



GANNAWARRA
Shire Council

Council Meeting

MINUTES

Wednesday, 21 May 2025

6:00 PM

Senior Citizens Centre

Kerang

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**MINUTES OF GANNAWARRA SHIRE COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE SENIOR CITIZENS CENTRE, KERANG
ON WEDNESDAY, 21 MAY 2025 AT 6:00 PM**

PRESENT: Cr Garner Smith (Mayor)
Cr Ross Stanton (Deputy Mayor)
Cr Daniel Bolitho
Cr Charlie Gillingham
Cr Lisa Farrant
Cr Keith Link
Cr Pat Quinn

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive Officer
Manager People and Culture
Governance Officer

Gallery: Nil

Media: Nil

1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Acknowledgement of Country video was played.

2 OPENING DECLARATION

Deputy Mayor, Cr Ross Stanton read the Opening Declaration.

3 APOLOGIES

Nil

4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Daniel Bolitho

Seconded: Cr Charlie Gillingham

That the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 16 April 2025 be confirmed.

CARRIED

5 DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Geoff Rollinson, Chief Executive Officer declared a Material Interest in Item 12.1 – CEO Performance Review.

6 BRIEFING SESSIONS

6.1 RECORDS OF COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS - 16 APRIL 2025 TO 20 MAY 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents to Council written records of Councillor Briefings in accordance with Clause 31 of the Gannawarra Shire Council Governance Rules.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Pat Quinn

Seconded: Cr Daniel Bolitho

That Council note the records of Councillor Briefings from 16 April 2025 to 20 May 2025.

CARRIED

7 BUSINESS REPORTS FOR DECISION

7.1 QUARTERLY BUDGET REPORT - QUARTER ENDING 31 MARCH 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council's projected income forecast shows a variance of \$0.802 million, while expenditure reflects a forecasted variance of \$2.960 million. The budgeted Operating Result of \$20.696 million surplus will decrease by \$9.803 million to an anticipated Operating Result of \$10.893 million surplus.

This decrease is generated by flood funding expenditure carried over to 2024/25 as well as capital income reduced on multiyear projects transferred to 2025/26 for completion. Surplus funds arising from these deferrals have been strategically invested, generating additional income to assist in reducing Council's underlying deficit.

Council's Capital Works program is progressing with an anticipated variation in scheduled works of \$9.353 million. The adopted capital budget for 2024/25 is \$29.158 million and it is expected to decrease to \$19.804 million by 30 June 2025. This decrease is due to multiyear projects carried over to facilitate completion of these major project in 2025/26.

As of 31 March 2025, Council is anticipating an underlying result deficit of \$1.769 million.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Daniel Bolitho

Seconded: Cr Pat Quinn

That Council receive and note the report outlining the 2024/2025 Quarterly Budget Report as at 31 March 2025.

CARRIED

7.2 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING - 7 MAY 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) met on 7 May 2025. The agenda included reports related to financial, governance, compliance, and risk management matters.

This report provides a summary of the meeting discussions and outcomes and tables the Biannual Report in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and the ARC Charter.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Ross Stanton

Seconded: Cr Charlie Gillingham

That Council:

- 1. Receive and note the summary of the discussions of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held 7 May 2025; and**
- 2. Receive and note the Audit and Risk Committee Biannual Report.**

CARRIED

7.3 GOVERNANCE RULES REVIEW

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with Section 60 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), Council is required to develop, adopt, and maintain Governance Rules, which also incorporate Council's Election Period Policy.

The Governance Rules establish a structured and transparent framework for the conduct of Council activities, including guiding the conduct of Council meetings, procedure for electing the Mayor, and Deputy Mayor, framework for the management of conflicts of interest, and ensures fair and merit-based decision making by Council.

The Governance Rules were last reviewed and endorsed by Council in September 2023. The Governance Rules have been comprehensively reviewed with several necessary amendments proposed to enhance the operation of Council meetings.

MOTION

Moved: Cr Daniel Bolitho

Seconded: Cr Charlie Gillingham

That Council:

1. **Rescind Gannawarra Shire Council's Governance Rules adopted on 20 September 2023; and**
2. **Adopt Gannawarra Shire Council's Governance Rules as presented and attached to this report.**

Cr Keith Link moved an amendment to the motion as follows:

'That Rule 91 – Notice of Motion deadlines to read 7 days.'

Admendment lapsed for want of seconder.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Daniel Bolitho

Seconded: Cr Charlie Gillingham

That Council:

1. **Rescind Gannawarra Shire Council's Governance Rules adopted on 20 September 2023; and**
2. **Adopt Gannawarra Shire Council's Governance Rules as presented and attached to this report.**

CARRIED

7.4 POLICY NO. 148 - FLAGS AND COMMUNITY FLAG SCHEDULE**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Gannawarra Shire Council Policy No. 148 – Flags and the Community Flag Schedule governs the flying of flags outside the Kerang Council Building and Gateway to Gannawarra Visitor Information Centre, Cohuna and establishes a mechanism to consider requests for the flying of other flags significant to the Gannawarra community outside Council buildings or on Council-managed flag poles.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Pat Quinn

Seconded: Cr Charlie Gillingham

That Council adopt the revised Policy No. 148 – Flags and the Community Flag Schedule

CARRIED

7.5 PETITION - ADDRESSING FLOOD MITIGATION AND RECOVERY IN KERANG WEST**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

A petition titled 'Addressing Flood Mitigation and Recovery in Kerang West' has been submitted to the Chief Executive Officer.

The petition meets the requirements of the Gannawarra Shire Council Governance Rules clause 104 and Schedule 3. As such the petition is presented to Council to be received with a recommendation to lay the petition on the table until the next Council meeting where a response to the request of the petition is recommended.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Ross Stanton

Seconded: Cr Keith Link

That Council:

- 1. Receive the petition 'Addressing Flood Mitigation and Recovery in Kerang West'; and**
- 2. Request a report from Council Officers at the June 2025 Council meeting responding to the petition request.**

CARRIED

8 URGENT BUSINESS

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Ross Stanton

Seconded: Cr Daniel Bolitho

That Council accept Urgent Business from Councillor Link relating to the *'Emergency Services Volunteers Fund'* into the Agenda.

CARRIED

8.1 EMERGENCY SERVICES VOLUNTEERS FUND

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Keith Link

Seconded: Cr Pat Quinn

The Gannawarra Shire Council opposes the imposition of the Emergency Services Volunteer Fund that will be levied on Gannawarra residents, businesses and farmers. The Gannawarra Shire Council requests a report to be presented at the June briefing and tabled at the June Council meeting regarding:

- 1. The estimated cost of the levy to Gannawarra residents.**
- 2. The estimated cost of collecting the levy assuming the reluctance of residents to pay it.**
- 3. Potential financial implications if residents choose not to pay it.**
- 4. Any options Council can exercise to not collect the levy or separate it from the general rate notice.**
- 5. Lobby the State Government to collect the levy via the State Revenue.**

CARRIED

9 NOTICES OF MOTION

9.1 NOTICE OF MOTION - 97 - VNI WEST POWERLINE PROJECT

Cr Garner Smith declared he would seek to vacate the Chair for the Notice of Motion.

Cr Garner Smith nominated Cr Ross Stanton to assume the Chair. Cr Ross Stanton declined.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

Cr Ross Stanton moved that Cr Keith Link assume the role as acting Chair.

Cr Garner Smith vacated the Chair at 6:33pm.

Cr Keith Link assumed the role as acting Chair at 6:33pm.

MOTION

Moved: Cr Garner Smith

Seconded: Cr Lisa Farrant

That this Council oppose the VNI West project, as it is currently proposed, as it does not achieve social licence due to the overall costs to our community being higher than the benefits. For the current VNI West project to achieve social licence, the following areas must be addressed to the satisfaction of this council:

- 1. Improved consultative process and compensation to landholders impacted by VNI West, both directly and neighbouring.**
- 2. Electricity produced from renewables along VNI West must be available to be retailed within shires hosting renewable projects at the feed in tariff, without transmission costs.**
- 3. Any housing projects must have long term benefits. Either through permanent housing being built, or, if temporary housing is built, residual trunk infrastructure and planning permissions for new housing developments will remain once the temporary housing is removed.**

AMENDMENT

Moved: Cr Daniel Bolitho

Seconded: Cr Ross Stanton

That this Council oppose the VNI West project, as it is currently proposed as the costs outweigh the benefits to our community.

CARRIED

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Daniel Bolitho

Seconded: Cr Ross Stanton

That this Council oppose the VNI West project, as it is currently proposed as the costs outweigh the benefits to our community.

CARRIED

PROCEDURAL MOTION

Cr Daniel Bolitho moved that Cr Garner Smith resume the Chair.

Cr Keith Link vacated the chair at 6:49pm.

Cr Garner Smith resumed the Chair at 6:49pm.

10 QUESTION TIME

Name	Bec Marshall
Address	Normanville
Question 1 <p>What is the Gannawarra Shires current position on the proposed underground transmission line which is planned to travel down local roads and connect the proposed Normanville Energy Park to the Koorangie Terminal Station?</p> <p>All local landowners have refused access to this transmission line as they oppose the project. Do you recognise this as a show of community opposition? Will you stand with neighbouring landowners who are clearly stating they are opposed by refusing power access? Allowing a developer to bypass all community feedback on the project and access public roads for transmission access could set a dangerous precedent for renewable energy in Gannawarra.</p>	
Answer <p>Gannawarra Shire Council acknowledges the question regarding the proposed underground transmission line associated with the Normanville Energy Park, which is planned to connect to the Koorangie Terminal Station. Large-scale renewable energy projects, including their associated infrastructure such as transmission lines, are determined by the Minister for Planning under Victorian legislation. The Council is not the responsible authority for planning approval of this project. The proponent has indicated its intent to install underground infrastructure within sections of Council-managed road reserves, including Denyer Road.</p> <p>Council is aware of this proposal and, consistent with any other development or infrastructure project within the municipality, is currently engaging with the proponent through established internal processes.</p> <p>Council's consideration of any request involving public land will be guided by the requirements of the Road Management Act 2004 and other relevant legislation. This includes assessment of road safety, asset protection, environmental impacts, and compliance with applicable standards. Council has not granted any final consent for infrastructure works within the road reserve at this time.</p> <p>The proposed route has been presented by the proponent following its advice that access via private land has not been secured. Council's role is to manage any proposals concerning its assets in a lawful, transparent, and procedurally fair manner. Any decisions regarding access or agreements over Council-managed land will be made following due process, with Council maintaining its responsibility to protect public infrastructure and ensure regulatory compliance.</p>	

Name	Bec Marshall
Address	Normanville
Question 2 <p>Has the Gannawarra Shire given any thought to producing some "housekeeping" rules for renewable energy developments in Gannawarra as some other shires have e.g. Yarriambiack?</p> <p>We currently have a number of developers proposing projects with vastly different strategies. Minimum turbine setback distances from neighbouring houses is a huge area of concern. The developer of the Meering West project has stated he will apply at 2km set back to all neighbouring houses. In contrast, turbines in the proposed Normanville Energy Park are as close as 1.3-1.5km from multiple neighbours houses. If built, these houses will become unliveable. Has the shire fully considered the ramifications of families being forced to leave their homes? If Gannawarra is going to welcome renewable energy projects into the shire, it should be essential that developers and projects are required to conduct themselves in a consistent manner.</p>	
Answer <p>Council acknowledges the question regarding the approach to turbine setback distances in renewable energy developments and the request for consistent development standards. At present, the regulation of wind energy facilities in Victoria is governed by the Victorian Planning Provisions, including Clause 52.32, which mandates that wind turbines must not be located within one kilometre of an existing dwelling unless the written consent of the owner is provided.</p> <p>The Minister for Planning is the responsible authority for such developments.</p> <p>Council notes that different renewable energy proponents have proposed varied turbine setback distances, with some voluntarily adopting distances beyond the minimum required. While these proposals remain within the jurisdiction of the Minister for Planning, Council recognises the importance of consistent and transparent practices across all projects. Council does not currently have a locally adopted policy that mandates greater setback distances than those required under State planning provisions. However, Council is reviewing its position on renewable energy development frameworks, including the potential for local guidance to support community understanding and expectations, and to inform Council's input as a referral authority where relevant.</p> <p>Council continues to support renewable energy development that aligns with State planning policy, while also ensuring that development proposals are implemented in a way that maintains public safety, protects amenity, and complies with planning requirements. Council will continue to consider options for advocacy or policy development to support consistent standards across projects, where permissible within the current legislative framework.</p>	

11 DELEGATES REPORTS

11.1 DELEGATES REPORTS

The Councillors provided updates on their portfolios and meetings they had attended.

COUNCILLOR COMMITTEES 2024/2025	
COMMITTEE	COUNCILLOR
Murray River Group of Councils (MRGC)	Cr Garner Smith, Mayor
Loddon Campaspe Group of Councils (LCGC)	Cr Garner Smith, Mayor
Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance (CVGA)	Cr Daniel Bolitho
Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee (MFMPC)	Cr Lisa Farrant
Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC)	Cr Lisa Farrant
Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)	Cr Ross Stanton
Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)(x 2)	Cr Garner Smith Cr Ross Stanton
Transport Committee including Rail Freight Alliance	Cr Pat Quinn
Rural Councils Victoria (RCV)	Cr Charlie Gillingham
Timber Towns Victoria (TTV)	Cr Pat Quinn
Community Halls Community Asset Committee	Cr Keith Link

Geoff Rollinson, Chief Executive Officer		
	1 April 2025	OHS Meeting
		Victorian Basin Communities Panel
		VNI West Meeting with Commissioner
	2 April 2025	Joint State/Local Government Monthly CEO Forum online
		Weekly Meeting with Mayor
	3 April 2025	Meeting with Swan Hill Rural City Council CEO, Mr Scott Barber in Swan Hill
		Murray River Group of Councils CEO Meeting online
		Meeting with Mr Brett Davis, Cross Border Commissioner
		Executive Leadership Team Meeting
	7 April 2025	April Council Briefing Session
	8 April 2025	Monthly CEO Meeting with KDH and NDCHS
	9 April 2025	Executive Leadership Team Meeting
	10 April 2025	Loddon Campaspe Councils CEO Meeting online
		Murray River Group of Councils CEO Meeting online
	11 April 2025	Meeting with Regional Development Victoria – Leanne Rosewall
	14 April 2025	Mallee Regional Partnership Meeting

	16 April 2025	Executive Leadership Team Meeting
		April Council Meeting in Kerang
	17 April 2025	Management Team Meeting
		Opening of Stage 2, 3, 4 of Kerang CBD Redevelopment
	18 April 2025	Rotary Club of Kerang Art Show - Gala Opening
	23 April 2025	Executive Leadership Team Meeting
	24 April 2025	Loddon Campaspe Councils CEO Meeting online
	25 April 2025	ANZAC Day Service
	28 April 2025	Gannawarra Levee Discussion
		Citizenship Ceremony in Kerang
	29 April 2025	Quambatook Weir Pool Discussion
	30 April 2025	Executive Leadership Team Meeting and Long-Term Financial Plan Discussion
		Alliance Meeting with Minister D'Ambrosio

Cr Garner Smith – Mayor

	1 April 2025	Victorian Basin Communities Panel in Echuca
	2 April 2025	Weekly Meeting with CEO
	3 April 2025	Leitchville Progress Association Meeting
	4 April 2025	3SH Interview
	5 April 2025	Leitchville Primary School Garden Opening with Peter Walsh MP
	6 April 2025	Cohuna Historical Society Opening
	7 April 2025	April Council Briefing Session
	9 April 2025	NGSC Transmission Meeting
	10 April 2025	VNI West Renewables Meeting
		Weekly Meeting with CEO
	16 April 2025	April Council Meeting in Kerang
	17 April 2025	Opening of Stages 2,3,4 Kerang CBD Redevelopment
		3SH Interview
	18 April 2025	Judging of GSC Art Acquisition Award and Rotary Club of Kerang Art Show - Gala Opening
	19 April 2025	Kerang Easter Races and Gannawarra Cup
	24 April 2025	VNI West Renewables Alliance Meeting
		Weekly Meeting with CEO
	25 April 2025	ANZAC Day March and Service in Cohuna and ANZAC Day Service and Speech at Leitchville
	28 April 2025	Citizenship Ceremony
	30 April 2025	Alliance Meeting with Minister D'Ambrosio

Cr Ross Stanton – Deputy Mayor

	7 April 2025	April Council Briefing Session
	9 April 2025	NGSC Transmission Forum online
	16 April 2025	April Council Meeting in Kerang
	17 April 2025	Opening of Stages 2,3,4 Kerang CBD Redevelopment
	25 April 2025	ANZAC Day Service in Murrabit

Cr Daniel Bolitho		
	1 April 2025	VNI West CRG Meeting
	7 April 2025	April Council Briefing Session
	9 April 2025	NGSC Transmission Forum
	10 April 2025	VNI West Renewables Alliance Meeting
	16 April 2025	April Council Meeting
	17 April 2025	CVGA Out of Session Board meeting
	24 April 2025	VNI West Renewables Alliance Meeting
	30 April 2025	Alliance Meeting with Minister D'Ambrosio

Cr Lisa Farrant		
	April	Guest Speaker at Koondrook Barham Lions Club
	7 April 2025	April Council Briefing Session
	16 April 2025	April Council Meeting in Kerang
	25 April 2025	ANZAC Day Service in Koondrook/Barham

Cr Charlie Gillingham		
	7 April 2025	April Council Briefing Session
	16 April 2025	April Council Meeting
	25 April 2025	ANZAC Day Service in Mystic Park

Cr Keith Link		
	3 April 2025	Leitchville Progress Association Meeting
	5 April 2025	Leitchville Primary School Garden Opening with Peter Walsh MP
	6 April 2025	Cohuna Historical Society Opening
	7 April 2025	April Council Briefing Session
	14 April 2025	Met with ratepayer to look at potholes in community walk
	16 April 2025	April Council Meeting
	17 April 2025	Opening of Stages 2,3,4 Kerang CBD Redevelopment Spoke to ratepayers regarding flooding, potholes and trees planted on street corners
	22 April 2025	Met with ratepayer at Sheepwash Creek in Kerang
	23 April 2025	Shire representation at Lions Club Dinner
	25 April 2025	Gunfire Service at Cohuna Cenotaph March and ANZAC Day Service in Cohuna War Memorial and ANZAC Day Service at Leitchville Spoke to ratepayers at length about Aquatic Strategy
	28 April 2025	Cohuna Progress Association Meeting

Cr Pat Quinn		
	16 April 2025	April Council Meeting
	25 April 2025	ANZAC Dawn Service in Cohuna ANZAC Day Service in Kerang

12 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Chief Executive Officer, Geoff Rollinson left the meeting at 7:09pm

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Ross Stanton

Seconded: Cr Daniel Bolitho

That Council considers the confidential report(s) listed below in a meeting closed to the public in accordance with Section 66(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020.

12.1 CEO Performance Review

This matter is considered to be confidential under Section 3(1)(f) and (h) of the Local Government Act, and the Council is satisfied that discussion of this matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest as it deals with personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs and confidential meeting information, being the records of meetings closed to the public under section 66(2)(a).

CARRIED

The Meeting closed at 7:10pm

The Minutes of this Meeting were confirmed at the Meeting of the Gannawarra Shire Council held on 18 June 2025.

Cr Garner Smith

MAYOR