

# GANNAWARRA *CONNECT*



November-December 2023

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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

## FROM THE MAYOR

It has been great to see staff and contractors make the most of the ideal conditions during the past two months to improve many of our valuable assets, such as roads, footpaths and public spaces.

These works include repairs to roads damaged by the 2022 floods, with Council committed to returning these roads to a pre-flood standard.

Finally, with this being the final edition of *Gannawarra Connect* for 2023, I hope all residents have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I encourage you all to visit one of the many events planned for the Gannawarra during the holiday period and make the most of this enjoyable time of year.

Regards,

**Mayor Charlie Gillingham**



## EVENTS TO BENEFIT FROM GANNAWARRA COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM

Six local events will share in more than \$14,000 of funding thanks to the Gannawarra Community Grants program.

Community groups were able to apply for funding from this popular program during August 2023, which supports initiatives that align with the *Growing Gannawarra – 2021-2025 Council Plan* and other strategies

Events that will benefit from funding via the program's Community Event stream include Christmas celebrations, musical performances and community gatherings. For more information regarding these events, please visit [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/grants](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/grants) and click on the Community Grants program heading.

An announcement regarding projects supported by the Community Support stream of this Community Grants Program will be made in late November.



Gannawarra  
**COMMUNITY  
GRANTS PROGRAM**

# COMMUNITY NEWS

## WHAT'S ON

25 NOVEMBER

Kerang Community Market

26 NOVEMBER

Cohuna Farmers & Makers Market

2 DECEMBER

Murrabit Country Market

9 DECEMBER

Kerang Community Market

10 DECEMBER

Christmas Wreath Workshop at Charm Lodge

17 DECEMBER

Cohuna Farmers & Makers Market

30 DECEMBER

Kerang Turf Club meet

31 DECEMBER

New Year's Eve celebrations - Cohuna, Kerang and Koondrook

6 JANUARY

Murrabit Country Market

26 JANUARY

Australia Day celebrations - Shirewide

EVERY SATURDAY

Kerang and Cohuna parkruns

EVERY SATURDAY

Grow Collective Community Garden, Kerang

Event details can be found at [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/events](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/events)

NOTE: Event details were correct at time of publishing

## UPDATE YOUR GROUP'S DETAILS IN OUR COMMUNITY DIRECTORY

Council's Community Directory is a great way for community groups to connect to residents.

Available online at [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/communitydirectory](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/communitydirectory) and provided to many new residents, this document lists all community groups and organisations based in the Gannawarra Shire, as well as contact details.

Updating your group's details is easy:

1. Visit [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/communitydirectory](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/communitydirectory)
2. Click on the *Update your community group/organisation/club contact details* box
3. Complete the form

If you have any questions, please contact Council on (03) 5450 9333.



## IMMUNISATION SESSIONS BY APPOINTMENT

### NOVEMBER 2023

Wednesday, 15 November

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

### DECEMBER 2023

Wednesday, 6 December

Kerang  
(10.30am - 12 noon)

Wednesday, 20 December

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

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

**It is encouraged that only one parent/guardian attend with the child to be vaccinated.**

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.*



# COMMUNITY NEWS



## RECOGNISING OUR RESIDENTS

Nominations are open for Gannawarra Shire Council's 2024 Australia Day Awards, which recognise the valuable contribution our residents make to their communities.

Presented annually as part of local Australia Day celebrations, the awards program features two categories:

- **Citizen of the Year:** Open to residents aged 25 years and above as of Friday, 26 January 2024; and
- **Young Citizen of the Year:** Open to residents aged 15-24 years as of Friday, 26 January 2024.

To nominate someone you know for these prestigious awards, visit [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/Australia\\_Day\\_Awards](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/Australia_Day_Awards) or collect a nomination form from Council's Customer Service Centres. Nominations close 9am Monday, 27 November.

Pictured is 2023 Gannawarra Shire Council Young Citizen of the Year, Deaken Fawcett (left) and Citizen of the Year, Ramon Steel (right) with Mayor Charlie Gillingham.

## SWIMMING POOLS OPEN 13 NOVEMBER

The Cohuna and Kerang outdoor swimming pools will open for the 2023/24 season at 3pm Monday, 13 November.

Both venues will be open between 3pm-7pm daily until Thursday, 30 November, with opening hours extended to 10am-8pm from Friday, 1 December until late January.

Operating hours may also be extended on days of extreme heat, with changes to be promoted via Council's Facebook page and at both venues.

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

For more information about both pools, as well as community-managed facilities at Koondrook, Leitchville and Quambatook, please visit [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/pools](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/pools)

## CHRISTMAS CLOSURES

Council's Customer Service Centres and Gannawarra Library Service branches will be closed for the Christmas-New Year holidays from 2pm Friday, 22 December to 8.30am Tuesday, 2 January.

Other service changes will be in place during the Christmas-New Year period, which Council will promote via local newspapers, signage at its facilities and online at [www.gsc.vic.gov.au](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au) by early December.

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023 PRODUCED

Council's *Annual Report 2023* (left) celebrates many of the community's achievements that occurred between July 2022 and June 2023.

To view Council's *Annual Report 2023*, as well as previously produced annual reports, please visit [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/Annual\\_Reports](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/Annual_Reports)



# COMMUNITY NEWS

## OUR COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

### COHUNA GOLF CLUB

Located at Weymouths Road, Cohuna, the Cohuna Golf Club is set on Gunbower Island.

Open seven days a week for members and visitors, the club caters for social and competition golf and lawn bowls matches.

Golf members and visitors are able to compete in midweek and weekend competitions, with the club also entering teams in the midweek and Saturday lawn bowls competitions.

The club also hosts a pro-am each September.

For more information about the club, including how to become a member, phone (03) 5456 2820 or email [hello@cohunagolfclub.au](mailto:hello@cohunagolfclub.au)



### HOW YOUR COMMUNITY GROUP CAN FEATURE IN GANNAWARRA CONNECT

All community groups who are signed up to Council's Community email list will be sent a questionnaire in mid-December.

Community groups can sign up to Council's community mailing list by clicking on the Community updates heading at [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/communitydirectory](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/communitydirectory)

### LIBRARIES' CHRISTMAS, SUMMER FUN

The Gannawarra Library Service is preparing for a busy Christmas and summer period, with numerous events planned to keep the family entertained.



An annual event, the **Christmas Library Story Time** sessions will occur at the Cohuna Library on Tuesday, 12 December from 10.30am and Kerang's Sir John Gorton Library on Wednesday, 13 December from 10.30am. There will be plenty of fun for the family with stories, songs and surprises!

Meanwhile, your local library will again be supporting Public Libraries Victoria's **BIG Summer Read**. Aimed at primary school children but open to all ages, the program is a fun way of counteracting the 'summer slide' in kid's reading levels over the extended break. Books read, shared and listened to are logged on a digital app during December and January with the chance to win some terrific prizes.

The library's popular school holiday program will commence Monday, 8 January, with more details to be available from mid-December.

For more information regarding any of these events, visit [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/libraries](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/libraries) or [www.facebook.com/GannawarraLibraryService](https://www.facebook.com/GannawarraLibraryService)



### LEITCHVILLE PRESCHOOL'S HEALTHY ACHIEVEMENT MILESTONE

Leitchville Preschool was recently fully awarded under the Healthy Early Childhood Services Achievement Program, delivered statewide by Cancer Council Victoria.

Celebrations marking this achievement occurred in mid-October.

Pictured is Cancer Council Victoria's Head of Healthy Places, Dimity Gannon (left), Cr Keith Link and Educational Leader, Kim Mason, with Leitchville Preschool children Amber Dehne and Walter Hill.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## COUNCILS' #PUSHBACKBUYBACK CAMPAIGN CALLS TO STOP WATER BUYBACKS

The Murray River Group of Councils - which Gannawarra Shire Council is a member of - recently launched the #PushBackBuyBack campaign, which call for the Federal Government to halt plans to resume using buyback processes to seek additional water for environmental use across the Murray-Darling Basin.

As part of the campaign, full-page advertisements calling for the Federal Government to reconsider its stance on the issue were published in *The Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald*, with media promoting the campaign sent to more than 300 local, regional and national media contacts.

You can support the #PushBackBuyBack campaign by visiting [www.mrgc.com.au/pushbackbuybacks/](http://www.mrgc.com.au/pushbackbuybacks/) and signing the online petition or using the letter templates to send your feedback to your local Member of Parliament or one of the five crossbench Senators.



## GANNAWARRA'S WATER BUYBACK TALKS

Council Chief Executive Officer, Geoff Rollinson (above, centre) and Executive Manager Economic Development, Roger Griffiths (right) took the Gannawarra's concerns regarding the planned resumption of water buybacks for environmental purposes to Federal parliamentarians last month.

Mr Rollinson and Mr Griffiths travelled to Mildura to raise Council's concerns with key Federal Opposition representatives, including Shadow Minister for Water, Perin Davey (above, left), Senator for Queensland, Matt Canavan, Federal Member for Mallee, Dr Anne Webster MP (above, right) and Opposition Whip, Rowan Ramsay MP.



## WHAT IS THE MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN?

Signed into law in November 2012, the Murray-Darling Basin Plan is an agreement between the Federal Government and the State Governments the Murray-Darling Basin covers that determines how the water that flows through the Basin is managed to ensure its long-term health.

Irrigation farming is a key driver of the local economy. In 1995, when water trading commenced, the local area held around 340,000 megalitres of water rights. The impacts of trading, drought and government buybacks has seen this figure reduced by around 46 per cent. Further buy backs will see food costs increase as irrigation is reduced.

Since the implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, Council has worked to diversify the municipality's agricultural sector, with medicinal cannabis, free range poultry and eggs, intensive animal developments, mining and renewable energy projects developed.

# FLOOD RECOVERY

## ASSISTANCE FOR FLOOD-IMPACTED BUSINESSES

Business Victoria has numerous new and ongoing supports available for businesses affected by the October-December 2022 floods.

Support available includes:

- **Business Recovery Advisory Service:** This service provides expert guidance and tailored support, including financial counselling and business coaching, as well as customised strategies for recovery through mentorship.
- **Business Groups Flood Recovery Grants:** Grants of \$20,000-\$50,000 are available for chambers of commerce, trader groups, industry associations and more to deliver locally-led projects to support flood-affected small businesses recover and thrive.
- **Partners in Wellbeing Helpline (1300 375 330):** A free and confidential help line available seven days a week. Business owners can speak to trained financial counsellors, business advisers and wellbeing coaches for confidential one-on-one support.

For more information regarding these services and other support available, please visit

[www.business.vic.gov.au/floods](http://www.business.vic.gov.au/floods)

## ONE YEAR ON - A STRONG AND RESILIENT COMMUNITY

It has been one year since the Gannawarra community experienced its second major flood event this century.

The October-December 2022 floods impacted 44 per cent of the Gannawarra Shire's landmass, with the impact widespread along the river systems which are a feature of the active floodplain on which we live.

For Council and residents, the recovery journey continues. Whatever your personal circumstances, remember to look out for yourself and others – your friends, families and neighbours.

Our Gannawarra residents and communities are highly resilient. In times of hardship and crisis, we come together to support each other. This community generosity is still evident 12 months on.

Volunteering is a strong feature of Gannawarra's communities and dedicated volunteers continue to work hard to ensure that Gannawarra remains a great place to live, visit and to enjoy.

As we reflect on the past 12 months, despite the challenges, our communities are keen to re-connect. There is optimism for the coming agricultural season as preparations for the 2023 harvest get underway. Thanks to good rainfall since the floods, dryland crop are looking good and high farm gate returns for our dairy farmers help to stimulate the local economy. This builds hope and confidence for the future for us all.

There is a strong interest across communities in events that help bring people back together, with Council supporting a range of events, particularly in the lead-up to Christmas. While bringing much needed joy to our residents and supporting social connections and mental health and wellbeing, these events also stimulate local business and tourism. For more information regarding these events, please visit [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/events](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/events)



ABOVE: Paint by the Murray Workshop, Murrabit



ABOVE: Floral workshop, Kerang

## FLOOD-DAMAGED ROAD REPAIRS CONTINUE

Work to repair the more than 1,000 kilometres of roads damaged by the October-December 2022 flood continues.

Council recently awarded the tenders for the final eight road repair packages, valued at more than \$3.1 million, with approval to proceed with these improvements, as well as work associated with the third of these repair packages, dependent on approval from the Department of Transport.

The approval process is time consuming, with Council required to take photographs at 100-metre intervals and submit this and other evidence to meet the requirements under the joint Commonwealth and State Government funded Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

Once works are ready to commence in the coming months, regular updates will be provided to the community informing of any disruption to the road and drainage networks in advance, whilst ensuring appropriate traffic management is in place to minimise disruptions.



## ONE YEAR ON FLOOD RECOVERY PROGRAM

As part of the Gannawarra One Year On Flood Recovery program, Council is working with numerous agencies and residents across the Gannawarra Shire to acknowledge the anniversary of the 2022 floods. This includes a One Year On Reflection video, featuring residents who appeared in the seven-part *Gannawarra Reflections* series of videos on the October-December 2022 flood event as they reflect on the previous twelve months.

A call out will soon be made for a One Year On exhibition that will feature photography, digital material and art. Occurring in March 2024, this exhibition will enable the collection of flood material from across the Gannawarra Shire to be collected, showcased and then retained to document key learnings to inform future flood planning and record historical information as part of the Gannawarra Library Service's collection so that it is available for future generations. Drone footage of the environment is also being captured One Year On in similar locations to drone footage captured during the floods.

A family event will also be held in partnership with Kerang Traders on Friday, 17 November in the Kerang CBD. This event aims to showcase the continued community spirit and to support the business sector who were also impacted by the floods. Further details will be in the November Gannawarra Flood Recovery Newsletter, which will be available online at [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/floods](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/floods)

## EVENTS BENEFIT FROM EMERGENCY RECOVERY VICTORIA FLOOD RECOVERY SUPPORT

Ten events will benefit from \$34,425 of funding thanks to support from the Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) Community Hubs funding.

The Gannawarra Community Resilience Committee accepted a recommendation to provide support for events and projects that were initially in contention for funding via Council's Community Grants Program.

Events that will benefit from this support include Christmas and New Year's Eve celebrations, family fun days, school holiday celebrations and musical performances.

For more information regarding the events that will benefit from this support, please visit [www.gsc.vic.gov.au/grants](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au/grants) and click on the Community Grants program heading.

# COUNCIL INFORMATION

## YOUR COUNCILLORS AVOCA WARD



**Cr Charlie Gillingham**  
(Mayor)  
0457 719 874  
[charlie.gillingham@gsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:charlie.gillingham@gsc.vic.gov.au)

## MURRAY WARD



**Cr Ross Stanton**  
0417 515 769  
[ross.stanton@gsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:ross.stanton@gsc.vic.gov.au)

## PATCHELL WARD



**Cr Kelvin Burt**  
0407 319 414  
[kelvin.burt@gsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:kelvin.burt@gsc.vic.gov.au)



**Cr Travis Collier**  
0433 269 577  
[travis.collier@gsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:travis.collier@gsc.vic.gov.au)



**Cr Jane Ogden**  
(Deputy Mayor)  
0476 786 051  
[jane.e.ogden@gsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:jane.e.ogden@gsc.vic.gov.au)

## YARRAN WARD



**Cr Keith Link**  
0427 564 138  
[keith.link@gsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:keith.link@gsc.vic.gov.au)



**Cr Garner Smith**  
0418 871 054  
[garner.smith@gsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:garner.smith@gsc.vic.gov.au)



## COUNCIL MEETING DETAILS

The **November 2023 Meeting of Council** will be held on Wednesday, 15 November at 6pm. The **December 2023 Meeting of Council** will be held on Wednesday, 20 December at 6pm.

Meetings are held at the Kerang Senior Citizens Centre, located at 169 Boundary Street, Kerang, 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). 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.

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

## CONTACTING COUNCIL

### IN PERSON

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

### BY PHONE

(03) 5450 9333 during business hours

### BY EMAIL

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

### BY MAIL

PO Box 287  
Kerang VIC 3579

### ONLINE

Lodge a request 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)  
**X (Twitter)** – [www.twitter.com/GannawarraShire](http://www.twitter.com/GannawarraShire)