



Gannawarra Connect

June 2020



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FROM THE MAYOR

I congratulate the community for their efforts during the past two months in helping to stop the spread of Coronavirus. There is still a way to go before all social distancing measures are relaxed, but if we continue on our great work so far, we will get through this.

It has been a busy time for Council, highlighted by the confirmation of the second portion of \$1 million from the Federal Government’s Drought Communities Programme - Extension.

Work continues on numerous projects at this time, ranging from road improvement to significant waterfront redevelopments at Cohuna and Koondrook.

Kind regards,
Mayor Lorraine Learmonth



APPLY NOW FOR COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PROGRAM FUNDS

Community groups and not-for-profit organisations located within the Gannawarra are encouraged to apply for up to \$5,000 in funding to support community-led initiatives thanks to the Gannawarra Community Resilience Grants Program.

Developed by the Gannawarra Community Resilience Committee, the \$40,000 program, funded by the Federal Government’s Drought Communities Programme – Extension, supports a variety of small initiatives that promote community-led activity and mental health and wellbeing.

“Council was pleased to roll out this program in late 2019, which supported 27 activities and initiatives, ranging from community art installations to community celebrations” Mayor Lorraine Learmonth said.

“I encourage not-for-profit community groups to look at the program guidelines, which are available at www.gsc.vic.gov.au/grants and determine whether any projects, activities or events planned would benefit from a funding application.”

Applications, which close at 5pm on Friday, 26 June, can be submitted online at www.gsc.vic.gov.au/grants

For more details, please visit www.gsc.vic.gov.au/grants, phone (03) 5450 9333 or email grants@gannawarra.vic.gov.au



LEFT: The Gannawarra Community Resilience Grants Program supported projects such as an art installation at Lake Charm.

SUPPORTING BUSINESSES DURING CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Council continues to support local businesses impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic.

Staff have been providing one-on-one assistance to businesses to work through the various Coronavirus-related government assistance packages.

Council is also collating information which will go into a report that outlines the concerns and effects the Coronavirus has had on businesses at a local level, which will assist with recovery efforts.

Information regarding Federal and State government business support available can be found online at www.gsc.vic.gov.au/coronavirus

Residents who are concerned regarding Coronavirus are encouraged to phone the Coronavirus hotline on 1800 675 398 or visit www.vic.gov.au/coronavirus

REMEMBER TO REGISTER YOUR POOL, SPA

Residents who have private pools and spas on their property are urged to register these facilities with Council.

The registration of all permanent pools and spas, and most relocatable pools capable of holding water to a depth greater than 30 centimetres, is part of the State Government's efforts to reduce the number of fatal drownings in private swimming pools and spas.

Residents can register their private pools or spas by completing an application form, which is available online at www.gsc.vic.gov.au/register-your-pool or by phoning Council on (03) 5450 9333.

Completed forms can be submitted to Council by mail to PO Box 287, Kerang 3579 or by email to council@gannawarra.vic.gov.au with a copy of the pool or spa's Building Permit or Certificate of Final Inspection.

Upon receipt of this information, Council will advise you of the relevant registration fee.

Private pool and spa owners who do not register their facilities by 1 June 2020 may be liable to an on the spot fine of \$330 and a breach of the *Building Regulations 2018*, which can be a penalty of up to \$1652.20.

For more information on the new regulations, visit www.vba.vic.gov.au/consumers/swimming-pools or contact Council's Building Department on (03) 5450 9333.



ABOVE: Trevor Keath with one of the new dog litter bag dispensers at Atkinson Park, Kerang.

DOG LITTER BAG DISPENSER INSTALLED AND TRIALLED

Residents who take their dogs on walks at a number of popular Gannawarra Shire Council-managed parks and reserves are benefiting from a trial of the use of new facilities.

Council recently installed dog litter bag dispensers at locations ranging from Atkinson Park and the back swamp walking track at Kerang to Apex Park at Cohuna and the Koondrook Wharf.

"Cleaning up any litter left by your dog on any walks that you take is a key factor of responsible pet ownership," Council's Director of Infrastructure and Development, Geoff Rollinson said.

"Residents and visitors who use these facilities to exercise their dog will benefit from these new dispensers, but it is just as important that used bags are disposed of properly."

Council will assess the trialing of the new facilities during the coming months and determine whether they become a permanent fixture at these locations.

"The correct use of these facilities will benefit residents and visitors to the Gannawarra, not just those who exercise their dogs at these locations," Mr Rollinson said.

"Actions such as vandalism and littering may lead to the trial failing and the removal of these dispensers, which will be to the detriment of local dog owners."

DROUGHT PROJECTS UPDATE

Twenty-two projects and nine events will benefit from a second \$1 million portion from the Federal Government's Drought Communities Programme – Extension, bringing the total amount received to \$2 million.

Council received notification in early May that an application for its second stage of \$1 million from the program that supports drought-declared municipalities had been approved, with projects to be completed by 31 December 2020.

"Communities throughout the Gannawarra are already benefiting from works supported by the rollout of Stage 1 of projects under this programme," Mayor Lorraine Learmonth.

"The confirmation of Council's application means that the number of projects and activities supported within the Gannawarra will increase from 37 to 69.

"These initiatives have been identified using a number of resources, including the Gannawarra Shire Council Plan 2017-2021 and projects that were not successful in obtaining funding from the State Government's Pick My Project program in 2018 and the 2019 round of Council's Community Grants program as a guide."

Nine events are proposed to be supported by Stage 2 of the program, but whether these initiatives proceed are dependent on the easing of social distancing measures currently in place to stop the spread of Coronavirus.

For more information regarding how the Federal Government's Drought Communities Programme - Extension is benefiting the Gannawarra, including a full list of projects supported by this initiative, please visit www.gsc.vic.gov.au/droughtfunding

WORKS UPDATE



LEITCHVILLE PLAYGROUND

Leitchville residents will benefit from recent improvements to Kitchener Street park once social distancing measures are reduced.

The project included the beautification of the nature strip outside the Leitchville Preschool Play Centre, the installation of new fencing, laying of new turf and planting of more than 350 shrubs and seven trees.

The improvements to the Kitchener Street playground are part of Council's \$10.877 million capital works program outlined in the 2019/2020 Council Budget.

APPIN SOUTH BRIDGE

Works are continuing on the replacement of the Appin South bridge, which spans the Loddon River in the southern part of the municipality.

Supported by the Federal Government's Bridges Renewal Program and Regional Roads Victoria's Fixing Country Roads program, the \$1.179 million project will be replaced with a new dual-lane structure.

The new structure will provide greater access to the Loddon Valley Highway for residents and key services.



SUPPORTED PROJECTS

Benjeroop

- Benjeroop Hall/Museum extension

Cohuna

- Installation of 15-amp power outlets at various locations
- Gunbower Creek event
- Cohuna event support

Kerang

- Permanent dance floor/games space at Atkinson Park
- Installation of 15-amp power outlets at Atkinson Park
- Purchase of kayak launching facilities and fishing platforms

Koondrook

- Koondrook RSL clubrooms accessibility improvements
- Koondrook Recreation Reserve Pavilion upgrade

Lake Charm

- Lake Charm Hall renewal works
- Installation of shade sails over exercise pod

Lake Meran

- Toilet upgrades

Lalbert

- Lalbert Community Complex solar panels
- Lalbert Cemetery grave identification signage

Leitchville

- Swimming pool lighting improvements
- Installation of historical plaques
- Powered sites at RV Park

Murrabit

- Murrabit Market Office solar panels
- Murrabit Recreation Reserve complex solar panels
- Miss Keats Park upgrade

Quambatook

- Quambatook Memorial Hall revitalisation
- Quambatook Caravan Park refurbishment

Shirewide initiatives

- Energy audit implementation on non-Council-owned buildings

HEALTH SERVICES UPDATE



A Message From Your Local Health Providers

We would like to extend a congratulations to everyone in the community for following the COVID-19 restrictions. It is because of all of your contributions that the spread of COVID-19 has been slowed in our state. This week we welcome the easing of restrictions as a result. With that in mind we ask you not to become complacent and assume it is safe to resume normal activity. Please follow the advice of our leaders as they guide us through this time.

Northern District Community Health

We are in different boats, in different seas, in different parts of the COVID-19 storm. We encourage you to take notice of how you are feeling and talk to your loved ones about how they are feeling. These conversations will be a way of being mindful of how we are each feeling, and being supportive, patient and caring as we weather these challenging times.

At NDCH we have noticed that we miss seeing each other in person. But we also have noticed that telehealth and video conferencing, whilst not for everyone, have become a great way of working for some. We encourage you all to keep talking, take notice and be kind to each other. Check out the NDCH Facebook page for tips on how to care for yourself and your loved ones during COVID-19.

Screening and Assessment Clinics

NDCH are currently running COVID-19 Screening and Assessment Clinics in Gannawarra. If you are experiencing cold and flu like symptoms please call the triage hotline on 5451 0200 and we will arrange for you to be tested. Not only does this process provide a safe and efficient way for people to be screened and assessed for COVID-19 but the data collected builds a database of COVID-19 in our community which allows the government to make informed decisions around when it is safe to ease restrictions.

We encourage you all to download the COVIDSafe app as well as this to assist in our communities returning to our normal practices as soon as is safely possible.

Amazing stats from Gannawarra and Northern Loddon in last weeks COVID-19 screening blitz! Thanks to everyone who participated in the blitz! Between us all we swabbed 830 people - close to 8% of our population!

Alcohol

As we begin to move out of COVID-19 restrictions and back to normal life some people may need assistance with reducing their alcohol consumption. If you would like some additional support we have trained nurses and counsellors who can assist you through this process. Please contact NDCH on 03 5451 0200.

Family Violence

Isolation and the increased stress of the impacts of Coronavirus - social, emotional and financially - have made these times challenging for us all. Despite this there is no excuse for family violence! If you need support for Family Violence you can call The Orange Door on 1800 290 943. If you are in immediate danger call 000.



Mallee District Aboriginal Services

MDAS Health is here for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their families during COVID-19. Our GP, Nurses, Aboriginal Health workers, Allied Health services are operating. Aboriginal Health Checks are still available through our Kerang site (some services are via telehealth). FluVax clinics are available on Wednesdays and Doctor appointments on Thursdays. But for all services, please phone us first on 5412 6004.

HEALTH SERVICES UPDATE

Cohuna District Hospital

VISTING HOURS FOR ESSENTIAL VISITS ONLY

2pm to 3pm and 6pm to 7pm

X-Ray and Ultra Sound

X-Ray and Ultrasound appointments are still available at both Kerang District Health and Cohuna District Hospital although services have altered due to the COVID-19 situation.

As of the 1st of May, both the **Glenarm and Cohuna District Hospital - Aged Care** staff will be asking all visitors on arrival to provide evidence of their influenza immunisation status. Evidence includes, a statement or record from a health practitioner or immunisation history from Medicare. If your influenza immunisation is not current you will be denied entry, even for compassionate reasons.

Theatre Services

Cohuna District Hospital is currently re-establishing its lists for Elective Surgeries, commencing middle of May 2020. Planned and emergency caesareans are still in operation.

Maternity Antenatal Clinic (MAC)

The MAC clinic has transitioned at this time to a predominately Telehealth model with additional appointments in place. Upon referral, a midwife will make contact with details of the telehealth and inpatient MAC appointments.

Kerang District Health

Visiting hours remain unchanged at Kerang District Health. Please see KDH website for more information along with the KDH Facebook page.

Temperature testing and screening of any visitors to the hospital continues. Thank you to all for your adherence to restrictions that are in place to protect the safety of your loved ones. We ask that you practice social distancing and good hygiene while visiting.

KDH celebrated **International Nurses Day** on 12th May with a BBQ breaky for all staff. The local Lions Club kindly provided biscuits for the nursing staff as a special gift. There is a wonderful display in the main flyer for International Nurses Day which just happens to be Florence Nightingale's birthday. St Joseph's Primary School have provided letters, drawings and notes of thanks to the nursing staff for the wonderful job they do. It is lovely to do something so positive and uplifting for staff who have been under pressure with pandemic planning and changes to practice and service delivery in the past few months.

Op Shops

Opening for Winter Woolies Tuesday and Thursday this week for short time frames with social distancing and strict hand hygiene practices.

5 Ways to Wellbeing

It is especially important to look after our wellbeing while practicing social distancing. The 5 Ways to Wellbeing gives us simple and practical ways to do that. They include:

- **Connect:** with family and friends. While you cannot be physically together you can make a phone call, video chat, connect on social media or even set up a zoom meeting with family and friends.
- **Be Active:** Exercise is one of the 4 reasons you are legitimately able to leave your house so why not make the most of it. Exercise not only makes us feel better but it can break up the monotony of being at home. Also, you can meet a friend and (practicing social distancing measures) enjoy a walk or perhaps take the dog.
- **Take Notice:** It can be very easy to get caught up worrying about the future but taking notice of our surroundings helps to bring us back to the present. It may be noticing the change of seasons which is happening while we are at home, the people out exercising or even the changes to your home garden.

Extra Support

If you or someone you know needs extra support during this time please make contact with the relevant services below:

- Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636
- Life Line 13 11 14
- Headspace (12-25 yrs) 1800 650 890
- Kid Help Line 1800 55 1800
- Men's Helpline 1300 78 99 78
- 1800RESPECT 1800 737 732



- **Discover or Learn:** If you find yourself with spare time why not read a book you have been wanting to read. There are many libraries offering online library options. Or listen to a podcast on a topic that interests you? Perhaps puzzles are your thing or you may even want to do some online learning to upgrade your skills or learn a new one. There has never been a better time to learn something.
- **Offer or Volunteer:** Where safe, you could offer to assist a vulnerable neighbor or family member with tasks such as shopping or gardening. Perhaps you know someone who is home schooling with young kids. You may be able to offer to take the kids for a walk? Or it may be that you offer to assist someone older to set up a social media account so they can contact their family members.



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@ndchvic
@kerangdistricthealth
@cdh.vic.gov.au

DROUGHT SUPPORT

GANNAWARRA GIVING ACCOUNT

With the end of the financial year approaching, did you know that you can make a tax deductible donation to the Gannawarra Giving Account?

This is a great way to support local children to participate in sport, recreation and community activities.

Funds raised will be distributed through local schools later in 2020.

Donations can be made by phoning Northern District Community Health on (03) 5451 0200 or visiting www.givenow.com.au/gannawarragivingaccount.



TACTICS FOR TOUGH TIMES

The Tactics for Tough Times program continues to consider new ways to support our communities at this time.

The T4TT program is aimed at increasing the capacity of our community to support each other through conversations, counselling, skill development and a suite of resources aimed at building resilience and knowledge.

For more information, contact Paul Lacy at Northern District Community Health by phoning (03) 5451 0200 or emailing paul.lacy@ndch.org.au

Information is also available online at www.ndch.org.au/t4tt



The Victorian Government's On-Farm Drought Resilience Grant has been boosted to \$10,000 to enable farmers to access professional services while still enabling them to invest in drought preparedness infrastructure.

For details, please phone 136 186 or visit www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons

DROUGHT SUPPORT ONLINE

Did you know that Council's website features information regarding drought support services?

Council's Dry Conditions Support web page - available at www.gsc.vic.gov.au/drought - features details on support and services made available by government and other organisations.

"Although the Gannawarra has experienced above-average rainfall so far this year, residents are still feeling the effects of the drought that impacted communities during the past few years," Mayor Lorraine Learmonth said.

"For many residents, it can be difficult to find out what support is out there. Council's Dry Conditions Support web page aims to make this process easier."

The Dry Conditions Support web page includes information on Federal and State government drought programs, as well as initiatives overseen by the Salvation Army, Country Women's Association of Victoria and Rural Aid.

"This web page also features the latest edition of Agriculture Victoria's Dry Seasonal Conditions Support guide specific to the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District, as well as previous editions of the *Gannawarra Cares* monthly newsletter," Mayor Learmonth said.

"The *Gannawarra Cares* newsletter is now incorporated into the *Gannawarra Connect* publication, which is distributed to all households and businesses within the Gannawarra."

Anyone seeking assistance at this time is encouraged to contact Council on (03) 5450 9333, Northern District Community Health on (03) 5451 0200.



Rural Financial Counselling Service Victoria – North West, is a free financial counselling service for farmers and small farm businesses in North West Victoria.

Our Rural Financial Counsellors can work with you to provide information and develop options, while you make the decisions.

For free, independent and confidential financial counselling, give us a call on 1300 769 489.



WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENTS

Construction works on two waterfront projects within the Gannawarra are continuing.

Improvements to Apex Park, Cohuna will be complete by the end of the month as part of Stage 1 of the Cohuna Waterfront Redevelopment. These works include the installation of a jetty onto Gunbower Creek, improved barbecue facilities, the installation of walkways and landscaping.

Stage 3 of the Koondrook CBD Redevelopment (above) is also on track to be completed by the end of the month. These works will link the Koondrook CBD to the Koondrook Nature Based Tourist Hub. This will be achieved by improving vehicle access to Tramway Place and the Koondrook Boat Ramp, with a shared path for pedestrians and cyclists being developed.



NATURE BASED TOURISM HUB WORKS

The development of the Koondrook Nature Based Tourism Hub is on track for completion by the end of this month.

Supported by an \$800,000 contribution from Regional Development Victoria, this \$1.2 million project will provide a new tourism experience for visitors to the Gannawarra and drive the growing Gannawarra brand.

Construction of a footbridge connecting the hub to Gunbower Creek was recently completed, with the installation of six glamping tents underway. Each tent includes an ensuite, kitchenette, a dishwasher and split system heating and cooling.

PROJECTS UNDERWAY

Council's Economic Development team are involved in the facilitation of projects across the municipality. The team's focus is to provide assistance to diversify the local economy, create new jobs and investment and develop new infrastructure that supports relocation and liveability.

A range of developments are underway in the Gannawarra:

- The VHM mineral sands and rare earth project at Lalbert. Likely to be operational in 2022, this project will create approximately 250 jobs;
- Peace family Wines' expansion project west of Kangaroo Lake is underway. This 2000-hectare project will incorporate a 500-hectare vineyard and the installation of 20 centre pivot irrigators;
- Various poultry developments are underway including free-range egg farms, processing facilities, feed mill and grow out facilities. These projects will create approximately 30 jobs;
- Development of a medicinal cannabis facility along the Murray River has commenced. This facility is the first of its kind in northwest Victoria and will employ around 30 staff;
- A piggery development at Kerang East;
- Horticultural development by Kilter Rural at Lake Charm is continuing;
- Sheded dairy developments around Cohuna;
- Assisting with enquiries for large-scale property aggregation for horticulture projects;
- The expansion of the Tate Drive Industrial Estate Kerang with five major business projects, a new subdivision plan and two new business projects in Keely Industrial Estate Cohuna, as well as a proposed greenfield site proposal at Koondrook;
- The Cohuna Solar Farm, which is complete and awaiting connection to the network; and
- Advocating to the Australian Energy Market Operator for construction of VNI 7, (KerangLink) the major transmission interconnector between Victoria and New South Wales.

COMMUNITY NOTICES

YOUR COUNCILLORS

AVOCA WARD



**Cr Charlie Gillingham
(Deputy Mayor)**

0457 719 874
charlie.gillingham@gsc.vic.gov.au

MURRAY WARD



Cr Steve Tasker

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steven.tasker@gsc.vic.gov.au

PATCHELL WARD



Cr Jodie Basile

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Cr Jenny Fawcett

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Cr Brian Gibson

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YARRAN WARD



Cr Andrew Gibbs

0488 668 114
andrew.gibbs@gsc.vic.gov.au



**Cr Lorraine Learmonth
(Mayor)**

0429 103 180
lorraine.learmonth@gsc.vic.gov.au

COUNCIL MEETING

The next Ordinary Meeting of Council will be held on Wednesday, 24 June 2020 at 6.30pm.

The agenda will be available two days prior to the meeting at www.gsc.vic.gov.au/meetings

NOTE: Council is operating in accordance with the new *COVID-19 Omnibus (Emergency Measures) Act 2020* which operates for a Prescribed Period from 1 May to 1 November. During this Prescribed Period this new Act puts in place numerous measures to ensure local government decision-making can continue during the Coronavirus pandemic.

During this Prescribed Period the following arrangements, which are effective immediately, will apply until 1 November 2020:

- Ordinary Council Meetings will be closed to the public; and
- Meetings will be live-streamed via Council's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/gannawarra).

Alternative options are available for residents who want to ask a question to Council. These options are listed in the Contacting Council section of this newsletter.

CONTACTING COUNCIL

IN PERSON

Cohuna Customer Service Centre

21-23 King Edward Street

Kerang Customer Service Centre

47 Victoria Street

BY PHONE

(03) 5450 9333 during business hours

BY EMAIL

council@gannawarra.vic.gov.au

BY MAIL

PO Box 287

Kerang VIC 3579

ONLINE

Lodge a request at www.gsc.vic.gov.au/request

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook – www.facebook.com/gannawarra

Twitter – www.twitter.com/GannawarraShire