

Gannawarra
Shire Council
Gannawarra 2025

2 December 2010



Gannawarra 2025

Taking up the challenge



GANNAWARRA
SHIRE COUNCIL

This report was prepared by McKINNA *et al* in 2010. The consultants acknowledge the assistance of community members, the Gannawarra Shire Council executive, Councillors and various regional authorities for providing input into the plan.

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Global Outlook

Table of contents

Part A: Introduction	1
Section 1 Introduction.....	2
Section 2 Objectives.....	4
Section 3 Methodology map	5
Section 4 What makes communities great?	6
Part B: About our shire	9
Section 5 Our heritage.....	10
Section 6 Our townships today	16
Part C: Analysis of our situation	22
Section 8 Future scan summary.....	23
Section 9 Our strengths.....	32
Section 10 Our shortcomings	34
Section 11 Possible scenarios	35
Section 12 Challenges.....	38
Part D: Our goals & aspirations	40
Section 13 Community aspirations	41
Part E: Community strategy	44
Section 14 Vision, mission & values	45
Section 15 Brand Gannawarra	46
Section 16 Strategy platforms	48
Appendix.....	79

Part

Introduction



Section 1 | Introduction

This document outlines the **Strategic Community Plan** for Gannawarra Shire for the next 15 years. It is a long-range strategy plan with aspirational goals and a range of suggested programs as to how to achieve those goals. Unlike other plans commissioned by Gannawarra Shire Council that are devised to guide council's day-to-day activity, this plan has been written for the community to guide its citizens; businesses; local community, professional, sporting and social clubs; and service organisations into the future. While Gannawarra Shire Council will champion the plan, it provides scope for all community driven groups to rally behind it and play a part.

This document includes an outline of the development process of the Strategic Community Plan explaining how the strategy platforms were derived. A separate report 'Gannawarra Future Scan 2025' provides the supporting data in detail, however, the top-level findings from the future scan are also captured in this report. Part D of this report articulates the community's goals and aspirations. The six strategy platforms that set the strategic direction have been written to achieve these aspirations.

This report has been written in a succinct PowerPoint style for ease of comprehension and knowledge absorption.

Plan linkages



GANNAWARRA
SHIRE COUNCIL

Regional
Development
Australia

Murray-Darling
Basin Plan

Gannawarra Shire Council 2010
Gannawarra 2025, Strategic Community Plan

Federal Government

Loddon-Mallee
Strategic Plan:
Northern Region

Ready for
Tomorrow: A
blueprint for
Regional and Rural
Victoria

Regional Tourism
Action Plan
2009-2012

State Government



Council Plan
2009-2013

Road Management
Plan 2010

Economic
Development Plan
2007-2010

Tourism Strategy 2008

Municipal Strategic
Statement

Asset Management
Plan 2010

Education Strategy
(recommended)

Environmental Plan
(recommended)

Youth Strategy
(in progress)

Municipal Public Health
& Wellbeing Plan 2009

Gannawarra Shire

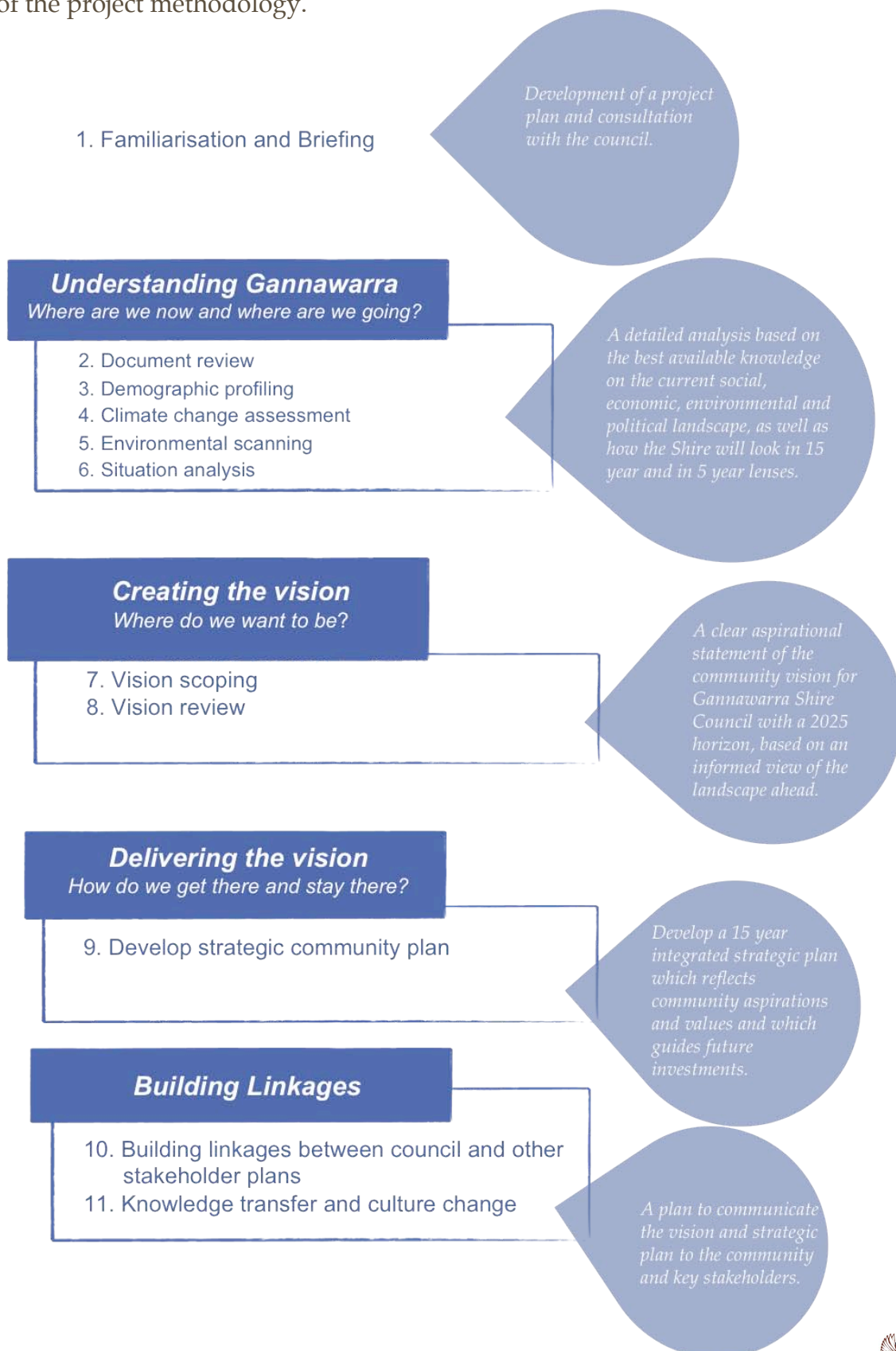
Section 2 | Objectives

The central objective of this project is to develop a 15 year Strategic Community Plan for the Gannawarra Shire which:

- Presents a vision for the future
- Outlines how Gannawarra will cope with the challenges ahead regarding:
 - *Demographics*
 - *Climate Change*
 - *Water*
 - *The Economy*
- Provides guidance to council on infrastructure investment
- Integrates and provides guidance to all plans relating to the shire, across all tiers of government.

Section 3 | Methodology map

The diagram below illustrates and explains the 11 steps of the project methodology.



Section 4 | What makes communities great?

In order to write a Strategic Community Plan, it is necessary to begin by asking the question: *'What makes a community a great place to live?'* This question was asked repeatedly throughout the stakeholder research for this report. The consultants also conducted a wider, global search for answers.

A great deal of social research has been done during the drought years to determine the impacts of drought on communities and to measure community wellbeing. This type of research has tended to be quite negative in focus (i.e. looking for the problems). An example of this is the 2007 report, *The Economic and Social Impacts of Water Trading: Case studies in the Victorian Murray Valley*. However, reports such as 'Resilience Report Card' (Colleen Lux, *Community resilience and irrigated agriculture in the Murray-Darling Basin*) do tell us that the well being of communities in a reduced water environment can be impacted by factors such as:

- *Degree of urbanization/remoteness*
- *Diversity of economy*
- *Median age*

One well-known international example of measuring community wellbeing is from the small monarchy of Bhutan, which has a national 'Register of Gross National Happiness'. The register measures the four factors that this community consider make Bhutan a great place to live:

1. *Economic self reliance*
2. *Pristine environment*
3. *Preservation of culture*
4. *Good governance*

American academic Richard Florida is one of the most well known international thinkers and researchers on the issue of measuring 'what makes a great community?'. A number of key elements that he believes must be present in a strong community are that they must:

- *Attract the 'creative class' (i.e. the 'thinking professions' such as architects, engineers, artists, scientists who create economic growth)*
- *Have cultural diversity - this increases tolerance, which is important as it makes communities open to new ideas, creative thinking and learnings from migrants or outsiders.*
- *Keep young people in the community - because they are the 'work horses', risk takers and future entrepreneurs.*

Creative classes want to live in communities that are inspiring to them because they offer a unique attribute or sense of identity. The essential aspects Richard Florida sees for economic development in this era are the three 'T's: talent, technology and tolerance.

The global not-for-profit organisation that is dedicated to improving communities, 'Partners for Livable Cities' believe that 'livability' is what makes communities great. They describe livability as: *"the sum of the factors that add up to a community's quality of life —including the built and natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity, and cultural, entertainment and recreation possibilities."*

Based on a project history of over 25 years of social research in numerous communities, it is the view of McKINNA *et al* that a further element to all those described above is required to make a community great. It is our experience that a strong community has a very clear belief in what it is that they stand for. This includes:

- *A sense of local identity*

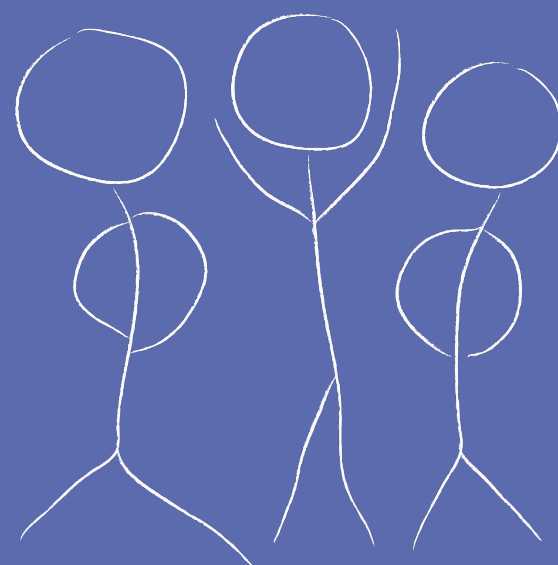
- *An understanding of how the community's external identity or 'brand' is perceived.*
- *A belief in the vision of the community, so that this vision can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.*

All of the above viewpoints have been considered as context in the development of the Gannawarra Strategic Community Plan. However, ultimately, what makes a community great is judged in the eyes of its own citizens. Hence, there has been a large amount of collaboration with local community members in the development of this Community Plan.

Part



About our shire



Section 5 | Our heritage

In order to understand our vision, and where we are going, it is important to have a sense of our heritage and where we have come from. The following presents a snapshot of the history of the main townships of Gannawarra.

Our indigenous heritage

Prior to white settlement, the Barapa-Barapa and Wamba-Wamba Aborigines are thought to have been the area's original occupants. With the significant discovery of a large burial ground on the edge of Kow Swamp, it is thought that tribes lived in this area 10,000-15,000 years ago.

The first European exploration of the area was in the Cohuna and Kerang districts by Major Mitchell in 1836, with squatters being able to take up leases in the area from the early 1840s.

History of Benjeroop, Murrabit and Myall

The Benjeroop district was settled under the 1869 *Land Act*, with the arrival of settlers leading to the construction of a state school soon after. The 1880s was a boom period for the district, with the construction of two new state schools, a bridge over the Loddon River, a post office and Baptist Church. In 1885, the Benjeroop Turf Club held a race meeting. Following WWI, the population of the area grew substantially, given arrival of returned servicemen and women, in addition to British settlers who had been recruited under the *Empire Settlement Act*.

The Murrabit area was first settled in the 1870s, with a settlement, boarding house, post office and blacksmiths being developed. A butter and cheese company was established in 1890, but only ran for two years. By 1912, a hall had been built and two schools were operating at Murrabit West and Rabbit Point.

Murrabit was dependent on river trade and the town had been agitating for years for a rail link to join the lines that reached Kerang and Swan Hill. In the 1920s, a branch line was finally built from Kerang to a place four kilometres upstream from the Murrabit settlement. As a result, the settlement relocated, with the surveying of a new township taking place in 1923. The railway line that connected the 'new' Murrabit with Kerang opened in 1925. In 1926, Gonn Crossing Bridge, a lift span steel girder bridge that could carry rail and traffic- opened. The Group School was opened in 1971 after parents made the decision to close the small schools. The renowned Murrabit market also began in the late 1970s and continues to this day.

The Myall area was settled by selectors in the 1870s, with the establishment of irrigation in the area taking place in the 1880s. In accordance to the *Settlement of Land Act 1893*, land was sub-divided into 180-20 acre blocks and families were given cash advances to take up irrigation allotments in the settlement. The period of 1900-1920 was a significant period in the area's history, with an increase in population due to the closer settlement of irrigated blocks that supported citrus and dairying, the construction of a new school and the establishment of a tennis club. The football and cricket clubs followed in the 1920s.

History of Cohuna

After early settlement, the two main stations in the Cohuna district were 'Gannawarra' and 'Gunbower'. In 1875, the village of Cohuna, (named after an Aboriginal word which is thought to mean 'brolga') was gazetted. Due to the development of irrigation, the 1900s witnessed the town grow substantially, in population and infrastructure. In 1915, railway reached the town and by 1922, Cohuna became a separate shire, having previously been a part of the shire of Kerang.

History of Kerang

The earliest white settlement was in buildings constructed by Woodfull Patchell in the late 1850s and early 1860s, including a store and hotel that became the nucleus of a village proclaimed as 'Kerang' in 1861, 'Kerang' being an Aboriginal word of lost meaning. Patchell is considered to be the first farmer in Victoria to employ irrigation practices, experimenting with oats, barley, maize, millet, tobacco, beet, cotton and sugarcane. Such practices caught on, leading to a great increase in local productivity.

Kerang was declared a shire in 1871. It grew considerably during the 1870s and 1880s due to the arrival of the railway from Bendigo and the construction of a tramway to Koondrook. As a result of such infrastructure, the population grew to over 1,000 people. By early 1890s standards, this was significant growth considering the settlement's population consisted of only 109 people in 1871.

History of Koondrook

In 1844, Archibald Campbell built Gannawarra Station which covered over 103,680 acres between present day Koondrook and Cohuna and is the source of the shire's name. At the end of the Gold Rush, an increasing number of selectors began to occupy land around Koondrook and Murrabit. This occupation led to the

building of Anglican and Baptist churches, as well as the construction of a school and hotel by the late 1870s and early 1880s.

Financially, the town benefited from its close proximity to red-gum forests, as timber was in high demand for railway sleepers. Such timber was also used in the construction of barges and paddleboats in the area between 1881 and 1923, with a wharf being built in 1882.

From the late 1880s onwards, infrastructure continued to grow:

- Opening of Arbuthnot Sawmill (still operating today).
- Construction of an irrigation pump site by the Murray River.
- Opening of first creamery.
- A private tramway between Koondrook and Kerang opened in 1889.

In 1904, a lift bridge was constructed, with a central section that could be raised in order for paddle steamers to pass through on their way to / from Echuca. Today, this structure is one of the oldest surviving bridges on the Murray River.

History of Lalbert

Lalbert was named by Major Mitchell in 1863. The name of the town derives from the Aboriginal word for a creeper that grows on trees in the Mallee. The railway reached Lalbert in 1900, with the Lalbert hotel being rebuilt in 1909. By that time, the township of Lalbert had grown, comprising a Church of England, a visiting National Bank, a post office, a state school, a public hall, railway station and several businesses. The 1920s was a significant period for Lalbert, with the construction of a new hall, the establishment of the Lalbert Sheep Dip Company, the construction of a permanent National Australia Bank and the establishment of a recreation reserve.

History of Leitchville

The town and district of Leitchville were named in honour of Duncan Leitch, manager of Gunbower Station, in 1888. Although the railway came through in 1915, Leitchville did not become a gazetted township until the late 1920s. During 1925-26, the Leitchville Irrigation District was constituted. The new irrigation district triggered another wave of development.

History of Macorna and Tragowel

Macorna was established in the early 1870s when selectors arrived in the area. From 1884 until 1915, Macorna railway station served as the railhead for the Cohuna and Leitchville area for passengers and goods. A state school, butter factory and new post office at the railway station were opened in the 1880s. In 1893, with the establishment of the Macorna North Irrigation Trust, dairying and fruit growing was taken up by residents. By the early 1900s, Macorna had grown to comprise of several churches, halls, stores, a bank, a state school and a hotel.

The Tragowel township was established in the early 1870s. By the end of that decade, eighty families had selected 170 blocks in the area. The 1880s was a significant period in the history of Tragowel, with the establishment of two state schools, Tragowel railway station (on the Kerang line), post office, cheese factory, multi-denominational church building and telegraph office. During that period, the Tragowel Plains Irrigation Trust (est. 1886) and the Macorna North Irrigation Trust (est. 1893), provided irrigation, stock and waters to the farmers in the area.

History of Quambatook

This town was settled in the aftermath of the 'gold fever' era of the 1850s. With many men seeking new ways to make a living, the Government introduced land laws in the 1870s to resume part of the squatters' territory. The railway line opened in 1894 and in 1897 rows of peppercorns were planted in the main street. In the following years, Quambatook emerged as one of Victoria's flourishing sheep and wheat areas.

Gannawarra defined

The shire of Gannawarra came into existence in early 1995, formed by the amalgamation of Kerang Borough and Kerang and Cohuna Shires. The shire was named after the Gannawarra Station. The station occupied 103,680 acres on the southern side of the Murray between present-day Koondrook and Cohuna. Originally, another name was selected for the shire, however, it was unpopular with the public and difficult to pronounce. Eventually, 'Gannawarra' was chosen as it was the one name common to all three municipalities.

'Gannawarra' is an Aboriginal term that is thought to have a number of meanings. It is believed to refer to 'wild geese' or 'black swans', however, it has also been suggested it has a meaning indicating 'the meeting of waters'. Either way, it is evident that the wet lands heritage of the region has been celebrated since aboriginal times. Today, it is reflected in the shire's symbol of the flying bird.

Section 6 | Our townships today

Murrabit

Situated in the far north of the shire on the Murray River this agricultural area is probably best known for the monthly Murrabit market - Victoria's largest country market, attracting more than 300 site holders from across the state selling diverse wares. An initiative of the Murrabit Advancement Society, the Murrabit market is a fine example of the power of a cohesive community to control its own destiny. Proceeds from the market are continually reinvested in the community.

Cohuna

One of the Gannawarra shire's major towns, Cohuna is situated in the east of the shire on the banks of the Gunbower Creek. Dairy farming is the main agricultural enterprise in the area. In addition to being a regional sports centre, the town is also a popular holiday spot, being the main access point to the vast red gum and box forest that covers Gunbower Island, the home to diverse native birdlife, kangaroos and emus. Popular tourist activities in Cohuna include golf, tennis, camping, fishing, water-skiing, canoeing, bird-watching and bushwalking.

Kerang

Kerang is located towards the centre of Gannawarra and is the shire's biggest town and its administrative centre. The nearby Kerang Lakes boast one of Victoria's best wetlands systems which supports hundreds of waterbirds including the ibis and has been proclaimed an international Ramsar site because of its international significance in the global migratory habits of many bird species. Kerang's main industries include livestock, dairy, hay and grain, horticulture, viticulture and stone fruit.

Koondrook

Koondrook is situated in the north-east of the shire on the confluence of the Gunbower Creek and the Murray River. It is a small community surrounded by rich river flats. Once a bustling river port and sawmilling town, today Koondrook provides visitors with a glimpse of life on the Murray in the past. The area's main industries still include timber, as well as dairying and citrus fruits. Koondrook is also considered an excellent fishing spot.

Lalbert

In the far-west of the shire, Lalbert is placed in the heart of the Mallee dryland cropping area, which is known for its production of wheat, barley, oats, canola and legumes. Hence, Lalbert supplies grain to the dairy industry, in addition to the milling industry and export markets. A town with a strong sense of community around its sporting activity, Lalbert is also home to Lake Lalbert, considered to be a significant environmental showpiece.

Leitchville

Located in the far south-east of the shire, Leitchville is regarded as the centre of Gannawarra's dairy industry. Despite the recent closure of the Murray-Goulburn cheese factory, dairying is still a mainstay of activity surrounding the town. Leitchville is also known for its production of pork, hay and stockfeed products.

Quambatook

In the south-west of the Gannawarra shire, on the Avoca River, Quambatook emerged as one of Victoria's flourishing wheat and sheep areas in the late 19th century, a trend that continues today with tonnes of grain being produced annually. Quambatook is also known as the birthplace of musician John Williamson and the home of the annual 'Quamby Tractor Pull'.

Dingwall, Lake Meran, Normanville

Lakes, Macorna, Tragowel, Mincha, Benjeroop and Myall

The Gannawarra shire is home to a number of smaller, but still active communities. Although populations have reduced in size as farms have rationalized in the area, these communities each have their own Community Plan and unique identity.

Section 7 | Our living environment

7.1 Natural environment

- The Shire of Gannawarra is blessed with a diverse geography and a balance of arable farm land and nature reserves. Gannawarra's natural attractions are an important factor in drawing in residents and tourists.
- 57 lakes, swamps and marshes are present within the shire, forming one of Australia's largest and most important wetland areas which typically changes during wet and dry seasons.
- Abundant native flora and fauna, red gum forests are an underdeveloped tourism resource.
- The Mallee landscape to the west of the Shire provides a stark contrast to the wetlands and the forests of other areas. It has a unique beauty of its own.
- The Shire boasts two major rivers: Loddon and Murray.
- Gunbower Island consists of over 26,000 hectares, with 19,500 hectares of forest and 1,200 hectares of marshes and waterways. It is home to 260 species of bird life and animals. The island is the largest inland island in the world.
- Kerang Lakes/Wetlands: Stretch from Kerang to Lake Boga and the home to thousands of colourful water birds. Every Spring, ibis (as seen on the emblem for the Shire) flock to breed in the Rocky Lake sanctuary.
- Other significant lakes are Lake Charm, Kangaroo and Boga (just outside the Shire).

7.2 Built environment

The built environment in Gannawarra displays the legacy of the rise and fall of various agricultural industries over the years. Some fine structures of previous eras attest to a proud community that values its heritage. Significant historical buildings include:

- Court House (Cohuna)
- Water Tower (Cohuna)
- Court House (Kerang)
- Post Office (Kerang)
- Municipal Chambers (Kerang)
- Lester Smith Lookout Tower (Kerang)
- London Chartered Bank (Kerang)
- Memorial clock tower (Kerang)
- Bael Bael Homestead (Kerang)
- Tram Complex (Koondrook)
- Schoolhouse (Koondrook)
- Several historic shops: butcher, grocery store, Arbuthnot Mill Office (Koondrook)
- Baptist Church (Koondrook)
- Arbuthnot Sawmill (Koondrook).

Infrastructure assets of value to the region include:

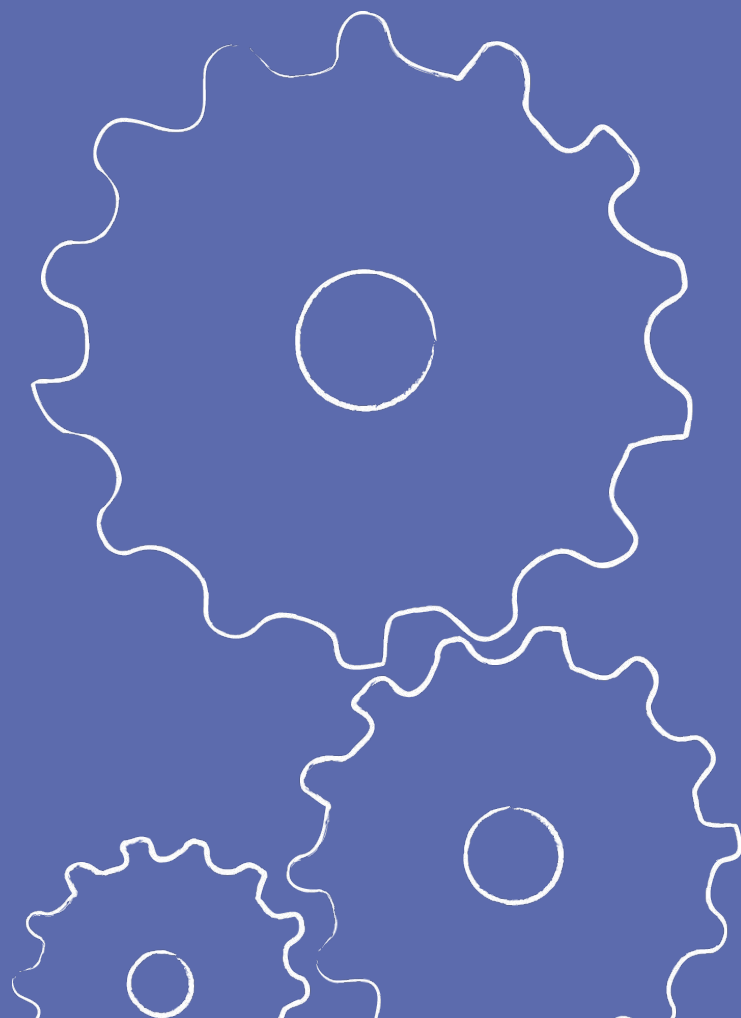
- Rail services are excellent with twice daily passenger services to Melbourne
- Access to two main highways (Loddon Valley Highway and Murray Highway) means Gannawarra is well placed as a transit hub between Melbourne, Adelaide and Mildura.
- Gannawarra sits within the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District (GMID) which is the largest system feeding off the Murray Darling Basin. The Torrumbarry Irrigation System provides critical water infrastructure to the region.

- Like other regional shires in Victoria with declining populations over large geographic areas, Gannawarra's roads, bridges and some community assets such as small halls are not all of the standard as those in larger regional centres. This is an issue that struggling shires have already taken up with Federal government and must continue to lobby about.

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Part

Analysis of our situation



Section 8 | Future Scan Summary

A separate McKINNA *et al* report has been produced called Future Focus 2025 which outlines the scenarios facing Gannawarra Shire in detail. The findings of the future scan are summarized here for reference.

8.1 Life in Gannawarra today

The stakeholder research indicated clearly that the drought has left many residents in the shire, both young and old, with a sense of despair. Recent rains however, appear to be uplifting for a number of farmers.

Gannawarra citizens are largely proud of their communities. There is a strong sense of 'belonging' at township level with the sporting clubs playing an important role in this.

Participants in the stakeholder research describe the defining culture of the district as being one of "resilience". The reason residents say they like living in Gannawarra is because of its so-called 'small town values' which they describe as follows:

"Knowing everyone by name"

"Looking out for each other"

"Pitching in when someone needs help"

"A volunteering tradition"

The weather and environment which provide opportunities for water sports, walking and fishing are aspects of the lifestyle here that are much valued by residents. The fact that international water sports events are now held on Gannawarra's lakes is a source of local pride.

Young professionals here see environmental challenges differently to the farming sector. They argue for a change of attitude as they believe this negative can be a positive.

Youth in the shire face challenges common to most young regional Victorians. While frustrated by some aspects of life here, a great sense of pride prevails and a willingness to see the region prosper. There is some apprehension about facing city life when the time comes to do this. Importantly, youth believe they can achieve their dreams here.

8.2 Stakeholder research summary

Key themes and emotions uncovered in the focus groups with community stakeholders surrounded the following issues:

- Maintaining education standards in a declining population.
- Youth retention after secondary college.
- Attracting young professionals back to the area.
- The need for population growth.
- Allied healthcare shortfalls.
- Transport needs for younger and older citizens.
- The citizens crave food, entertainment, shopping and cultural opportunities available in bigger cities.
- Youth have un-met entertainment needs, particularly in the evenings.
- Youth had concerns about having to leave the area for education/work.
- A sense of despair exists across all sectors on the community about economic losses in timber milling and agriculture.
- There is some optimism about new industries: tourism, transit services, new farming models, water recreation, retirement products.

- The community feels that the run down state of many roads, bridges and town buildings exemplifies the mood of the residents, given the challenges of the last decade. It was suggested that the built environment was a direct reflection of how they are feeling as a community.

8.3 Demographics

Without intervention the population of Gannawarra is forecast to continue on a steady decline, from 11,567 in 2010 to 10,831 in 2025.

Population shifts

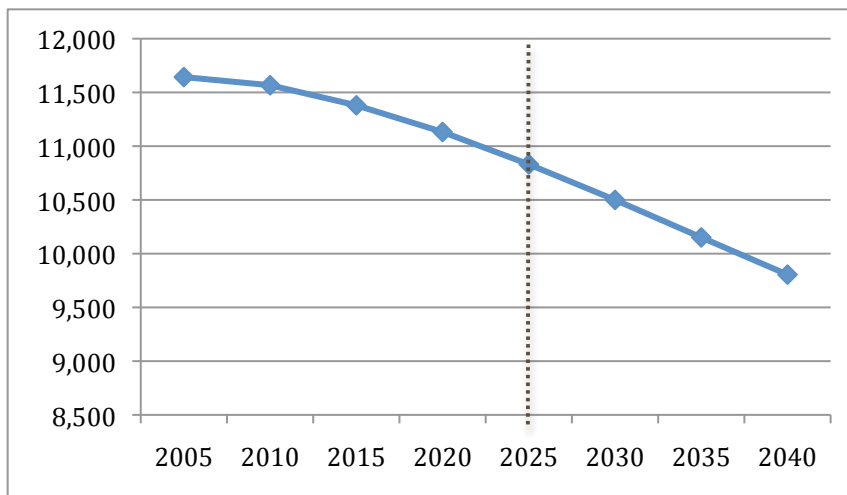


Figure 1 Gannawarra's population, 2005- 2040. Source: 2006 ABS Census/ McKINNA et al, 2010

Age trends

The population will also age significantly, with working population falling to 4,586 by 2025.

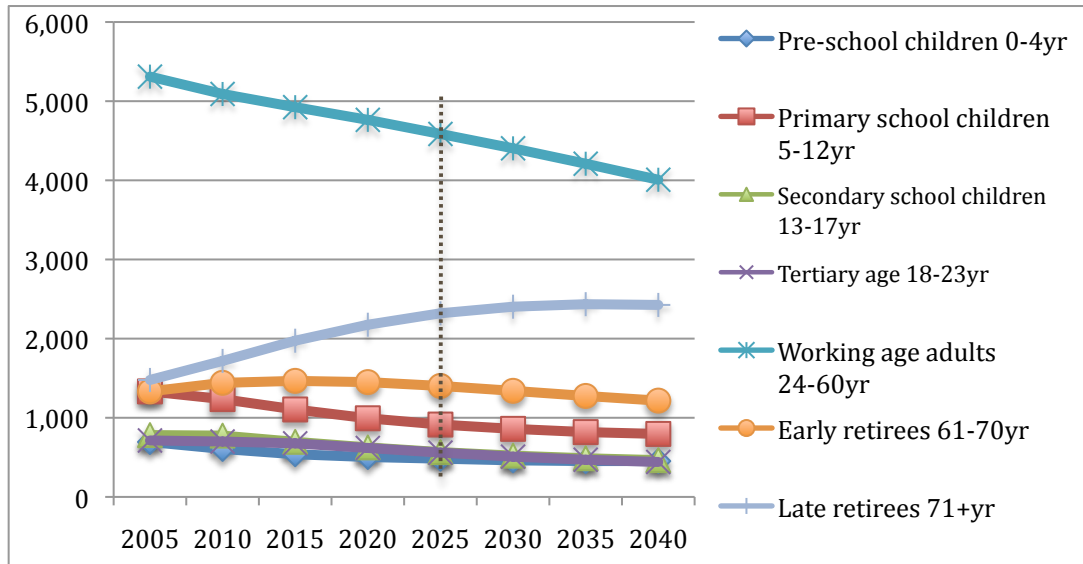


Figure 2 Population projections by age, 2005- 2040. Source: 2006 ABS Census/ MckINNA et al, 2010

Ethnic composition

The Shire has the lowest ethnic diversity in the state (5%).

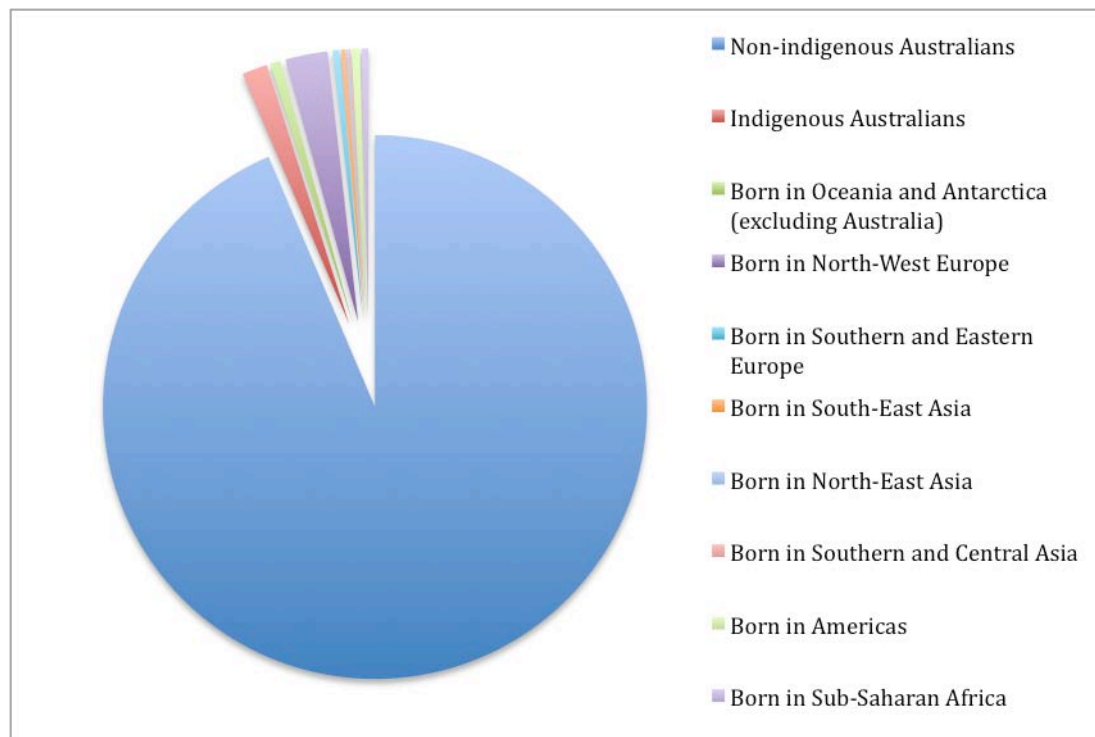


Figure 3 Ethnic composition of Gannawarra, according to the 2006 ABS Census

Economic/social disadvantage indicator

Gannawarra's 2006 SEIFA score of 971 means that it is considered to be a disadvantaged area.

Local Government Area	2006 SEIFA Score	Ranking in Victoria (out of 80)
Gannawarra	971	23
Loddon	942	2
Swan Hill	958	10
Campaspe	975	24
Buloke	971	21

Table 1 SEIFA scores, Gannawarra and surrounding areas. Source: Urban Enterprise, 2010, Shire of Gannawarra Economic Development Strategy: Existing Situation Report.

Gender imbalance

A gender imbalance is caused by more highly skilled women leaving the area for jobs or study during their childbearing years. This imbalance impacts socially and economically, as women are now the main 'white collar' workers in most developed economies.

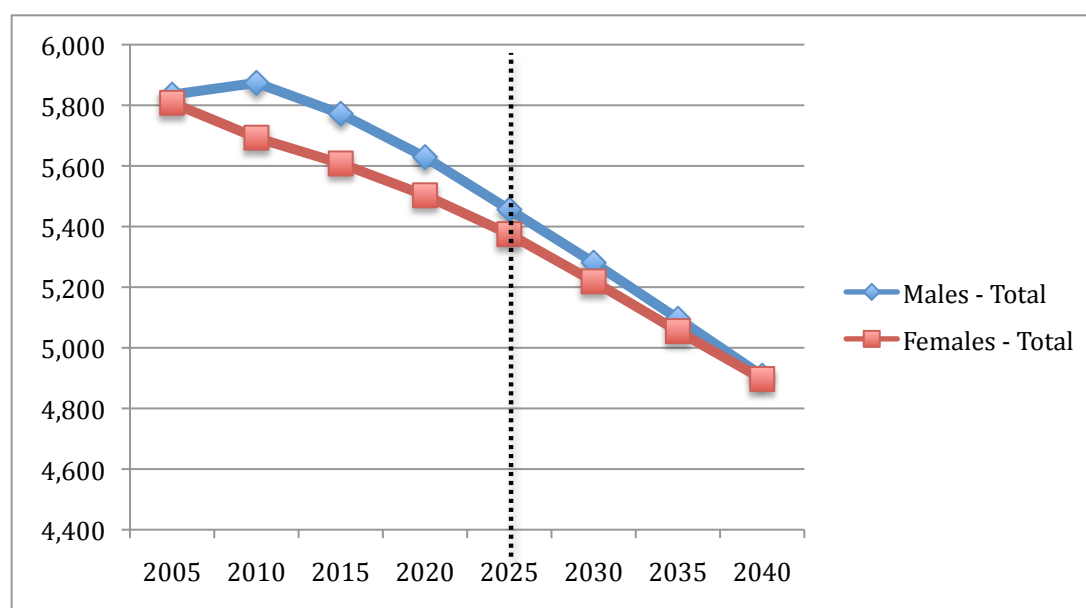


Figure 4 Gannawarra's gender predictions, 2005- 2040. Source: 2006 ABS Census/ McKINNA et al, 2010

8.4 Climate Uncertainty

- Although there are widely varying opinions on this issue, the general scientific consensus is that there has been a shift in climatic patterns.
- Based on the most widely held view, climate uncertainty will put increased pressure on the shire funds. At the same time it will create opportunities.
- Scientists forecast more unseasonal and extreme weather events such as the recent floods which will have two types of climate change impact:
 1. *Direct effects from global warming*
 2. *Impacts from change abatement policies.*
- The increase of such events also has the potential to lead to greater insurance costs (due to extreme weather events) and demand for health services (more days over 30°C), given Gannawarra's ageing population.
- However, Gannawarra is also well-placed to take advantage of carbon tax and remission policies, and turn climate uncertainty into a positive through embracing the following:
 - *Solar energy*
 - *Carbon sequestration*
 - *Vegetation offsets*
 - *Carbon credit*
 - *Salt remediation*
 - *Eco tourism*

8.5 Water

- Water will be the defining issue for the Gannawarra Shire over the next 15 years
- Irrigated agriculture has been the backbone of the Gannawarra economy and is likely to remain so. However, the Murray-Darling Basin Plan will fundamentally change how irrigation works in Victoria.
- Irrigated land has 20 times the productivity of dryland agriculture.
- The level of Commonwealth environmental water purchase is expected to continue for 5 years.
- Changes in legislation such as the potential removal of the 4% limit on water trade out of the district; plus the removal of restrictions of the 10% limit of water held by non-water users could cause further economic loss.
- The impact of the Murray Darling Basin Plan (MDBP) is yet to be fully explained and understood.
- Converting some farms in the area to dryland operations will be challenging because of scale, soil type and difficulties with land aggregation.

8.6 The economy

Industry economic value (millions)

Although agricultural output has dropped substantially since the drought, the shire is still heavily dependant on it. Agriculture and forestry remains the highest employment sector.

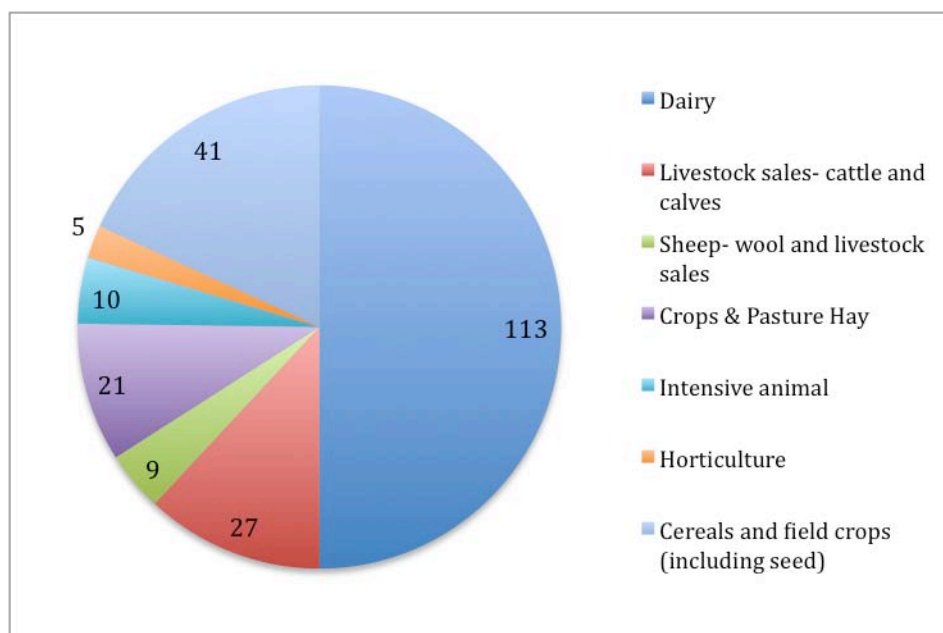


Figure 5 Value of agricultural products produced in 2006 (\$m). Source: RMCG, 2009, NVIRP TRAMS Update: Final Report.

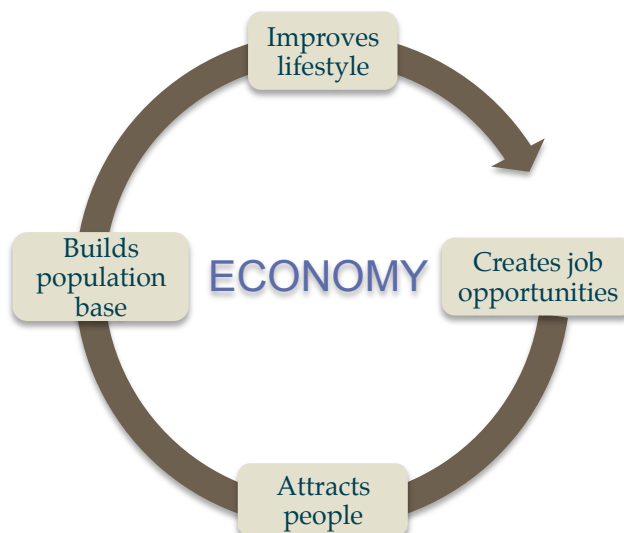
No. of people employed by industry, 2006- 2040

Industry	2006	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Administration	270	269	265	260	254	248	241	235
Accommodation, Food, Wholesale and Retail	753	745	736	727	716	705	694	683
Professional, Utilities and Support	654	647	637	630	618	611	598	591
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	1,319	923	855	812	788	764	741	719
Construction	232	231	227	222	216	210	203	196
Manufacturing and Mining	407	403	397	389	380	369	357	346
Health Care and Support	418	479	490	496	497	492	484	473
Education and Training	260	254	250	244	238	231	223	215

Table 2 Breakdown of the Gannawarra economy- number of people employed by industry, 2006- 2040. Source: McKINNA et al, 2010

8.7 Implications

- The blunt fact of the matter is that the Gannawarra economy is in decline as evidenced by the following factors:
 - *In 2001, the GVP (Gross Value Product) was \$248 million. In 2006, that figure had decreased to \$226 million. Although the data is not available, the economy is believed to have declined even further since that time.*
- The dairy industry (50% of Gannawarra's agricultural industry) has decreased significantly, due to farmers selling water and exiting dairy production.
- The shrinking of the economy, in particular, the agricultural sector, will have major negative flow-on effects for businesses within the shire, not only those that are heavily linked to the agricultural sector.
- New enterprises and new industries will be essential to replace agriculture in order to arrest the downturn.
- As indicated in the schematic below, the economy is the underlying force in addressing a number of issues; fundamentally population growth and lifestyle.



Section 9 | Our strengths

9.1 Strengths summary

The Gannawarra community has a number of strengths to draw from, many of which are not fully appreciated. They are summarized below:

1. Gannawarra is a stable, safe collection of communities with positive 'small town' values.
2. Dairy has given Gannawarra economic stability over the years until recent drought and low milk prices.
3. Agricultural diversity exists due to the range of farmland in irrigated and dry land areas.
4. The Murray River is a great advantage to the area in both economic and lifestyle terms.
5. The irrigation network is a major infrastructure asset that is in the process of an upgrade to world-class standards.
6. Mediterranean climate provides better lifestyle and agricultural advantages.
7. Great sporting and culture facilities exists in all the townships. Strong service clubs exist in most.
8. Our aboriginal heritage is one of the most significant in Victoria. It provides a rich source of local knowledge about our land and scope for indigenous tourism development.
9. Rail link to Melbourne 2 x per day gives access to Melbourne entertainment and services.
10. A strong volunteer culture and spirit ensures all in the community are cared for.
11. Gannawarra has less threat from fire or major natural disasters (although flood risk is still eminent, the flood warnings have longer lead times).
12. Affordable housing means it is a great place to raise a family.
13. Although schools in Echuca and Swan Hill are doing similar work, the technical high school in Kerang is an asset to the region. In a job market

with skills shortages, it holds potential to be developed further as an education showcase for particular trades.

14. Likewise, the potential exists to develop Cohuna Secondary College's as an academic centre of excellence.
15. Manufacturers here are well located for access to major markets, e.g. Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide.
16. The Murrabit market story is a great case study of what a community can achieve by working together.
17. The wetlands are some of the best in Victoria and include Ramsar listed sites.
18. Lakes offer world-class venue for water sports, fishing or nature activities.
19. The beauty of the Mallee adds a contrast to the wetlands landscape.

9.2 Gannawarra's potential areas of competitive advantage

The challenge for the community is to recognise new opportunities and adjust to respond to them. These include:

- Solar power
- Eco tourism, water sports, fishing.
- Getting onto the grey nomad touring route.
- Sustainable agricultural systems.
- Retirement villages (hospitals influence this)
- Kerang transport corridor
- 'Best practice' land use agricultural investment projects.

Section 10 | Our shortcomings

As indicated by the name of this report, Gannawarra faces some significant challenges ahead. In summary, these are:

- Demographic challenges:
 - *Lower education level*
 - *Lower average household income*
 - *Higher socio-economic disadvantages based on the SEIFA.*
 - *Lower ethnic diversity*
 - *Gender imbalance*
- Proximity to Bendigo, Echuca, Swan Hill offers advantages, but creates economic leakage for shops and services.
- Not well serviced with tourist amenities, including accommodation, restaurants, entertainment centres. This impacts residents' lifestyle as well as tourism development.
- Not well serviced for allied health, respite care and general GP services.
- The absence of a tertiary education facility impacts the culture of the Shire and forces young people to leave to further their education.
- Small manufacturing base means the region relies on agriculture which limits economic diversity.
- The small rate base and geographic spread of the shire means the shire council struggles to raise the revenue needed to adequately service roads, bridges and other community assets.
- Limited bus and taxi services for younger and older residents.
- Limited entertainment options for our youth at night.

Section 11 | Possible scenarios

Without strategic intervention, the future for Gannawarra does not look bright. The future scan exercise reveals that, **without intervention**, by 2025; the scenario facing Gannawarra **could** be:

- Gannawarra's population has declined.
- The economy has shrunk from its peak in the late 90s.
- The working age population, the driving engine of retail and general economic activity, has declined.
- 40% of irrigation water has been traded out of the region, with many once-productive dairy farms lying idle.
- Whilst NVIRP activity may have created a significant number of jobs over the early years, these are likely to be transient workers.
- Businesses serving farmers and the community in general have closed down because of reduced spending power and increasing competition from big chain retailers in Echuca, Swan Hill, Bendigo, etc.
- Sporting and community clubs have closed down due to insufficient members to field a team. As a consequence, under-occupied youth turn to alcohol, drugs and crime.
- The quality of education available at the secondary schools has declined because of insufficient resources to offer specialty courses, inability to attract quality teachers and a loss of confidence from local parents who will choose to send their children away to study.
- One of Victoria's best wetlands remains relatively unexploited and unknown to the outside world because of lack of tourism infrastructure.

However, the scenario with intervention **could** be a very different one:

- Gannawarra will be a vibrant growing shire due to the appealing lifestyle and jobs on offer.
- Migrants will feel welcomed to settle in the shire, keeping the housing sector buoyant and fostering tolerance and diversity, to the benefit of the community.
- New industries such as solar, tourism, healthcare and perhaps first stage value-added food processing will make the shire less dependent on the dairy industry.
- Marginal land is being re-vegetated at a profit.
- Our indigenous community is proud of their culture and knowledge of the country and generously share their ancient learnings.
- Dairy farms are now larger, more profitable, sustainable and globally competitive.
- Many community businesses have adapted to survive competition from larger towns by offering convenience and an enhanced level of personalized service.
- Sporting and community clubs are thriving so further investment can be made in their facilities.
- A revitalized secondary school sector is part of our new education strategy. It means we have retained the critical mass needed to offer specialist programs of study by leveraging the technical strengths of Kerang Technical High School as well as the academic strengths of Cohuna Secondary College.
- The technical high school is known for its state leadership in key specializations that link to local industry and job opportunities, e.g. specialist welding, engineering, hospitality and tourism, environmental science. Likewise, Cohuna Secondary College known for its strong academic

record in performance arts, humanities and sciences.

- A TAFE or satellite-campus of a larger tertiary institution is offering programs that are relevant to the area and attracts older students back to study.
- High speed broadband connection opens up the region and offers improved medical, shopping, education and working options.
- The Shire has lobbied hard for funding post-MDB plan and is using this to reinvigorate tourism infrastructure.
- Victoria's best wetlands become the icon of the region and open up opportunities for a burgeoning tourism sector including nature, sporting and indigenous tourism products.
- An active hospitality sector is emerging that creates jobs and a career path for young workers as well as improving the quality of life for residents.
- Street-scapes are vibrant places where residents want to eat, meet and celebrate regular events.
- The roads, bridges and infrastructure are well-maintained and local services are comparable to larger regional centres.

Section 12 | Challenges

For Gannawarra, a non-intervention scenario is not an option. This is a resilient and fighting community, therefore the community vision must advocate a program of economic and cultural reinvention.

Gannawarra must put in place strategies that are inspiring and aspirational, including:

1. Addressing the demographic time bomb by:
 - a) Ensuring that there are job opportunities to attract young adults back to Gannawarra after they have finished their tertiary education.
 - b) Stopping the migration of working age people, particularly females, out of the community.
 - c) Encouraging those who have left to pursue careers, to return to raise families.

2. Attracting young working families of all ethnicities to the community by making it a good place to live and raise a family. This includes:
 - a) Ensuring that there are quality, rewarding jobs and careers in the region.
 - b) Providing a good quality of life in terms of services, retail outlets, dining and entertainment options.
 - c) Providing quality medical services and allied health support.

3. Providing a broad and high quality education and ensuring that the community values learning, because:
 - a) It provides pathways to jobs and keeps our young people here.
 - b) It has a strong link to industries that will define our shire in the future.
 - c) It allows our youth to develop into who they want to be in their future.

4. Building confidence for businesses to invest in the town by:
 - a) Ensuring that the shire has a reliable, well-trained workforce.
 - b) Ensuring fast speed broadband and 3G mobile phone access.
 - c) Providing business friendly planning services at the shire.

5. Creating a brand identity and personality which unifies the Gannawarra community and instills a sense of regional pride; whilst still maintaining the individual spirit of each of the local communities.

6. Managing climate uncertainty and a potentially further reduced water scenario.

Part

Our goals & aspirations



Section 13 | Community aspirations

The stakeholder engagement during the course of this research revealed a number of community aspirations for improving life in Gannawarra. These centred around addressing the following key areas of concern:

- Community confidence and self-belief
- Economic diversity
- Education pathways to industry
- High-speed broadband opportunities
- General healthcare
- The wetlands and their tourism potential
- Local sporting clubs and facilities
- Town ship appearance, infrastructure and liveability.

The above themes were articulated in some specific aspirations as follows:

1. To have an education system that offers state of the art facilities and a breadth of learning options.
2. To provide career pathways that keep our young people working locally in rewarding jobs.
3. To encourage the young professionals who have left the area to come back to raise their families.
4. To prevent chronic illness and deliver improved respite care and allied health care services for all citizens, especially those who are disadvantaged.
5. To have transport services that give our younger and older residents greater independence.
6. To achieve population growth and diversity, but without compromising our 'small town' values.
7. To have streetscapes, bridges and roads that are safe as well as attractive.
8. To build a tourism industry that creates jobs and infrastructure and allows us to proudly show visitors the beauty of our natural environment and the depth of our aboriginal heritage.
9. To improve entertainment options, particularly for our youth.

10. To foster new ways of best practice farming in response to a low water future.
11. To support our entrepreneurs and thinkers, celebrate their successes and help them lead us into new industries and initiatives.
12. To be able to enjoy the same richness of food, street life, lifestyle and culture that other Victorians enjoy.
13. To keep our smaller towns alive through social and sporting initiatives driven by the passion of community volunteers.
14. To recover our sense of optimism and self-confidence.

These issues are captured in the following 2025 Aspirational Statement, which describes the community we would like to be:

Aspirational Statement

It is 2025 and Gannawarra is once again an energetic and confident community.

Agriculture remains the backbone of the economy and boasts state-of-the-art, sustainable water management systems and leads the state in best practice land management. The economic base is now more balanced with new industries such as environmental remediation, renewable energy, carbon management and eco-tourism. The youth of the town are enthused by the local employment prospects these sectors offer and educators are able to tailor their education accordingly. As a result, the community values education because it builds pathways to success. The shire recognise this, making a point of celebrating the achievements of its citizens.

High-speed broadband Internet seamlessly connects Gannawarra with the rest of the world, creating new paradigms for business, education, social engagement and health care.

Gannawarra is renowned as the home of Victoria's wetlands. As well as playing a critical role in natural resources management, the wetlands and waterways are a valuable tourism resource because of the range of passive and active water activities they make possible. The rich indigenous heritage of the area and its strong bond with the environment is a further asset of which all citizens are proud. Likewise, the heritage of our pioneers is preserved and celebrated.

The sporting and community clubs are the pulse of each township. They provide a social link, improve our health outcomes and teach our children a variety of life skills.

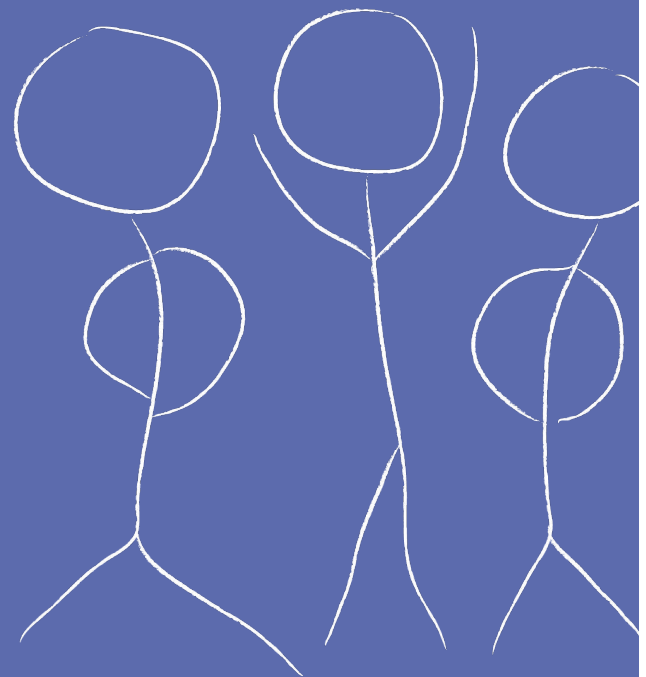
The towns within the shire are vibrant, offering an affordable quality of life in a healthy, sunny climate, as well as support services and well maintained infrastructure. They are safe, tolerant and community-spirited. As a consequence, young families of all ethnicities from bigger centres are attracted here seeking a better future. The hospitality and entertainment offering develops rapidly in response to this population swell and the cultural influence of new residents.

The waterbirds look magnificent in full flight. They represent our soaring optimism.

We feel good about the future.

Part

Community strategy



Section 14 | Vision, mission & values

Community Vision & Mission

Vision

Working together to turn today's challenge into tomorrow's opportunity.

Mission

To create sustainable economic prosperity and continually improve our quality of life in harmony with our environment.

Naming the Community Plan

Gannawarra 2025: Taking up the challenge!

Implicit in the vision and the name of this community plan are three integral propositions:

1. Confronting the fact, head-on, that Gannawarra faces some serious challenges.
2. Accepting that Gannawarra is in a unique position to turn these challenges to its advantage.
3. Asserting that the community is committed to take up the challenge.

Section 15 | Brand Gannawarra

The community consultation indicated that Gannawarra lacks a clear brand identity that the whole community can relate to and rally behind. The brand is more than a logo, it is about how the Shire presents itself to the outside world. It is ultimately a statement of self-belief.

The stakeholder research revealed the following facts about 'Brand Gannawarra':

- Gannawarra does not enjoy a united brand identity across all townships.
- Ghosts of the Borough of Kerang still lurk.
- There is competitive (not always healthy) tension between the communities.
- Each town has its own pride and identity.
- The Shire's vision and mission do not uniquely identify the community.
- The opportunity to own 'Victoria's wetlands' as the defining feature of the shore is well recognised.

Brand elements:

The following elements define the Gannawarra brand:

1. Wetlands and waterways
2. Fishing / Water sports
3. Irrigation
4. Red gum
5. Resilience
6. Murray river
7. Geographic link – Murray River, highways
8. The Ibis.

Brand values:

1. Progressive
2. Resilient
3. Sense of community

4. Caring
5. Resourceful
6. Responsible
7. Spirited
8. Responsive
9. Tolerant
10. Confident.

Branding provides a powerful framework to capture and manage the essence of the community strategy. A brand architecture program is recommended with the following steps:

1. Initiate project to develop branding strategy with:
 - *Market research*
 - *Brand analysis and architecture*
 - *Brand strategy and graphics*
 - *Brand style manual*
2. Launch brand as a central platform of the community strategy.

A brand pyramid must be developed with the following elements defined:



Section 16 | Strategy platforms

The following pages outline the strategy platforms and programs that will be the 'road map' to guide Gannawarra into a prosperous future in 2025.

Gannawarra 2025

Taking up the challenge!



GANNAWARRA
SHIRE COUNCIL

STRATEGY PLATFORMS

1

Reverse decline
in working
population

2

Revitalize our
towns into
vibrant places

3

Foster
economic
prosperity
through diversity

4

Embrace
environmental
sustainability

5

Focus
education &
lifelong learning

6

Facilitate local,
regional & global
connectivity

Gannawarra 2025

Taking up the challenge!



GANNAWARRA
SHIRE COUNCIL

STRATEGY PLATFORMS

1

Reverse decline in working population

To grow our population into a community with the size and diversity necessary to prosper and advance our quality of life.

2

Revitalize our towns into vibrant places

To make our townships inspiring places for all ages to live, work, play and visit, where we value our indigenous and pioneering heritage.

3

Foster economic prosperity through diversity

To achieve growth by leveraging our areas of sustainable advantage to foster stability through greater industry diversity.

4

Embrace environmental sustainability

To embrace opportunities surrounding environmental sustainability, turning it to our social and economic advantage.

5

Focus education & lifelong learning

To create a culture where education is valued because it is strongly linked to our identity, our industries and our unique resources.

6

Facilitate local, regional & global connectivity

To build strong linkages within our communities, the region and the wider world to ensure we are informed and engaged.

Platforms

Programs

1

Reverse decline in working population

- 1.1 | Attract working age residents of all ethnicities
- 1.2 | Stay connected with young professionals who have left to pursue careers
- 1.3 | Champion local entrepreneurs
- 1.4 | Capture the knowledge and skills of older workers

2

Revitalise our towns into vibrant places

- 2.1 | Invest in a master plan for built environments and streetscapes that reflects the Gannawarra brand
- 2.2 | Develop local community services appropriate to needs
- 2.3 | Champion a food and hospitality culture
- 2.4 | Facilitate retail vibrancy
- 2.5 | Ensure health and wellness services match demographic needs
- 2.6 | Further develop an integrated regional events program
- 2.7 | Foster creativity and cultural development
- 2.8 | Celebrate the cultural heritage that makes us who we are today
- 2.9 | Promote wellness and healthy living

3

Foster economic prosperity through diversity

- 3.1 | Focus business development on areas of competitive advantage
- 3.2 | Expand the Shire's economic development resources
- 3.3 | Support capability development of small businesses
- 3.4 | Protect and nurture 'at threat' businesses

4

Embrace environmental sustainability

- 4.1 | Change culture to emphasize the positives of new water and environmental policies
- 4.2 | Facilitate water conservation and reduction of carbon footprint
- 4.3 | Restore the wetlands and develop environmental remediation and tourism opportunities
- 4.4 | Attract funding to replace lost agricultural industries with new environmental industries
- 4.5 | Support communities to respond to climate uncertainty
- 4.6 | Develop an environmental plan to link all the environmental programs

5

Focus education & lifelong learning

- 5.1 | Develop an education and lifelong learning strategy for the shire
- 5.2 | Champion rationalisation of the school system
- 5.3 | Encourage specialisation in the secondary schools
- 5.4 | Attract satellite tertiary campus or develop remote learning strategy, e.g. Deakin
- 5.5 | Create a culture that values education and learning and recognizes achievement
- 5.6 | Build business and education pathways and partnerships

6

Facilitate local, regional & global connectivity

- 6.1 | Capitalize on high speed broad-band connectivity
- 6.2 | Improve regional mobile phone connectivity
- 6.3 | Improve integration between Gannawarra communities
- 6.4 | Build Gannawarra community awareness of the realities and opportunities of globalisation
- 6.5 | Continue to play an active role in the Murray River Group of Councils
- 6.6 | Help our youth reach out to the wider world

STRATEGY 1

| Reverse decline in working population



| Programs:

- 1.1 | Attract working age residents of all ethnicities
- 1.2 | Stay connected with young professionals who have left to pursue careers
- 1.3 | Champion local entrepreneurs
- 1.4 | Capture the knowledge and skills of older workers

STRATEGY 1

| Reverse decline in working population



| Rationale:

1. A decline in working residents is a serious threat to the Gannawarra economy.
2. Lack of critical mass limits the health services required for ensuring a good quality of life.
3. The opportunity is to attract working families to live in the area on the basis of affordability and work/life balance. However, it is dependant on being able to create jobs so it is linked to Strategy 3 (economy) as well as Strategy 2 (live-ability).
4. Cultural diversity enriches communities and contributes to quality of life, so working age migrants must be encouraged to settle here, again this will be dependent on jobs.
5. An influx of retirees to the area means that skills and experience are also coming into the community which could be harnessed by encouraging part time and flexible working conditions for older workers.

STRATEGY 1

| Reverse decline in working population



| Indicative projects:

1. Develop an E-prospectus profiling the live-ability of Gannawarra
2. Continue efforts to showcase live-ability and lifestyle to tourists during events
3. Instigate a 'grey power' initiative to get older people working, mentoring and contributing to the economy.
4. Capture passive wealth in the area and encourage retirees to invest in the community.
5. Use social networking to keep in touch with young people who have left for study and work so they consider returning to raise families.
6. Promote the support services on offer to new business entrepreneurs to guide them through the system and connect them to local networks, investors and government assistance.
7. Target skilled migrants to fill emerging job opportunities.
8. Establish a 'knowledge' or 'skills register' to identify skilled retirees and working professionals residing locally who could be called on to offer input as mentors or advisors.

STRATEGY 1

| Reverse decline in working population



| Partners:

Regional Development Australia
Regional Development Victoria
Migration agencies
Professional business community groups
Education organisations
Community Advancement groups
Senior citizens groups

STRATEGY 2

| Revitalise our towns into vibrant places



| Programs:

- 2.1 | Invest in a master plan for built environment and streetscapes that reflects the Gannawarra brand
- 2.2 | Develop local community services appropriate to the needs
- 2.3 | Champion a food and hospitality culture
- 2.4 | Facilitate retail vibrancy
- 2.5 | Ensure health and wellness services match demographic needs
- 2.6 | Further develop an integrated regional events program
- 2.7 | Foster creativity and cultural development
- 2.8 | Celebrate the cultural heritage that makes us who we are today
- 2.9 | Promote wellness and healthy living

STRATEGY 2

| Revitalise our towns into vibrant places



| Rationale:

1. Liveability is essential to enhance quality of life for residents and to attract new people.
2. Residents of all ages crave for more vibrancy in the shopping areas, a wider array of coffee shops, eating establishments, gourmet food stores and specialty retailers.
3. Kerang does not enjoy the benefits of visitors who tend to pass through in transit. Even when in the area for events, they don't spend to their potential because of lack of hospitality product.
4. Gannawarra's aboriginal and pioneering heritages needs to be preserved and celebrated. Where possible, it should be reflected in the streetscapes and brand imagery.
5. It is important that townships continue to take ownership of their own needs and investment priorities through their individual community plans and budgets.
6. Establish a community planning network to share ideas to improve livability across towns.
7. The support of healthy lifestyle programs and town planning and design initiatives improves quality of life and prevents chronic illnesses that are a drain on health services (e.g. healthy outdoor spaces).

STRATEGY 2



| Revitalise our towns into vibrant places

| Indicative projects:

1. Invest in street-scaping that reflects the Gannawarra brand and hold street events. Establish healthy and inspiring outdoor spaces e.g. bike and walking tracks, arts and culture trail.
2. Develop visually enticing street-scaping and caravan parking to funnel drivers from the highway into Kerang centre
3. Encourage stores to stay open longer, i.e. on Saturday afternoon, Sunday morning and evening trade (e.g. summer street market of Friday evenings).
4. Develop events and school programs that raise awareness and share knowledge of local aboriginal culture, art and history.
5. Conduct customer service training programs for local businesses
6. Develop a shire ambassador program as a unifying strategy
7. Explore feasibility of a truck stop for general transport and logistics services.
8. Start a hospitality training café with high schools (e.g. Pelican Café at Hastings)
9. Tap into knowledge of ex-residents with city experience in hospitality, entertainment and the arts.
10. Coordinate and promote unique events such as Cohuna Hoof & Feather market.
11. Establish a program of community awards that celebrates local initiatives and success stories.

STRATEGY 2

Revitalise our towns into vibrant places



Partners:

Individual community planning groups

- *Dingwall/Lake Meran/Normanville*
- *Cohuna*
- *Lalbert*
- *Koondrook*
- *Macorna*
- *Lakes*
- *Leitchville*
- *Kerang*
- *Benjeroop Murrabit Myall*
- *Quambatook*

Regional Development Victoria

State Government (specific arts, culture & health departments)

Community advancement/fundraising/event groups

Aboriginal community groups

Historical Societies

AAS/Cultural societies

Sporting clubs



STRATEGY 3

| Foster economic prosperity through diversity



| Programs:

- 3.1 | Focus business development on areas of competitive advantage
- 3.2 | Expand the Shire's economic development resources
- 3.3 | Support capability development of small businesses
- 3.4 | Protect and nurture 'at threat' businesses

STRATEGY 3

| Foster economic prosperity through diversity



| Rationale:

1. Economic development is the central platform of the strategy. Its success underpins all of the other strategies. (It is addressed separately in the Shire's Economic Development plan 2010).
2. The high reliance on the agricultural sector has put Gannawarra in a vulnerable position in recent times. For future security and to create a wider spectrum of job opportunities, a range of new industries must be developed. However, irrigated agriculture needs to be supported and protected.
3. Gannawarra is the best placed of any shire to benefit from climate change abatement and water policies. Industries based around environmental remediation can replace losses in agriculture.
4. The local superannuation farming initiative is an example of the effectiveness of an integrated, 'best land use' approach and could be championed as a test case.
5. The Gannawarra shire must invest in greater economic development resources than normal given the critical need – a larger scale of transformation is needed here compared to most other Victorian shires. Resources are needed to capture small scale as well as large scale potential investment.

STRATEGY 3

| Foster economic prosperity through diversity



| Areas of competitive advantage:

The following areas must become the focus of the economic development team:

- Sustainable agriculture
- Renewable energy
- Climate change remediation
- Eco-tourism
- On-line businesses

STRATEGY 3

| Foster economic prosperity through diversity



| Indicative projects:

1. Continue to regularly canvass business leaders for investment attraction ideas (see Economic Development Plan 2010).
2. Continue to support 'buy local' campaigns
3. Link infrastructure upgrades to attracting new investors e.g. airport, gas.
4. Promote the business 'trouble shooter' services within the shire that already assist businesses to navigate the bureaucracy.
5. Facilitate business excellence programs for small business
6. Explore ideas to retain passive wealth in the community (e.g. investment angels program) from investors both within and outside the shire.
7. Continue to monitor land use change and develop planning and policy to enhance sustainable agricultural productivity.

STRATEGY 3

| Foster economic prosperity through diversity



| Partners:

Loddon Mallee Strategy Plan Northern Region
Regional Development Victoria
Tourism Victoria
Victorian Government (DSE)
Community business/professional groups (e.g. Rotary, Business Kerang)
Agricultural groups
Industry association groups (e.g. dairy, retail)
Events organising committees

STRATEGY 4



| Embrace environmental sustainability

| Programs:

- 4.1 | Change culture to emphasize the positives of new water and environmental policies
- 4.2 | Facilitate water conservation and reduction of carbon footprint
- 4.3 | Restore the wetlands and develop environmental remediation & tourism opportunities
- 4.4 | Attract funding to replace lost agricultural industries with new environmental industries
- 4.5 | Support communities to respond to climate uncertainty
- 4.6 | Develop an environmental plan to link all the environmental programs.

STRATEGY 4

| Embrace environmental sustainability



| Rationale:

1. A carbon tax of some form and other carbon reduction policies are inevitable.
2. Gannawarra is well placed to benefit from environmental reform which most see as a negative. The starting point for this is to change the culture and attitude. Young professionals in the shire believe this is possible.
3. There will be large parcels of Federal and State adjustment and compensation funding. Gannawarra is well placed to attract this funding.
4. Carbon abatement programs provide an alternative economic land use for ex-irrigation land that is unsuitable to convert to dry land farming.
5. Generations X and Y are more driven to improve the environment. They are accepting and supportive of environmental initiatives and will drive social change.
6. The Greens Party is growing in political influence and will push this agenda federally.

STRATEGY 4



| Embrace environmental sustainability

| Indicative projects:

1. Promote local awareness of the opportunities in environmental remediation.
2. Investigate opportunities to link environmental and economic outcomes. Conduct an audit of assets and opportunities and develop an environmental prospectus.
3. Help industry develop eco-tourism products and feature in tourism marketing programs. Engage with Parks Victoria and Tourism Victoria to assist (e.g. Tourism Excellence programs).
4. Promote local sustainable farming superannuation project as 'best practice' case study and leverage to put Gannawarra wetlands 'on the map'.
5. Promote good news stories of NVIRP.
6. Capture funding to transition from agriculture to new industry development.
7. Develop a timber sector strategy plan to transition the sector to accommodate new legislation.
8. Raise awareness of Gannawarra as a haven for bird life e.g. Ramsar treaty, ibis rookery, etc.
9. Lobby to influence government policy on the environment (e.g. 'feed in' tariffs) and wetlands policy.

STRATEGY 4

| Embrace environmental sustainability



| Partners:

Murray Darling Basin Authority
Federal Government
State Government (DSE)
Parks Victoria
Tourism Victoria
Loddon Mallee Regional Group
Environmental Groups (e.g. Landcare)
Agricultural Groups

STRATEGY 5



| Focus education and life long learning

| Programs:

- 5.1 | Develop an education and lifelong learning strategy for the shire
- 5.2 | Champion rationalisation of the school system
- 5.3 | Encourage specialisation in the secondary schools
- 5.4 | Attract satellite tertiary campus or develop remote learning strategy (e.g. Deakin).
- 5.5 | Create a culture that values education and learning and recognises achievement
- 5.6 | Build business and education pathways and partnerships

STRATEGY 5



| Focus education and life long learning

| Rationale:

1. Education and life-long learning is critical to the economic and social welfare of the shire. The emerging industries require highly skilled specialists. Manual labouring jobs are in decline and even agriculture is becoming more 'high tech'.
2. Gannawarra has one of the lowest education levels in Victoria.
3. The education strategy needs to support the economic development strategy and the focus on renewable energy, environmental remediation and eco-tourism. The strategy must build a pathway between industry and education.
4. A strong Gannawarra brand should reinforce the economic vision, so that students aspire to careers in the existing or emerging sectors.
5. The technical high school is a local asset on which to build a point of difference. Likewise, the academic strengths of Cohuna Secondary college should be nurtured. Both institutions have a point of difference that can be leveraged to offer a wider overall education choice. Individually, both schools will not have the critical mass to satisfy all future student needs, so it is logical that they develop individual but complementary specialisations.

STRATEGY 5



| Focus education and life long learning

| Rationale continued:

6. The details around program 5.2 of ‘championing rationalisation of the school system’ require further consideration with education professionals and relevant government departments. This does not refer to mass closures of schools, but rather managing the available education resources to offer wider choice to students (e.g. allow the secondary schools to develop unique areas of specialisation); or ensuring schools are modern, safe facilities with access to new technology (e.g. concepts such as P12 school models).
7. Local students and parents should be made aware of the strengths of the local education offering.
8. The case study of Singapore discussed in the community workshops proves how investment in education can be a key contributor to building a new economy. This example should be shared with local business leaders.

STRATEGY 5



| Focus education and life long learning

| Indicative projects:

1. Development of the education strategy will be a pivotal step that will set the direction of all projects for this strategy.
2. Extending the shire work experience programs and showing leadership in building pathways.
3. Advocate industry/Govt/shire funded scholarships to fund external study.
4. Drive internship programs with local authorities (e.g. Goulburn Murray Water).
5. Work with secondary schools as part of the education strategy to develop new education programs which are linked to the new strategic and economic direction of the shire.
6. Lobby government for funding and support for the re-energisation of the Kerang technical high school, so it may adapt trade programs to fit the new industries. Likewise, the opportunity exists to leverage the strong academic performance of Cohuna Secondary College by assisting it to take up equally relevant academic programs.

STRATEGY 5



| Focus education and life long learning

| Indicative projects continued:

7. Instigate dialogue with one of the universities for a satellite campus specialising in economically relevant sectors e.g. environmental remediation, tourism, hospitality.
8. Improve bus services to Swan Hill, Bendigo and Echuca so students can more easily access available tertiary programs in neighbouring shires.
9. Call on business and professional groups (Probus, Business Kerang, Rotary etc.) to take ownership of mentoring and other business programs.

STRATEGY 5



| Focus education and life long learning

| Partners:

State Government Education (DEECD)
LLEN
MADEC
Community Business Groups
Education providers and committees
Men's Shed
Significant regional employers
Local businesses
Youth Groups
MMLLEN/CCLLEN strategic plans

STRATEGY 6

| Facilitate local, regional and global connectivity



| Programs:

- 6.1 | Capitalise on high speed broad-band connectivity
- 6.2 | Improve regional mobile phone connectivity
- 6.3 | Improve integration between Gannawarra local communities
- 6.4 | Build Gannawarra community awareness of the realities and opportunities of globalisation
- 6.5 | Continue to play an active role in the Murray River Group of Councils
- 6.6 | Help our youth reach out to the wider world

STRATEGY 6

| Facilitate local, regional and global connectivity



| Rationale:

1. It is essential that the communities in the shire share a common vision and are supportive of the strategic direction.
2. It is important that residents identify with the Gannawarra shire as well as their local communities. The treatment of the Gannawarra brand identity will play a large part in this.
3. The shire needs to continue to build strong ties with the other Murray river shires to leverage its regional influence and lobby collectively.
4. Residents need to be globally connected and made aware of the opportunities and threats posed by globalisation.
5. Our youth need to reach out into the wider world and bring back learnings that contribute to the community's advancement.

STRATEGY 6

| Facilitate local, regional and global connectivity



| Indicative projects:

1. Community websites linked to a shire portal
2. Communicate with the community electronically e.g. SMS for shire events, Twitter etc.
3. Student exchange programs to conduct study trips to other areas or scholarships to travel to courses/seminars (e.g. Rotary Exchange Scholarships).
4. Work with publishers to replace 2 local papers with a regional paper (Gannawarra Gazette)
5. Expand the sister city program
6. Profile local businesses and celebrate their successes.
7. Build IT support capability and educate residents for the need for all to be IT literate.
8. Work with the professional and volunteer organisations to coordinate their activity and call on them to take ownership of an aspect of this plan (e.g. Probus maintain skills register).

STRATEGY 6

| Facilitate local, regional and global connectivity



| **Partners:**

State Government
Community Groups
Local planning groups
Murray River Group of Councils
Youth Groups
Nationally networked groups (e.g. RSL, CWA, Rotary)

Appendix

Gannawarra Community Groups

Cohuna Senior Citizens Club
Kerang Senior Citizens Club
Lake Charm Mystic Park Senior Citizens Club
Murrabit Senior Citizens
Quambatook Senior Citizens
Barham Koondrook Agricultural Show Society
Cohuna AP & H Society
Kerang and District Agricultural Society Inc.
Kerang Agricultural Society Ladies Committee
Kerang Cropping Group
Kerang/Koondrook UDV
Regional Extension and Education Committee
Torrumbarry System Irrigators Association
United Dairyfarmers Victoria
Benjeroop Land Care Group
Lalbert Land Care Group
Macorna Land Care Group
Cohuna Men's Shed
Kerang New Year's Eve Committee
Quambatook Tractor Pull Assoc. Inc.
Kerang and District Health Social Club
Kerang Legacy Widows
Cohuna Country Women's Association
Kerang Country Women's Association
Kerang District Health Ladies Auxiliary
Kerang RSL Ladies Auxiliary
Macorna Country Women's Association

RSL Women's Auxiliary
Cohuna Cancer Support Group
Cohuna Carers, Arthritis and Parkinsons Support
Family and Friends of Glenarm Group
Gannawarra Mental Health Carers Group
Health Support Australia
Kerang and District Arthritis Support Group
Memory Loss Support Group
SCAFFALD- Kerang
Sunshine Group- Disability Activities Group
Cohuna TOWN (Take Off Weight Naturally) Club
Murrabit and District Heritage Inc
Kerang and District Family History Group Inc
Barham Koondrook Historical Society Inc
Cohuna and District Historical Society Inc
Kerang Historical Society Inc
Murrabit Promotions Committee Inc
Cohuna Probus Club Inc
Kerang Probus Club Inc
Advancing Community Kerang
Benjeroop-Murrabit-Myall Community Planning Group
Business Kerang
Cohuna and District Progress Association
Cohuna Community Planning Group
Cohuna Traders Association
Koondrook Community Planning Group
Koondrook Development Committee
Lakes District Community Planning Group
Lalbert Progress Association
Leitchville and District Development Group Inc
Leitchville and District Progress Association Inc
Leitchville Community Planning Group

Macorna, Tragowel and Mincha Community Planning Group
Murrabit Advancement Association Inc
Quambatook Community Development Association
Quambatook-Sandhill Lake Community Planning Group
Tragowel Progress Association Inc
Cohuna Scout Group
Kerang Book Group
Cohuna Patchwork Group Inc
Cohuna Scrap-Booking Group
Cohuna Spinning and Weaving Group Inc
Kerang Community Knitting Group
Kerang Quilters Inc
Kerang Spinners and Weavers
Knit 'n' Natter- Community Knitting Group
Time Out
1st Kerang Scout Group
Guides Victoria- Cohuna
Kerang Girl Guides
Kerang Guide Support Group
Rangers Australia
Barham Rock 'n' Roll Club
Kerang Dance Club
Northern District Dance Club- Cohuna Branch
Australian Plants Society- Loddon Mallee Group
Barham Koondrook Garden Club
Cohuna Garden Lovers
Kerang and District Garden Club
Mid Murray Orchid Club
Quambatook Garden Club
Cohuna Model Flying Club Inc
Kerang and District Band

Kerang Music Society
Kerang Camera Club
Kerang and District Vintage Motor Club Inc
Cohuna Happy Wanderers
Kerang Bushwalking Club
Kerang Jolly Walkers
Murray River Woodworkers Club Inc
Quambatook Amity Club
Cohuna Apex Club
Kerang Group of the Bendigo Legacy Club Inc
Barham Koondrook Lions Club
Cohuna Lions Club Inc
Lake Charm Mystic Park Lions Club
Leitchville Lions Club
Lions Club of Kerang
Murrabit and District Lions
Quambatook Lions Club
Rotary Club of Kerang
Cohuna Leitchville RSL Sub Branch
Kerang and District Sub Branch RSL
Koondrook Sub Branch RSL
Cohuna Little Athletics Club
Kerang Little Athletics Centre
Cohuna and District Badminton Association
Kerang Badminton Association Inc
Barham Indoor Bowls
Cohuna Bowls Club
Kerang Bowling Club Inc
Kerang Bowling Club- Ladies
Kerang Carpet Bowls
Kerang Golf Bowling Club
Kerang Golf Bowls Ladies Club
Koroop Indoor Bowling Club

Leitchville Indoor Bowling Club
Quambatook Bowling Club
Barrook Sporting Field and Game Aust Inc
Cohuna Clay Target Club
Kerang Clay Target Club
Leitchville Bunyip Sporting Club
Barham Koondrook Cricket Club
Cohuna United Cricket Club
Kerang Fairley Town Cricket Club
Leitchville Footballers Cricket Club
Leitchville Gunbower Cricket Club
Mincha Cricket Club
Murrabit Cricket Club
Nondescripts Cricket Club
Northern District Cricket Association
Kerang Croquet Club
Central Murray Football League
Cohuna Kangas Football and Netball Club
Golden Rivers Football League
Kerang Football and Netball Club
Koondrook Barham Netball Club
Lalbert Netball Club
Leitchville Gunbower Football Netball Club
Macorna Netball Club
Murrabit Football Club Inc
Murrabit Netball Club
Quambatook Football Club
Quambatook Netball Club
Wandella Football/Netball Club
Wandella Football Club
Cohuna Golf Club Inc
Kerang Golf Club Inc
Lalbert Golf Club Inc

Quambatook Golf Club Inc
Kerang Junior Hockey Association
Loddon-Murray Hockey Club Inc
Kerang Martial Arts
Koondrook Karate Club
Mid-Murray Flying Club
Cohuna Pony Club
Macorna Pony Club
Kerang Pony Club Inc
Murrabit Riding Club
Cohuna Squash Club Inc
Cohuna Swimming Club
Kerang Amateur Swimming and Life Saving Club Inc
Quambatook Memorial Swimming Pool Committee
Kerang Table Tennis Association Inc
Cohuna Lawn Tennis Club
Gannawarra Tennis Club
Kerang Lawn Tennis Club
Lake Meran Tennis Club
Leitchville Tennis Club Inc
Murrabit Lawn Tennis Club Inc
Quambatook Lawn Tennis Club
Wandella Tennis Association Inc
Kerang Turf Club