



GANNAWARRA
Shire Council

Council Meeting

MINUTES

Wednesday, 19 March 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, 19 MARCH 2025 AT 6:00 PM**

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive Officer
Governance Officer

Gallery: 1

Media: 0

1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

2 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 19 February 2025 be confirmed.

CARRIED

5 DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Nil

6 BRIEFING SESSIONS

6.1 RECORDS OF COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS - 13 FEBRUARY 2025 TO 19 MARCH 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 Charlie Gillingham

Seconded: Cr Daniel Bolitho

That Council note the records of Councillor Briefings from 13 February 2025 to 19 March 2025.

CARRIED

7 BUSINESS REPORTS FOR DECISION

7.1 REVISED 2024/2025 FEES AND CHARGES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each year Council reviews the level of fees and charges that are applied across Gannawarra Shire Council for the provision of services, with a view to achieving a balance between affordability, encouraging greater usage, cost recovery and raising sufficient revenue to support the delivery of services.

The Schedule of Fees and Charges is to be included in Council's Annual Budget document.

Since the adoption of the 2024/2025 Fees and Charges in June 2024 and the implementation of Pre-Prep as part of the State Government's Best Start Best Life reforms, Council Officers have identified an opportunity to implement a new fee that would enable children in the Leitchville area an additional day of three-year-old kindergarten.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Pat Quinn

Seconded: Cr Daniel Bolitho

That Council endorse the change to the 2024/2025 Fees and Charges relating to the Leitchville Kindergarten, to commence from 1 April 2025.

CARRIED

7.2 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING - 5 FEBRUARY, 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) met on 5 February 2025. The agenda included reports related to financial, governance, compliance, and risk management matters.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Ross Stanton

Seconded: Cr Charlie Gillingham

That Council receive and note the summary of the discussions of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held 5 February 2025.

CARRIED

7.3 POLICY NO. 071 - REGULATION 87, ERECTION OF CLASS 10A BUILDINGS ON VACANT ALLOTMENTS**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Council officers have undertaken a review of Policy No. 071 - Erection of Class 10a Buildings on Vacant Allotments. Following this review, amendments have been made to enhance clarity on conditions for Class 10a buildings (domestic sheds), statutory declaration requirements, and procedural elements. This report seeks Council's endorsement of the revised policy.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Charlie Gillingham

Seconded: Cr Lisa Farrant

That Council endorse the revised Policy No. 071 - Erection of Class 10a Buildings on Vacant Allotments.

CARRIED

7.4 FINANCE POLICIES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council officers undertake regular reviews of Council policies to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and that they are reflective of current practices. This report addresses the following policies which have recently been reviewed:

- **Policy No. 025 – Outstanding Debt**

Outstanding Debt applies to ratepayers and other clients who have an outstanding debt with Council and sets out the steps that Council will take to recover these debts.

- **Policy No. 034 – Rate Relief**

Rate Relief is the policy that has traditionally provided for assistance to ratepayers experiencing general and financial hardship, specifically around rates and charges raised by Council.

- **Policy No. 140 – COVID-19 Hardship**

The COVID-19 Hardship policy was implemented in response to the global pandemic in 2020 and the potential impact to local businesses. Following several reviews and extensions of this policy it is officers recommendation that this policy is no longer relevant and should be rescinded.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Lisa Farrant

Seconded: Cr Charlie Gillingham

That Council:

1. **adopt Policy No. 025 – Outstanding Debt;**
2. **adopt Policy No. 034 – Rate Relief; and**
3. **rescind Policy 140 – COVID-19 Hardship.**

CARRIED

7.5 POLICY NO. 033 - OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This policy outlines Council's commitment to providing a safe and healthy work environment for employees, volunteers, contractors, and visitors. It establishes clear responsibilities for all parties, ensures compliance with the *Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*, and promotes proactive risk management.

The policy covers key areas such as incident reporting, hazard control, consultation, training, and continuous improvement of workplace safety practices. Reviews ensure alignment with legislative requirements and industry standards, reinforcing Council's commitment to reducing workplace risks and fostering a strong safety culture.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Ross Stanton

Seconded: Cr Daniel Bolitho

That Council adopt Policy No 033 – Occupational Health and Safety.

CARRIED

8 URGENT BUSINESS

Nil

9 NOTICES OF MOTION

9.1 NOTICE OF MOTION - 96 - 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 Smith declined.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

Cr Daniel Bolitho moved that Cr Keith Link assume the role as acting Chair.

Cr Garner Smith vacated the chair at 6.20pm

Cr Keith Link assumed the role as acting Chair at 6.20pm

MOTION

Moved: Cr Daniel Bolitho

Seconded: Cr Garner Smith

I, Councillor Daniel Bolitho, give notice that at the next Ordinary Meeting of Council be held on 19 March 2025, I intend to move the following motion:-

1. That the Gannawarra Shire Council write to the Minister for Energy expressing deep concern regarding the VNI West powerline project, particularly in relation to landholder consultation, consideration, compensation, and community benefit.
2. That the Gannawarra Shire Council requests immediate and thorough action from the proponents of the of the VNI West transmission line project to address the following issues:
 - Re-open the route planning process and consultation, with a focus on the financial, mental, and physical health impacts on landholders. This process must apply stronger scrutiny and weighting against the impact on hosting and surrounding landholders.
 - Compensation for landholders is substantially increased, including the implementation of a benefit structure for easement landholders and near neighbours. These benefits must be provided proportionate to the lifespan of the transmission line.
 - Economic benefits are provided to all residents of the Gannawarra Shire, including an assessment of (but not limited to) an exemption to transmission charges associated with the transmission and distribution networks and access to energy at an equivalent value to wholesale energy feed-in tariffs.

AMENDMENT TO THE MOTION

1. That the Gannawarra Shire Council write to the Minister for Energy expressing deep concern regarding the VNI West powerline project, particularly in relation to landholder consultation, consideration, compensation, and community benefit.
2. That the Gannawarra Shire Council requests immediate and thorough action from the proponents of the of the VNI West transmission line project to address the following issues:

- Re-open the route planning process and consultation, with a focus on the financial, mental, and physical health impacts on landholders. This process must apply stronger scrutiny and weighting against the impact on hosting and surrounding landholders.
- Compensation for landholders is substantially increased, including the implementation of a benefit structure for easement landholders and near neighbours. These benefits must be provided proportionate to the lifespan of the transmission line.
- Economic benefits are provided to all residents of the Gannawarra Shire. including an assessment of (but not limited to) an exemption to transmission charges associated with the transmission and distribution networks and access to energy at an equivalent value to wholesale energy feed-in tariffs.

To Facilitate this, Council requests that TCV and VIC Grid be invited to meet with councils before the end of April, to discuss VNI west progress and Landowner and Community Consultation and Compensation.

Council calls for a report to be provided, at the May Council Briefing, with regards to the Economic benefits available through current legislation, both Victorian and NSW, and which organisation council should meet with to maximise these benefits for our communities.

LOST

Cr Garner Smith called for a division.

DIVISION

In Favour: Cr Charlie Gillingham, Cr Pat Quinn, and Cr Ross Stanton

Against: Cr Daniel Bolitho, Cr Lisa Farrant, Cr Keith Link, and Cr Garner Smith

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Daniel Bolitho

Seconded: Cr Garner Smith

I, Councillor Daniel Bolitho, give notice that at the next Ordinary Meeting of Council be held on 19 March 2025, I intend to move the following motion:-

1. That the Gannawarra Shire Council write to the Minister for Energy expressing deep concern regarding the VNI West powerline project, particularly in relation to landholder consultation, consideration, compensation, and community benefit.
2. That the Gannawarra Shire Council requests immediate and thorough action from the proponents of the of the VNI West transmission line project to address the following issues:
 - Re-open the route planning process and consultation, with a focus on the financial, mental, and physical health impacts on landholders. This process must apply stronger scrutiny and weighting against the impact on hosting and surrounding landholders.
 - Compensation for landholders is substantially increased, including the implementation of a benefit structure for easement landholders and near neighbours. These benefits

must be provided proportionate to the lifespan of the transmission line.

- Economic benefits are provided to all residents of the Gannawarra Shire, including an assessment of (but not limited to) an exemption to transmission charges associated with the transmission and distribution networks and access to energy at an equivalent value to wholesale energy feed-in tariffs.

CARRIED

PROCEDURAL MOTION

Cr Ross Stanton moved that Cr Garner Smith resume the Chair.

Cr Keith Link vacated the chair at 6.51pm.

Cr Garner Smith resumed the Chair at 6.51pm

10 QUESTION TIME

Name	Lynee
Address	Koondrook
Question 1	
If I purchase a large block of land and want to subdivide for housing blocks, do I have to asphalt the roads?	
ANSWER:	
If subdividing land into residential blocks, the requirement to asphalt roads can depend on conditions outlined in the planning permit, local planning policies, and guidelines set out in the Infrastructure Design Manual. To determine specific obligations relevant to your subdivision, it's recommended you consult with a planning consultant who can provide guidance tailored to your individual circumstances.	

Name	Nathan
Address	Kerang
Question 1	
What specific strategies does the Council have in place to address the anticipated increase in population and demand for housing due to the industrial developments, including the rare earth mineral mine, egg farm and the VNI transmission line projects. Is the Council considering any changes to zoning regulations, particularly regarding the rezoning of farmland within the levy banks system, to facilitate the development of new residential areas?	
ANSWER:	
Councils are required to undertake a Planning Scheme amendment to change a zone from its current land use and development. The Planning Minister is responsible for approving such amendments the Gannawarra Shire Council must operate within this framework. Representatives from council have been advocating to the Minister to make this process simpler and with shorter timeframes. To assist with re-zoning council has developed an Urban Growth Strategy to identify areas of residential growth across the shire. The next step in the process is to develop structure plans for each of the identified areas in the shire, this will allow future zoning changes to occur and ensure there is adequate land for housing and employment.	

Name	Nathan
Address	Kerang
Question 2	
What is the Council's long-term vision for residential growth in Kerang, and how does it align with the anticipated industrial growth in the area. How will the Council monitor the impact of industrial developments on the housing market, and what measures will be taken if the situation worsens?	
ANSWER:	
A lack of residential availability is an issue not only across the Gannawarra Shire but across the entire country, housing development is failing to meet population growth across the country. This is why the state and federal government have set housing targets for each municipality in Australia, the target set for Gannawarra is 850 new homes by 2051. These targets will be supported by federal and state government funding to support the development of projects. At a local level the Gannawarra Shire has developed the Urban Growth Strategy, is developing town structure plans and is working closely with developers to identify potential projects.	

11 DELEGATES REPORTS

11.1 DELEGATES REPORTS

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

Councillors reported on the activities within their portfolios.

12 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Nil

The Meeting closed at 7.11pm.

The Minutes of this Meeting were confirmed at the Meeting of the Gannawarra Shire Council held on 16 April 2025.

Mayor Garner Smith
CHAIR