

Growing Gannawarra

2021 – 2025
COUNCIL
PLAN

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ABOUT THE COUNCIL PLAN

A Council must prepare and adopt a Council Plan for a period of at least the next 4 financial years after a general election in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices (Local Government Act 2020).

Gannawarra Shire Council’s 2021 - 2025 Council Plan is a strategic document reflecting where Council, and the community, wants to be in 2025 and how it will achieve those outcomes. The Council Plan is the overarching strategy for the organisation that clearly identifies what the Council is planning to achieve in the next 4 years.

This Council Plan is supported by an annual Action Plan for each of the three priority areas. Each year, the Council Plan will undergo a review process against the actions set for the 12 month period in the annual Action Plan, and also at the outcome and objective level through a review of success measures. At this point, a revised Action Plan will be developed for the next 12 month period of the Plan. This approach supports the staged implementation of this plan.

This Council Plan also includes the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan that identifies goals and strategies based on evidence for creating a local community in which people can achieve maximum health and wellbeing.

A Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is a requirement of the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008.

Cover image: Aunty Esther Kirby OAM with Koondrook Primary School students at the Nature Based Tourism site, November 2020



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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.



Mayor's Message



Together with my fellow Councillors, I am pleased to present to our community Growing Gannawarra – our 2021-2025 Gannawarra Shire Council Plan. This Plan is a high level strategic document that reflects the needs of our community and will help guide us over the next four years to realise our full potential.

During the past four years we have seen the Gannawarra grow into a region renowned for its diverse agriculture sector, its renewable energy opportunities and the potential for the area to become Victoria's nature based tourism destination.

Growing Gannawarra aims to build on these objectives and focus on our efforts to enhance the health and wellbeing, connectivity and productivity of our community.

As Councillors, we are committed to developing and implementing this plan with our community, who played a key role in developing Growing Gannawarra's objectives following an extensive community engagement period that included in-person sessions, online forums, conversation boards and a survey.

Through the engagement process, residents identified that our natural environment and community/lifestyle are the Gannawarra's strengths, with access to services; such as access to health and early years services and recreational infrastructure, being a challenge and creating disadvantage for our rural community.

As a result of this feedback, we have identified three goals Council would like to achieve between 2021 and 2025:

- Enhance the wellbeing and liveability of the Gannawarra through creative infrastructure and access to services;

- Grow the Gannawarra by developing a diverse and broad economy;
- Supporting long-term financial and environmental sustainability.

Strategic priorities, as listed in this Council Plan, will ensure we achieve these goals. Working in partnership with the community is crucial to this process.

It is also important that throughout the life of this Council Plan that we, as Councillors, continue to listen to the community and work collaboratively to create a positive and progressive future for the Gannawarra together.

Growing Gannawarra is about all of us. It's about what we love about the Gannawarra and what we can do to continue making the Gannawarra a great location to work and live. Let's all work together to further grow hope and confidence in the Gannawarra.

*Mayor
 Charlie Gillingham*

Your Councillors



**CR CHARLIE
GILLINGHAM,
MAYOR**

Arca Ward



**CR ROSS
STANTON**

Murray Ward



**CR KELVIN
BURT**

Patchell Ward



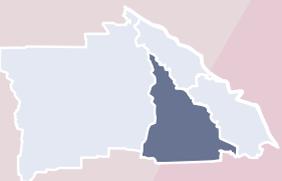
**CR TRAVIS
COLLIER**

Patchell Ward



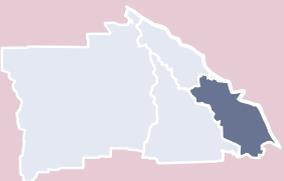
**CR JANE
OGDEN**

Patchell Ward



**CR GARNER
SMITH**

Yarrouan Ward



**CR KEITH
LINK**

Yarrouan Ward



Who is Gannawarra?

Gannawarra Shire encompasses a number of towns in the north of Victoria with an evolving agriculture sector and growing tourism industry.

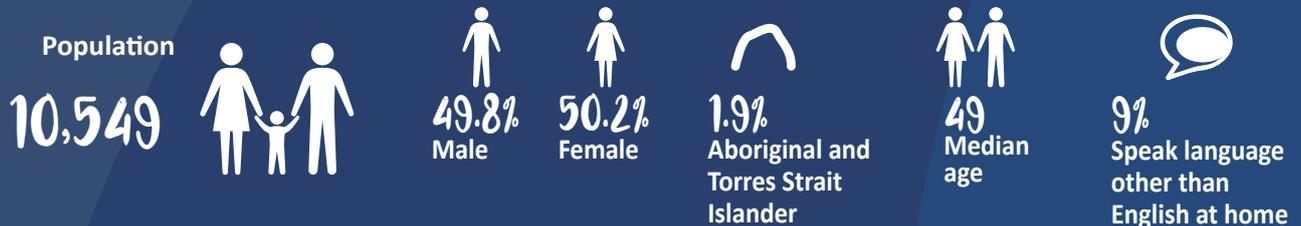


LOCATION

Gannawarra Shire is located on the Murray River, just 1.25 hours from Bendigo, 40 minutes from Swan Hill and 3 hours from Melbourne. It is serviced by the Murray Valley and Loddon Valley highways.



DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census

ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILE

- Gannawarra is a region loaded with natural features, rivers, lakes, wetlands and forests. It is a perfect destination for relaxing on the riverbank, water skiing with friends or just soaking up the ambience of the majestic red gum forests. Gannawarra has many attractions such as beautiful golf courses, red gum sawmills, national parks, wetlands, diverse shopping centres and special places of interest.
- Our sensational climate attracts visitors and locals out to enjoy all the environmental features that Gannawarra has to offer.
- Climate change is however impacting different sectors of the economy. Water scarcity and drought are posing challenges. We are seeing a shift in the agriculture sector from traditional farming methods towards intensive modern methods.
- Despite the challenges of climate change, there are increasing opportunities for solar and renewable energy in the region.
- Supporting our community to adapt to a changing climate and to seek new opportunities is a priority for Council.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

- Demographic shifts are presenting both opportunities and challenges for Council.
- Gannawarra has an ageing population with 27.6% aged over 65 years, an increase from 24% as at the 2011 ABS Census. In 2016, 6.5% of the population in Gannawarra reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability. This was a similar percentage to 2011.
- Maintaining the liveability of our municipality for our ageing population presents challenges and requires Council to rethink the services we deliver, including accessibility to transport and healthcare.
- At the same time remote and flexible working arrangements are driving young workers into regional areas, bringing new skills and experience which Council can capitalise on. Attracting young families and working age residents to our Shire is an important priority. Real estate and infrastructure considerations as well as connectivity will help drive this change into the future.
- The 2016 ABS Census highlighted a turnaround in previous population predictions, suggesting the Gannawarra would experience a population decline of 0.04% per annum during the next 20 years.
- Population increased by 183 people or 0.38% per annum from the 2011 to 2016 ABS Census. This positive growth is a sign that the work undertaken by Council in improving liveability and economic capacity is delivering positive population growth.

ECONOMIC PROFILE

- The major employing industries in the region are agriculture, forestry and fishing (26.6%) followed by healthcare and social assistance (12%), retail trade (10.1%), education and training (6.3%), and construction (6.2%).
- The Gannawarra has a diverse agricultural base. Dairy is the most prominent sector (39% of agricultural production) followed by cropping (38%), livestock (13%), and horticulture (10%). The dairy sector is undergoing significant change while broad acre irrigated cropping and horticulture are growing and likely to overtake dairy as the key sectors.
- Tourism is currently a relatively minor industry in the Gannawarra, accounting for around 4% of employment. However, there is opportunity for this sector to expand and play a greater role in the local economy.
- Renewable energy is providing significant investment, employment, rate revenue and business leverage potential. There is capacity to consider related green activities that align with nature-based tourism, energy and agriculture.
- Gannawarra has a strong manufacturing sector across Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook. This sector needs to be a priority to build ongoing employment capacity.
- Technology is driving rapid change across the economy and this will create many new opportunities.

Heatwave
Vulnerability
Score



15.1

Employed
persons



3,754

Unemployment
rate



4.8%

Median
weekly
personal
income
people aged
15+



\$498

Internet
accessed
from
dwelling



69.7%

Socio-Economic
Disadvantage
Score



957

Family
Violence
incidents
2019



273

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census

Our Community

In developing this 2021-2025 Council Plan we have listened to our community. Community consultation activities included in person sessions across the municipality, online engagement platform, and conversation boards. Hard copy surveys were also distributed. Through the community consultation process, we have heard from a wide cross section of our community about what is most valued about living in Gannawarra and what are some of the challenges.

Council has over 40 strategies and plans that guide Council decision making and each of these strategic documents has also been developed in consultation with the community. By hearing from our community we have been able to form the key themes of the Council Plan and this will help ensure that our work over the next four years reflects the needs of our community.

CAMPAIGN REACH



14 Consultation Sessions
(252 people)



Have Your Say Platform
(125 Comments)



8 Conversation Boards
(85 Comments)



Hardcopy Surveys
(56 Responses)



Emails
(5 direct to Council)

WHAT WE HEARD YOU LIKE ABOUT WHERE YOU LIVE



The natural environment



The community



The lifestyle

WHAT WE HEARD ARE YOUR CHALLENGES



Housing availability



Physical access (footpaths, connections etc)



Access and inclusion to early years, health services and recreation infrastructure



Full community engagement summary report and list of Council's strategic documents is available at www.gsc.vic.gov.au

Our Community Vision

VISION STATEMENT

Our community will be proud, connected and inclusive as we actively seek opportunities that enhance lifestyle and liveability.

We will recognise and appreciate the value of the natural environment and how it connects our communities.

We will strive to be resilient to a changing environment through innovation and collaboration.

The Gannawarra will grow through encouraging economic diversity, creating unique tourism destinations, and embracing our cultural and natural assets.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- 1. Liveability
- 2. Growth
- 3. Sustainability

GANNAWARRA RESIDENTS TOLD US THEY LIKE..

- “Beauty of our surrounds”
- “The friendly community spirit”
- “Peaceful”
- “We have good people and great potential!”
- “Safe”

About Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing

Council recognises that improving health and wellbeing outcomes is vital to achieve liveability and sustainability of Gannawarra into the future.

To support our residents to achieve maximum health and wellbeing, Council has incorporated the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan into this Council Plan.

A Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is a requirement under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008.

The Act requires Council to work in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services (now known as the Department of Health and Department of Families, Fairness and Housing) and other agencies undertaking public health initiatives, projects and programs to contribute to the achievement of the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023.

The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan has ten priorities. Over the next four years, Council will work towards addressing three of these priorities.

These priorities have been informed by what our community told us were key challenges, as well as an assessment of our health population data, other evidence and legislative requirements.

FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS, COUNCIL WILL FOCUS ON THE FOLLOWING THREE PRIORITIES:

Improving mental wellbeing (through reconciliation and community resilience)

Working towards gender equality and preventing family violence

Tackling climate change and its impact on health and wellbeing

By focusing on these priority areas we will be building on existing work with our key partners and stakeholders and addressing areas of concern highlighted in the data and evidence.

We will also be meeting the requirements of various laws such as the new Local Government Act 2020 and the Gender Equality Act 2020 which put gender equality, diversity and inclusion as key priorities for Council.

The Climate Change Act 2017 also identifies local government as a decision-maker that must consider climate change and its impact on health and wellbeing when preparing a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

In addition, Council is required by law to specify measures to prevent family violence and respond to the needs of victims of family violence in the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

The rate of family violence incidents across Gannawarra continues to be a concern. In 2019 there were 273 family violence incidents, or a rate of 2,607.0 per 100,000 people (compared to the Victorian rate of 1,231.5). In the vast majority of cases, women were the victims of family violence and a concerning number of incidents occurred with a child, or children, recorded as a witness.

Council will continue to work towards supporting communities, organisations, and cultures that are non-violent, gender equitable, non-discriminatory, and that promote respectful relationships. In this way we will address the underlying drivers of family violence and create a safer community for all.

To address specific areas of disadvantage in our community, a specific focus will be on:



Aboriginal health and wellbeing



Vulnerable children and young people

OUR FOCUS ON HEALTHY PARTNERSHIPS

As we focus on these three health and wellbeing priorities, Council will seek to continue to engage and listen to our community.

We will build on our existing partnerships and seek new partnerships that support better health and wellbeing outcomes for our community.

At a local level, Council will continue to work particularly closely with the Department of Health, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Northern District Community Health, Kerang District Health, Cohuna District Hospital, Victoria Police, Mallee District Aboriginal Service, Mallee Family Care, Murray Primary Health Network, and the Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership.

This local partnership group is known as the Gannawarra Local Agency Meeting (GLAM).

The Gannawarra Free from Family Violence Working Group sits under GLAM.

Council will continue to lead the Gannawarra Community Resilience Committee, a network of 28 agencies working together to support the Gannawarra community through rural change and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Council will also continue to be an active partner with our neighbouring councils as we work together to

implement the Buloke Loddon Gannawarra (BLG) Health Needs Analysis Implementation Plan. The BLG plan aims to reduce the prevalence of key chronic diseases within our region by focusing on Heart and Respiratory Health, Oral Health, Mental Health and Diabetes.

Council acknowledges that it can influence a reduction of chronic disease by working closely with the community and our partners to encourage and support health promoting behaviours.

To create healthier communities we will support and encourage our residents to:



Increase consumption of healthy foods



Increase levels of physical activity



Reduce alcohol and smoking rates

Advocacy for increased access to services will be a key component to achieving measurable change. Over the four year period, Council will continue to work in partnership to advocate for resources from state and federal governments that support improved health equity within our rural community.

ACTIONS, REVIEW AND EVALUATION

Strategies and actions to address health and wellbeing priorities will be detailed over the four year period in the 2021-2025 Action Plan which can be viewed at www.gsc.vic.gov.au/councilplan

Implementation and progress towards outcomes and impacts will be reviewed annually.

The GLAM Action Plan, Gannawarra Free from Family Violence Action Plan and Gannawarra Community Resilience Action Plan will assist in monitoring progress across the four year period.

In monitoring progress, the annual review will be undertaken with our partners and processes will be established to ensure ongoing community involvement in decisions which help support our residents to live healthy lives.

*Population Health Data for Gannawarra: Community Data Profile and Aboriginal Community Data Profile:

www.smpcp.com.au/data

The Buloke Loddon Gannawarra Health Needs Analysis:

www.blpcp.com.au/our-publications

Murray Primary Health Network Population Health Needs Assessment:

www.murrayphn.org.au/needsassessment

A Liveability Assessment for Gannawarra Shire:

www.gsc.vic.gov.au/councilplan

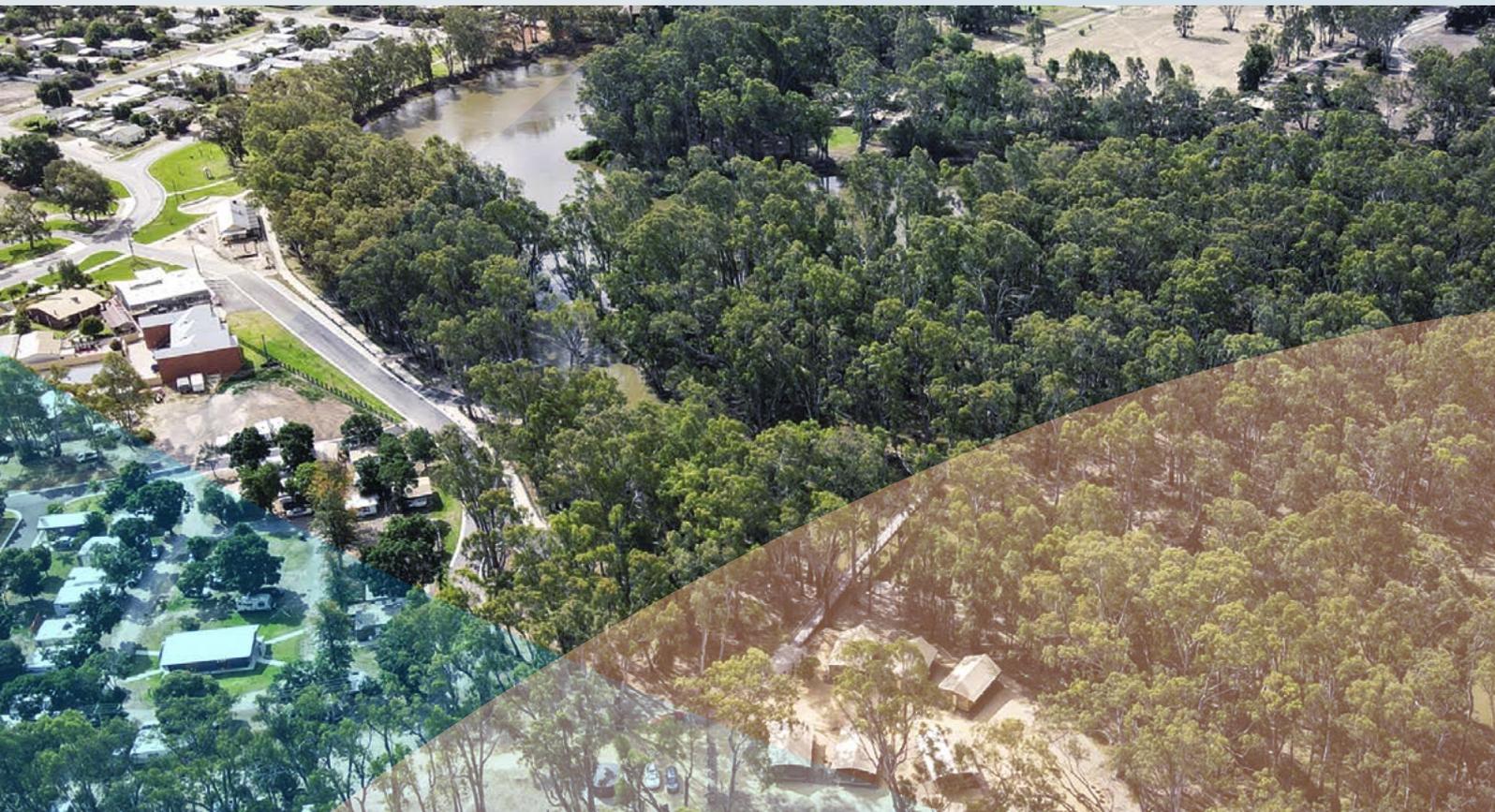
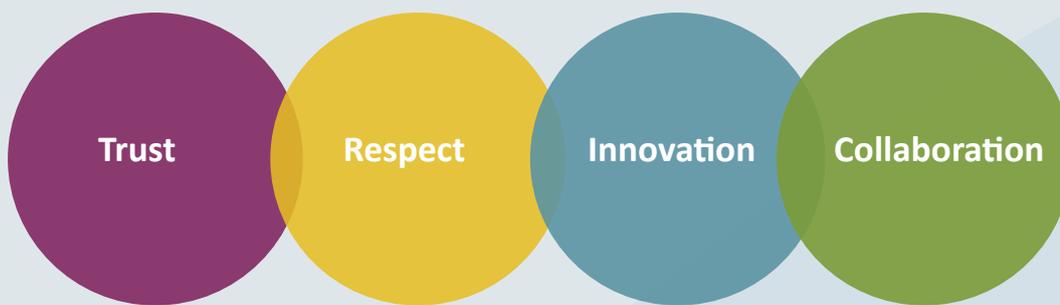


Strategy Statement

The Gannawarra will be renowned as an Australian destination and home of choice for its liveability and unique opportunities in innovative agriculture, renewable energy and nature-based tourism.

We focus on inclusive services and assets that enhance the health and wellbeing, cultural heritage, connectivity and productivity of our communities.

Values



Our Goals

1.
Liveability

2.
Growth

3.
Sustainability



Goal 1. Liveability

Enhance the wellbeing and liveability of the Gannawarra through creative infrastructure and services.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Improve the health, safety and wellbeing of our community through partnerships, services and programs.
2. Build unique transformational infrastructure that enhances liveability and passive and active recreation.
3. Construct a regional community wellbeing centre.
4. Respond to key community needs through innovative, commercially focused services including aged care and early childhood services.

SUCCESS MEASURES

Satisfaction with services
(Community Satisfaction Survey)

Meeting Service Quality Frameworks

Reduction in incidents of family violence

Improvement in perception of community safety

Improved Population Health

Goal 2. Growth

Grow the Gannawarra through a diverse and broad economy.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Facilitate infrastructure, programs and policies that support economic development and productivity, whilst considering our natural environment.
2. Facilitate the implementation of new energy infrastructure and energy projects.
3. Advocate for improvements in digital connectivity and services.
4. Support the creation of destinations in the Gannawarra to attract visitors to our region.
5. Continue to support existing agriculture and facilitate diversification to improve regional productivity through sustainable planning.
6. Support growth through land rezoning for future rural residential development opportunities.

SUCCESS MEASURES

Job creation
across the
region

Planning and
building
approvals

Income
generated in
region (GDP)

Increased
visitor
numbers

Population
growth

Goal 3. Sustainability

Achieve long-term financial and environmental sustainability.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Generate additional revenue through new energy infrastructure and commercially viable services.
2. Carefully monitor expenditure to ensure value for money and monitor our long term financial plan to maintain financial sustainability.
3. Be a creative employer of choice through our adherence to good governance and our inclusive culture.
4. Support community resilience through climate adaptation, clean energy, environmental sustainability and waste management programs.

SUCCESS MEASURES

Maintaining financial sustainability of Council

% revenue from alternative sources

Reduction of Council's carbon footprint

Diversification of waste from landfill

Improvement of Local Government Performance Reporting Framework indicators



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