workshop, Kerang

**12 MAY**  
Bar-Rook Koondrook Probus Club

**16-17 MAY**  
2026 Border Flywheelers Club Annual Vintage Rally, Barham

**23 MAY**  
Kerang Community Market

**24 MAY**  
Cohuna Farmers & Makers Market

**6 JUNE**  
Murrabit Country Market

**9 JUNE**  
Bar-Rook Koondrook Probus Club

**27 JUNE**  
Kerang Community Market

**28 JUNE**  
Cohuna Farmers & Makers Market

**4 JULY**  
Murrabit Country Market

**FIRST AND THIRD TUESDAYS OF THE MONTH**  
Chatty Café, Kerang

**SECOND AND FOURTH THURSDAYS OF THE MONTH**  
Craft and Chat, Kerang

**EVERY SECOND TUESDAY**  
Carers Group, Kerang

**EVERY MONDAY**  
Barham Koondrook Men's Shed  
Cohuna Pram Brigade Social Group  
Walk Safe Rural walking group, Kerang

**EVERY TUESDAY**  
Cohuna Men's Shed

**EVERY WEDNESDAY**  
Barham Koondrook Men's Shed  
Cohuna Men's Shed  
Murrabit Crafty & Chatty Café  
Waters Edge Walkers, Cohuna

**EVERY THURSDAY**  
Cohuna Men's Shed  
Kerang Line Dancing  
Murrabit Line Dancing  
Soup and a Sandwich, Kerang

**EVERY SATURDAY**  
parkrun, Cohuna and Kerang  
Grow Collective Garden, Kerang

For details or to add your event to Council's calendar of events, visit [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/events](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/events)

## STAY CONNECTED WITH COUNCIL

If you would like Council news, including media release delivered to your inbox, visit [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/news](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/news) and click on the "Sign up for the latest news by email" link.

If you would like the latest information regarding community programs and grant opportunities sent to you electronically, visit [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/communitydirectory](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/communitydirectory) and click on the "Community updates" link.