

COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday 18 February 2026

6:00 PM

Glasshouse, Kerang

MUNICIPAL

CHAMBER



GANNAWARRA
Shire Council

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1 WELCOME TO COUNTRY

Playing of the Welcome to Country video clip.

2 OPENING DECLARATION

We, the Councillors of the Shire of Gannawarra, declare that we will undertake the duties of the office of Councillor, in the best interests of our community, and faithfully, and impartially, carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in us, to the best of our skill and judgement.

3 APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Apologies received from Mayor, Garner Smith and Chief Executive Officer, Geoff Rollinson.

4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

That the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 17 December 2025 be confirmed.

5 DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

General conflict of interest

Unless exempt under Section 129 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) or regulation 7 of the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020, a Councillor or member of Council staff has a general conflict of interest in a matter if an impartial, fair-minded person would consider that the person's private interests (as defined in Section 127(2) of the Act) could result in that person acting in a manner that is contrary to their public duty.

Material conflict of interest

Unless exempt under Section 129 of the Local Government Act 2020 or regulation 7 of the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020, a Councillor or member of Council staff has a material conflict of interest in respect of a matter if an affected person (as defined in Section 128(3) of the Act) would gain a benefit or suffer a loss depending on the outcome of the matter.

Disclosure of a conflict of interest

A Councillor who has a conflict of interest and is attending a meeting of the Council must make a full disclosure of that interest by either advising:

- a) the Council at the meeting immediately before the matter is considered at the meeting; or
- b) the Chief Executive Officer in writing before the meeting –

whether the interest is a general conflict of interest or a material conflict of interest; and the nature of the interest.

Note: If a Councillor advises the Chief Executive Officer of the details under b) above, the Councillor must make a disclosure of the class of interest only to the meeting immediately before the matter is considered at the meeting.

In accordance with Section 130 of the Act, a councillor who has a disclosed a conflict of interest in respect of a matter must exclude themselves from the decision making process in relation to the matter, including any discussion or vote on the matter at any Council meeting, and any action in relation to the matter.

Failure to comply with Section 130 of the Act may result in a penalty of 120 penalty units.

6 BRIEFING SESSIONS

6.1 RECORD OF COUNCILLOR BRIEFING - 03/12/2025 TO 03/02/2026

Author: Jodie Basile, Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer
Authoriser: Geoff Rollinson (Chief Executive Officer)

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the Records of Councillor Briefings from 3 December 2025 to 3 February 2026.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in regard to this matter.

COUNCIL PLAN

Goal 3. Sustainability - achieve long-term financial and environmental sustainability
4. Ensure transparent, inclusive decision-making through effective leadership.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In accordance with Clause 32 of the Gannawarra Shire Council Governance Rules, a written record of a meeting held under the auspices of Council is, as soon as practicable, reported at a meeting of the Council and incorporated in the minutes of that Council meeting.

The record must include:

- The names of all Councillors and members of Council staff attending.
- The matters considered.
- Any conflict-of-interest disclosures made by a Councillor attending.
- Whether a Councillor who has disclosed a conflict of interest left the meeting.

CONSULTATION

Consultation with Councillors and staff has occurred to ensure the accuracy of the Councillor Briefing records.

CONCLUSION

To ensure compliance with Clause 32 of the Gannawarra Shire Council Governance Rules, it is recommended that Council note the Councillor Briefing records as attached to this report.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Councillor Briefing Record - January 2026 [6.1.1 - 1 page]
2. Councillor Briefing Record - February 2026 [6.1.2 - 2 pages]

RECORD OF A COUNCILLOR BRIEFING



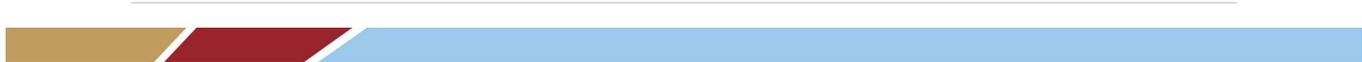
Type of Meeting	Councillor Briefing Session	
Date:	Monday 19 January, 2026	
Time:	12.30 pm – 6.00 pm	
Location:	The Glasshouse, Kerang	
In Attendance: (Councillors)	Cr Garner Smith, Mayor Cr Ross Stanton, Deputy Mayor Cr Daniel Bolitho Cr Charlie Gillingham Cr Lisa Farrant Cr Pat Quinn	
Apologies:	Cr Keith Link, Wade Williams, Jodie Basile	
In Attendance: (Officers)	Geoff Rollinson, Phil Higgins, Paul Fernee, Fiona Gormann, Jan Palmer, Deanne Caserta, Leigh Hollingworth, Stevie Pearce.	
In Attendance:	Brad Drust, North Central Catchment Management Authority Tim Shanahan, North Central Catchment Management Authority	
Matters Discussed:	Budget Updates Rating Modelling Koondrook Caravan Park Councillor Induction Training – Governance Presentation on Victorian Murray Flood Plan Restoration Project Waste Services Update Status Report Councillor Induction Training - Statutory and Strategic Planning Fees Cohuna Recreation Reserve Governance Options Future Listing Report Councillors/CEO/Directors Discussion CEO & Councillors Discussion Councillor Only Session	
Conflict of Interest Disclosures		
Matter No.	Councillor/Officer making disclosure	Councillor left meeting for the discussion
Nil	Nil	Nil
Completed By:	Geoff Rollinson – Chief Executive Officer 	

RECORD OF A COUNCILLOR BRIEFING



Type of Meeting	Councillor Briefing Session
Date:	Monday 2 February, 2026
Time:	8.30 am – 5.30 pm
Location:	The Glasshouse, Kerang
In Attendance: (Councillors)	Cr Garner Smith, Mayor Cr Ross Stanton, Deputy Mayor Cr Daniel Bolitho Cr Lisa Farrant Cr Charlie Gillingham Cr Keith Link Cr Pat Quinn
Apologies:	Nil
In Attendance: (Officers)	Geoff Rollinson, Jodie Basile, Phil Higgins, Wade Williams, Paul Fernee, Fiona Gormann, Stevie Pearce, Paul Laughton (via TEAMS), Leigh Hollingworth, Dmitry Belekov (via TEAMS), Narelle O'Donoghue, Jodie Hartley, Scott Bourne, Scott Wishart,
In Attendance:	Lachlan Smith, Alastair Mitton, Michael Jones, Mark Hudson - Westwind Energy Penny Wilkinson, CEO - Northern District Community Health Service
Matters Discussed:	Referrals for Land Surrender in Macorna Council Policy Review – No 74 and No 83 Delegations Update – S6 Instrument of Delegation to CEO and S6 Instrument of Delegation to members and Staff Quarterly Budget Report – Quarter ending 31 December 2025 Community Asset Committee Planning Scheme Amendment – C48gann Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy – Addendum Planning & Regulatory Services Department Update G12-2025 DRFA Flood Betterment Works Draft Gannawarra Resource Recovery and Waste Management Strategy Glass Recycling and Kerbside Reform 10 Year CAPEX Programs/Projects Update Council Policy No 129 and No 137 Policy Review – Welcome to Country Video Clip and Protocol Normanville Energy Park Northern District Community Health Service Update Northwestern Victoria Energy & Mining Impact Readiness Study Response to actions – Koondrook Local Development Strategy 2025-2029 Council Plan Year 1 Action 1 Progress Report Community Grants Program Community Benefit Sharing Model - Draft

	Future Listing Report Councillors/CEO/Directors Discussion CEO & Councillors Discussion Councillor Only Session	
Conflict of Interest Disclosures		
Matter No.	Councillor/Officer making disclosure	The Councillor/Officer left the meeting for the discussion
2.8 – G12-2025 DRFA Flood Betterment Works	Geoff Rollinson	Yes
Completed By:	Geoff Rollinson – Chief Executive Officer 	



7 BUSINESS REPORTS FOR DECISION

7.1 POLICY REVIEW - WELCOME TO COUNTRY VIDEO CLIP AND PROTOCOL

Author: Narelle O'Donoghue, Manager Community Health
Authoriser: Paul Fernee (Director Community Wellbeing)

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the revised Welcome to Country Video Clip Protocol.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A revised Gannawarra Welcome to Country Video Clip has been created by Council in partnership with the Kerang Elders and Leaders Group, Northern District Community Health and Mallee District Aboriginal Services.

Filming of the revised video clip took place at Lake Meran in September 2025, and the revised video has since been approved by all partners.

As a Welcome to Country is an official Aboriginal custom, a Welcome to Country Video Clip Protocol sits alongside the clip to authorise its wider use where an Elder is not available to conduct a Welcome to Country, or where it is impractical to have an Elder from that Country attend to conduct a Welcome, such as at the monthly Council Meeting.

The Welcome to Country Video Clip Protocol has been reviewed by partners.

The reviewed Protocol will be adopted by Northern District Community Health and Mallee District Aboriginal Services to ensure that the use of the Gannawarra Welcome to Country Video Clip recognises and pays respect to the Welcome to Country custom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as well as acknowledging their ongoing connection to Country.

The Welcome to Country Video Clip and Protocol form part of Council's commitment outlined in the Gannawarra Reconciliation Action Plan 2024-2026.

An official launch of the revised Gannawarra Welcome to Country Video Clip will be held at the Glasshouse, Sir John Gorton Library, Kerang on Thursday, 20 March 2026 commencing at 4:00pm. This event will provide the local Aboriginal community with the opportunity to come together with the wider community to view the clip and to celebrate and recognise the children, young people and Elders that feature in the video.

Following the adoption of the Welcome to Country Video Clip Protocol and the official launch on 20 March, the revised video would then be released for use as intended.

PURPOSE

To present to Council a reviewed Gannawarra Welcome to Country Video Clip Protocol for adoption.

DISCUSSION

Council has a long history of working with the local Aboriginal community through the Kerang Elders and Leaders Group and partner agencies Northern District Community Health and Mallee District Aboriginal Services. The inaugural version of the Gannawarra Welcome to Country Video Clip was launched at a community event in December 2019.

The Kerang Elders and Leaders Group requested that a revised clip be developed in 2025. Local Elders selected Lake Meran as the location for the filming.

Council officers worked with partners to coordinate a family day at Lake Meran in September 2025 where a videographer filmed the revised clip. Each aspect of the revised video clip has been developed in partnership, and this has resulted in a sense of pride and ownership of the project by local Aboriginal Elders and the wider Aboriginal community. Partner agencies are also proud of the high-quality finished product.

An unplanned complementary activity was that the videographer brought along a professional photographer and 25 high quality photographs have been printed. With permission of participants, these photographs will form an exhibition to be held at the same time as an official launch of the revised Welcome to Country Video Clip. The launch and exhibition are scheduled to be held on Thursday, 20 March 2026 at the Glasshouse, Sir John Gorton Library, Kerang between 4:00pm and 5:30pm.

The Welcome to Country Video Clip Protocol was adopted as an official Council Policy in March 2020. In line with the review of Council policies within two years of a Council election and with the review of the Gannawarra Welcome to Country Video Clip, it is timely for Council to review the Protocol. The Protocol enables the wider use of the Gannawarra Welcome to Country Video Clip while maintaining the custom of respect and acknowledgement of the meaning of a Welcome to Country for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

The draft Welcome to Country Video Clip Protocol has been reviewed by all partners.

Four minor changes have been included in the revised Welcome to Country Video Clip Protocol as a result of feedback from partners: a name change from Kerang Elders Group to Kerang Elders and Leaders Group, making it clear that a Welcome to Country can only be conducted by an Elder from that Country, changing people to peoples in response to the Reconciliation Australia 'Demonstrating Inclusive and Respectful Language' guide, and changing Mallee District Aboriginal Service to Mallee District Aboriginal Services.

It should be noted that the Gannawarra Welcome to Country Video Clip does not take the place of an Aboriginal Elder conducting a Welcome to Country at official functions or events held by Council. It can however be used where an Elder from that Country is not available to perform a Welcome to Country at such official events or functions. The Protocol also enables Council to use the video clip where it would be impractical for an Elder to conduct a Welcome to Country, for example at monthly Council Meetings.

RELEVANT LAW

The *Local Government Act 2020* recognises Traditional Owners as part of the 'municipal community' and creates statutory obligations on local government to engage Traditional Owners in strategic planning and decision making.

Other relevant Victorian legislation is the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010*, *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, *Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*, the *Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018*, and the *Statewide Treaty Act 2025*.

There are also many Commonwealth laws in place relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This includes the *Constitution Alteration (Aboriginals) 1967*, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984*, *Native Title Act 1993*, *Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Act 2000*, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005*, and many more.

Australia is also a signatory to the United Nations Declaration on the *Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2007*. This Declaration covers all areas of human rights as they relate to Indigenous peoples under 4 key principles of self-determination, participation in decision-making, respect for and protection of culture, equality and non-discrimination.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council meeting March 2020 – adoption of Welcome to Country Video Clip Protocol.

Council meeting 18 September 2024 – adoption of Gannawarra Reconciliation Action Plan 2024-2026 (formal endorsement by Reconciliation Australia on 14 January 2025).

OPTIONS

1. Council may approve the Welcome to Country Video Clip Protocol as presented.
2. Council may reject the Welcome to Country Video Clip Protocol as presented and choose not to use the revised Gannawarra Welcome to Country Video Clip.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Adopting the revised Welcome to Country Video Clip Protocol forms part of the ongoing partnership work with the local Aboriginal community to overcome inequalities that currently exist and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who call the area now known as Gannawarra home to stand proud in their culture and community, by:

- Acknowledging, respecting and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, language and connection to Country.
- Involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in decisions that impact on their lives.
- Identifying the current gap that exists between indigenous and non-indigenous residents across the key social determinants of health and wellbeing.
- Working in partnership to close the identified gaps in support of current and future generations.

The Gannawarra Reconciliation Action Plan provides the strategic direction for achieving sustainable and long-term outcomes by working closely with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who call the area now known as Gannawarra home on a range of issues that impact on their lives.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Gannawarra Welcome to Country Video Clip Protocol was originally developed in partnership with the Kerang Elders and Leaders Group in 2019-2020. The proposed revisions to the Welcome to Country Video Clip Protocol have been to the Kerang Elders and Leaders Group, the local Yarn up and feedback sought from partner organisations.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The revised Gannawarra Welcome to Country Video Clip has been reviewed to modernise the clip and ensure that it represents the current Aboriginal community, particularly children, young people and Elders. The clip has been improved through the incorporation of Barapa language and promotion of landscapes and cultural practices that provide a learning opportunity for all.

COLLABORATION

Council has a long history of working with the local Aboriginal community; a relationship based on mutual respect and trust. The Kerang Elders and Leaders Group was created in 2013 and has developed over its 13-year history. A formal Partnership Agreement guides the work and was re-

signed on 1 October 2025. The Partnership Agreement includes partners re-committing to a Welcome to Country being conducted at the commencement of special events.

The primary focus of the partnership over the past 5 years has been to support Aboriginal children and young people through locally co-designed and self-determined children and youth programs - Tyipen Kwe (children), Tyipen Kwe (youth) and Kethawil Pemenguuk. These Northern District Community Health facilitated programs ensure that Aboriginal children and young people are provided with the opportunity to be culturally strong by learning about Country, language, stories, women's and men's business, and that they have the opportunity to develop a sense of belonging, cultural identity and connection. The intergenerational approach between Elders, community leaders, young people, children and their families is prominent in the revised Gannawarra Welcome to Country Video Clip. Collaboration between community members and partner agencies has supported the development of a high quality and professional video clip that we can all be proud of.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The revised Gannawarra Welcome to Country Video Clip was funded by Emergency Recovery Victoria as part of the Aboriginal Self-Determination pillar of the 2022 Flood Recovery Program funded jointly by the Victorian and Commonwealth Government funding under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, which came into effect in July 2021, local government has a responsibility to actively support Closing the Gap implementation.

The Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy – Pathways to Stronger Partnerships 2021-2026 identifies the role local government plays in self-determination for Aboriginal Victorians and the need for partnerships based on sharing, listening, care, trust, truth telling and understanding. The strategy provides a framework for shared decision-making processes and actions for Aboriginal Victorians working together with local government.

In addition, Victoria's Statewide Treaty commenced on 12 December 2025 and aims to deliver better outcomes for Victoria's First Peoples and their families.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Goal 1: Liveability - Enhance the wellbeing and liveability of the Gannawarra through infrastructure development and services.

1. Celebrate our diverse identity and maximise community health, wellbeing and safety.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in this matter.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Welcome to Country Video Clip Protocol Revised [7.1.1 - 1 page]



Welcome to Country Video Clip

PROTOCOL

A Welcome to Country is a protocol where Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners welcome others to the land of their ancestors.

The Welcome to Country ceremony is carried out at significant events, formal functions and meetings. This practice shows respect for the Traditional Owners and Elders of the Country on which the event, formal function or meeting is taking place.

Engaging an Elder to conduct a Welcome to Country is a way of recognising and paying respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as well as acknowledging their ongoing connection to Country.

An Elder from that Country will be engaged to perform a formal Welcome to Country whenever possible at events and formal functions held throughout the Gannawarra Shire.

Each Elder's Welcome to Country is unique as it reflects the experiences and beliefs of the attending Elder. A Welcome to Country should occur at the opening of an event or formal function, preferably the first item.

Where an Elder is not available to conduct a Welcome to Country to open an event or formal function, the Gannawarra Welcome to Country Video Clip will be used.

The video clip will also be used in the following ways:

- At monthly Gannawarra Shire Council, Council meetings and other significant meetings.
- By partner organisations at formal events, functions and meetings where a local Elder is unable to attend. The partner organisations are Mallee District Aboriginal Services, Northern District Community Health and the Kerang Elders and Leaders Group.
- On the Gannawarra Shire Council's website and the websites of partners involved in the development of the video clip, namely Mallee District Aboriginal Services, Northern District Community Health and the Kerang Elders and Leaders Group.
- At educational sessions within Gannawarra schools and communities.
- At Cultural Awareness Training sessions.
- To open Kerang Elders and Leaders Group meetings.
- For other purposes that the Kerang Elders and Leaders authorise.

PROTOCOL REVIEW

Council will review this Protocol as required but always within two years after a general election of the Council.

The wording of this Protocol was developed with permission of the Kerang Elders and Leaders Group and the same wording will be adopted by Mallee District Aboriginal Services and Northern District Community Health.

At the time of development, this Protocol was compliant with the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Members of the public may inspect all Council policies at Gannawarra Shire Council's Kerang and Cohuna office or online at www.gannawarra.vic.gov.au.

Any enquiries in relation to this Protocol should be directed to the Director Community Wellbeing on (03) 5450 9333.

7.2 GLASS RECYCLING AND KERBSIDE REFORM

Author: Leigh Hollingworth, Manager Projects & Design

Authoriser: Wade Williams (Director Infrastructure & Development)

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Does not commit at this time to the implementation of a mandatory, standalone kerbside glass recycling service by 1 July 2027, as the Service Standards required under the Victorian Government's Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021 have not yet been set or released.
2. Investigates and supports alternative and complementary approaches to glass diversion across the Shire, including but not limited to expanded drop-off facilities, recovery partnerships, and other non-kerbside options, where they provide effective, accessible, and cost-efficient outcomes.
3. Joins the Glass Advocacy Group, an alliance of over 30 councils advocating for practical and cost-effective alternatives to the mandatory glass-only kerbside bin rollout.
4. Advocate for the inclusion of additional glass types (e.g. wine and spirit bottles) in the Container Deposit Scheme (CDS).
5. Writes to the Minister for Environment, Minister for Local Government, Member for Murray Plains, the members for Northern Victoria Region of the Legislative Council and DEECA outlining Council's position.
6. NOTES the significant number of local governments challenging the State Government's mandated kerbside glass delivery date and its Glass Regulatory Impact Statement.
7. NOTES the risks to Council of prematurely implementing a new, additional kerbside waste and recycling service in the absence of certainty around service delivery requirements that are to be confirmed in the as yet unreleased service standards.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report discusses the proposal to introduce a kerbside glass collection service for Gannawarra Shire in line with upcoming state recycling reforms. The Shire covers 3,735–3,736 km² and has a dispersed population, meaning that adding a separate glass collection service would require trucks to travel long distances for relatively small volumes.

Recent waste audits (2025) indicate that 6% of garbage bins and 24% of mixed recycling bins currently contain glass. The mixed recycling from the Shire is processed at the Echuca Material Recovery Facility (MRF), which also receives recycling from New South Wales, where glass-only collection is not mandated.

Financial modelling shows that a separate kerbside glass service would increase costs for Council and ratepayers, while operational and regulatory uncertainties add further risk. Enhancing glass drop-off facilities, expanding participation in the Container Deposit Scheme (CDS), and implementing community education are more practical, cost-effective, and sustainable approaches to managing glass recycling in Gannawarra Shire.

PURPOSE

To provide Council with information relating to the Victorian Government's mandated kerbside glass collection service and to establish a formal position of Council in relation to the Victorian Government's requirement for councils to introduce a mandatory standalone kerbside glass recycling service (4th household waste and recycling bin) by 1 July 2027.

The report consolidates insights from statewide research, financial modelling, legal advice summaries, and experiences of early-adopter councils.

DISCUSSION**Circular Economy and State Policy**

Victoria is undergoing a major transformation in waste management driven by the *Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021* (VIC) and the state's 10-year policy and action plan, *Recycling Victoria: A New Economy*.

The plan aims to:

- Divert 80% of waste from landfill by 2030 (interim target: 72% by 2025)
- Halve the volume of organic material sent to landfill by 2030
- Standardise household recycling with a four-bin system
- Roll out the Container Deposit Scheme (CDS Vic) statewide from July 2024
- Increase landfill levies to incentivise recycling and resource recovery

The Victorian Government's strategy is underpinned by new regulations, the yet to be released Household Waste & Recycling Service Standard ("the Standard"), and significant investment in infrastructure and education.

A critical risk to Council's planning and delivery is the ongoing delay in the release of the Standard. These standards are intended to provide the detailed requirements for how Councils must deliver expanded kerbside services, including FOGO and glass, and to clarify the criteria for exemptions where delivery is not "reasonably practicable".

The standards were initially due in December 2024, then delayed to April 2025, then June 2025. As of November 2025, they have still not been released, and no definitive timeframe has been provided.

The Act allows for exemptions, but the criteria for these exemptions remain undefined.

Local Context

Gannawarra Shire's large geographic area and dispersed settlement pattern significantly increase the distance collection vehicles must travel. Introducing a separate glass service would require additional trucks servicing all households regardless of bin presentation, resulting in high costs and emissions for comparatively low glass volumes.

Waste audit data confirms that glass volumes in kerbside bins are already relatively low and continue to decline as CDS access expands. The average glass bin presentation rate across councils is approximately 40%, with some councils reporting much lower rates. One rural council reported an 18% presentation rate in 2025, while a city counterpart observed presentation rates of 15–20%, with bins on average only 30% full.

Council officers, like many others in the sector, question whether the volumes of glass being recovered at a collection frequency of monthly / 4 weeks justifies a kerbside collection service.

Operational, Financial and Compliance Considerations

Council's draft modelling indicates that introducing a kerbside glass service would result in significant financial impacts:

- Upfront implementation costs are estimated at approximately \$50 per household
- Ongoing annual collection costs of at least \$26 per household

These costs would largely be borne by ratepayers, as government funding covers less than 10% of implementation costs. For rural councils such as Gannawarra, these costs divert funding away from higher-risk waste streams such as batteries, chemicals, and e-waste.

Council has commenced development of its 2026–27 Budget. Without clear guidelines, it is impossible to allocate resources, design for a glass service, or budget responsibly and accurately to meet the mandated 1 July 2027 deadline. Due to the continued delay in the release of the Standard, Council will be locked into unworkable procurement and delivery timelines and exposed to escalating costs.

Failure to implement the required service under the Victorian Government's Circular Economy Act may expose Council to a range of compliance measures. These can include improvement notices, fines, and civil penalties that may apply not only to the Council itself but also to individual staff and Councillors. Although non-compliance is not treated as a criminal offence, civil penalties can be imposed if Council cannot demonstrate a valid "reasonable excuse" for delays or failures to meet obligations.

Acceptable excuses may include genuine constraints such as insufficient funding, lack of appropriate infrastructure, or safety-related limitations that prevent timely implementation. Without such justification, Council may face increasing enforcement actions designed to ensure compliance with the requirements of the circular economy framework.

Lessons from Other Councils and Sector Advocacy

Several councils participating in the Glass Advocacy Group have formally rejected the mandatory glass-only bin service, citing its high cost, operational inefficiency, duplication of existing programs, and lack of flexibility. Multiple councils involved in joint advocacy have highlighted persistent challenges with the glass service model, including:

- High capital costs for bin procurement and truck fleet expansion
- Low bin utilisation rates following the introduction of the Container Deposit Scheme (CDS)
- Community frustration with storage limitations for a fourth household bin
- Delays in the release of legislated Service Standards, which prevent councils from designing compliant services and create procurement and budgeting risks

Co-mingled recycling from Gannawarra is processed at the Echuca Material Recovery Facility (MRF), which also receives recycling from the commercial sector and New South Wales municipalities, where glass-only collection is not mandated. The drop-off process at the MRF in Gannawarra recycling being mixed with the NSW recycling. This means that even with a separate glass bin, contamination from other materials would still occur, limiting the potential environmental benefit.

Section 11 of the *Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021* (Vic) discusses Integrated decision-making.

11.1 states that actions and decisions should be based on the best available evidence, officers contend that the evidence provided by early-adopter councils does not justify a kerbside service.

11.2 states that actions and decisions under the Act should consider all economic, social, and environmental costs and benefits, including externalities. Widespread belief across the sector is that the proposed Standard does not adequately address the economic justification, environmental costs of increased emissions verses the benefits, nor does it consider the effect of an expanded CDS or existing sorting at MRFs.

11.3 states that “*Decisions, policies, programs and processes related to the circular economy should seek to achieve best practice having regard to the decisions, policies, programs and processes of other States, the Territories, the Commonwealth, other countries and international bodies and organisations, related to the circular economy*”. To date no other Australian state or territory has mandated kerbside glass collection.

It should be noted that New South Wales, South Australia, and the Northern Territory have all announced reforms that will see glass wine and spirit bottles included in their respective CDS programs joining Queensland, who introduced the change in 2023. The NT is acting to implement the change in early 2026, while the change comes into effect from 2027 in South Australia and New South Wales. Western Australia committed to expanding their scheme during their recent state election.

RELEVANT LAW

Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021 (Vic)

To note:

- Section 60: details the mandatory service provision by councils.
- Section 62 and 63: gives Recycling Victoria the power to prepare a service standard for ministerial approval.
- Section 69, 71, 73 and 74 detail the penalties for contravention of the Act.

Local Government Act 2020 (Vic) – councils required to act in the best interest of municipal communities, promote sustainability, innovation, and financial viability.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Gannawarra Shire has previously engaged in regional waste reform discussions at officer, executive and councillor level, and supported advocacy efforts seeking more flexible waste service models aligned with rural realities.

OPTIONS

- Implement kerbside glass collection – Higher cost, low participation and volume of glass collection expected, with operational risk and environmental inefficiency across a dispersed municipality.

- Do not implement – Maintain current services; focus on enhanced and accessible drop-off facilities, CDS expansion, and community education. Some cost and ongoing management will still apply. Education is needed to combat contamination.
- Hybrid approach – Township-only service – Provide bins in Kerang, Cohuna, and Koondrook; rural residents use drop-off points; still incurs significant cost, environmental cost and contamination risk. Education is needed to combat contamination.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Introducing a kerbside glass bin in Gannawarra Shire would have limited environmental benefit for several reasons:

- The Echuca Material Recovery Facility (MRF), which processes Gannawarra's co-mingled recycling, also receives co-mingled recycling from New South Wales, where a glass-only bin mandate is not proposed. As a result, even if glass is separated at the kerbside, it is likely to mix with commingled recycling at the MRF, reducing the quality of recovered glass and limiting the environmental benefit.
- Additional kerbside collection vehicles would be required to service the Shire's dispersed population across 3,736 km², increasing vehicle emissions and road maintenance.
- Waste audits indicate that only 6% of garbage bins and 24% of mixed recycling bins contain glass, meaning the incremental environmental gain from a separate glass bin is minimal.
- In contrast, enhanced glass drop-off points (including 24/7 access) and expansion of the Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) provide a more efficient, high-quality recovery pathway for glass with lower emissions and operational impacts.

This demonstrates that the sustainability benefits of a kerbside glass bin are marginal compared to alternative recovery methods, and a focus on drop-off and CDS is the more environmentally responsible approach.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engagement from comparable rural councils shows strong resistance to a fourth kerbside bin due to limited yard space, rising waste charges, and confusion over acceptable materials.

Gannawarra residents have expressed similar concerns to Council officers, noting that a separate glass bin would likely be unused, take up too much space, and add little value. Residents consistently prefer community drop-off points, which are more practical, accessible, and easier to manage.

Focusing on drop-off facilities and education programs aligns with community expectations and the Shire's dispersed population, ensuring better participation and tangible environmental outcomes without the costs and complexity of an additional kerbside bin.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Council will explore modernised recycling approaches, including AI-driven sorting technologies emerging in the sector and the expansion of local Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) infrastructure. These options offer higher circularity outcomes with lower cost and allow Council to adapt strategies over time to improve efficiency and environmental performance without the need for a separate kerbside glass bin.

COLLABORATION

This report aligns with the collective position of more than 30 Victorian councils advocating for flexibility and evidence-based reform of the glass service mandate. Gannawarra Shire's involvement strengthens regional advocacy efforts.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Preliminary analysis indicates implementation costs exceeding \$238,600, with an additional \$124,072 annually for servicing. Ratepayer charges would increase an estimated \$26 per property being serviced.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

- Victorian Recycling Victoria and Circular Economy Act 2021
- National Waste Policy 2018 – emphasis on resource recovery
- CDS expansion aligns with other states (NSW, SA, WA, NT) and national harmonisation

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Goal 3: Sustainability - Achieve long-term financial and environmental sustainability.

- 1. Manage Council's budget responsibly by delivering cost-effective services, pursuing new revenue opportunities, and ensuring long-term financial sustainability.*
- 2. Protect our environment and prepare our community for a changing climate.*
- 3. Advance local sustainability and waste initiatives.*
- 4. Ensure transparent, inclusive decision-making through effective leadership.*

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in this matter.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

7.3 REFERRALS FOR LAND SURRENDER IN MACORNA

Author: Deanne Caserta, Manager Financial Services
Authoriser: Phil Higgins (Acting Director Corporate Services)

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

1. Obtain a formal valuation of the properties within the Macorna estate;
2. Write to landholders outlining the option to surrender parcels in the Macorna estate.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In November Council adopted the Surrender of Land Policy (the Policy). This was a first step in the process to work towards purchase and consolidation of land parcels in the Macorna subdivision located on the north side of the Macorna Pyramid Road and east of the Kerang Macorna Road. A map is provided in the detail of the report.

This report has been provided as a next stage of this process and includes recommendations to assist in gathering preliminary information and costings for the project as a whole.

This information gathered will then be bought back to Council and will guide further decisions around the next phases of the project.

PURPOSE

The Policy outlines the process and treatment of requests received. It outlines the application process and assessment decisions to be applied to assist the Council in forming a suitable decision.

Once an application has been received and all the required information has been confirmed, the Manager Financial Services will provide a report to Council to determine the application outcome.

When making its decision, Council will consider the following issues:

- legal costs involved in transferring ownership of the land
- payment of future rates and related charges
- possible escalation into a Section 181 of the Local Government Act 1989 (S181) property sale
- payment of future Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund Levy – for both fixed and variable charges
- suitability for resale
- restrictions on property (building notices, chattels, caveats)
- previous land use and cost to rehabilitate (possible contamination, risk of mine shafts)
- capacity for development (land size, planning zones, presence of effluent)
- site condition and any possessions remaining
- liability for maintenance of the vacant land which includes grass slashing and control of weeds if the property is not suitable for resale.

Only land with an identified potential future benefit to Council will be considered for surrender.

DISCUSSION

While working through the debt collection process, ratepayers have made requests to surrender land in this Macorna subdivision. For Council to consider this initial application, and future ones, it will need to come to a decision around process and determine who is responsible for any costs associated.

What are the options for Council?

It is expected that Council does should not incur any costs association with the outstanding debt and purchase of the property? To the other extent, is Council expected to pay market price for the property, cover all transfer fees and outstanding debts. These are conversations that are expected to take place within future stages of the process.

What are the property values?

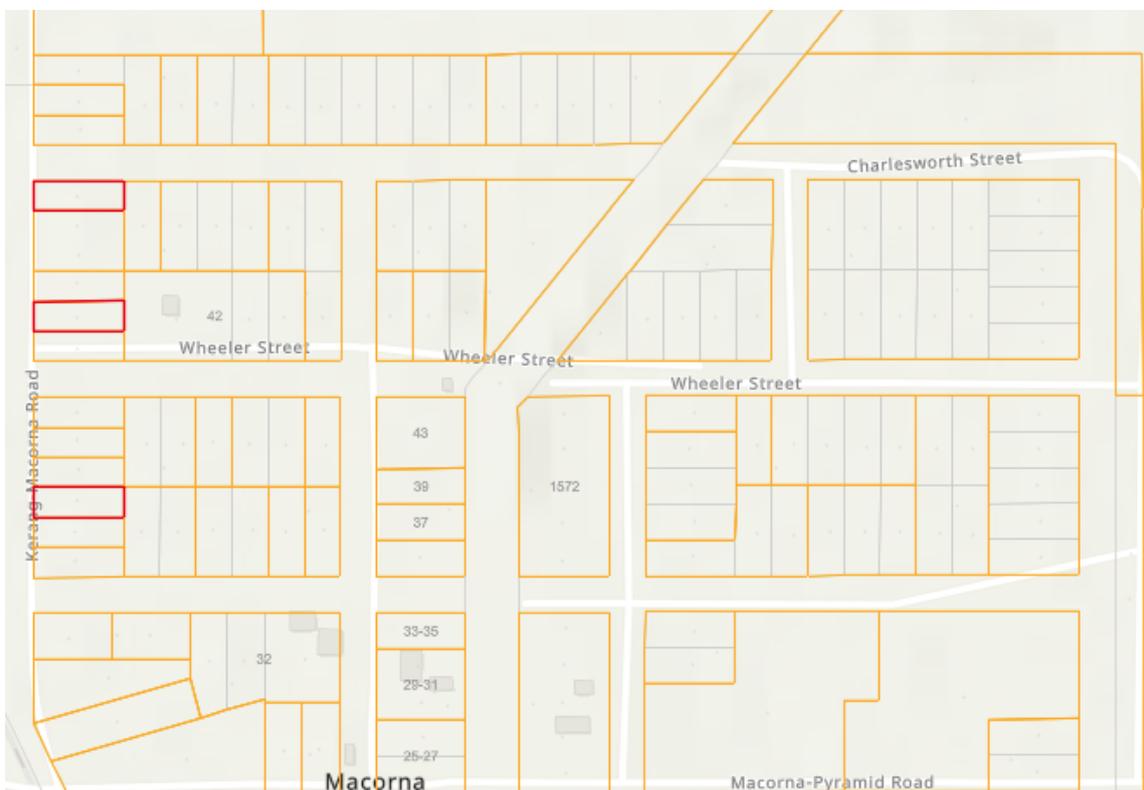
Each of these parcels have a current Capital Improved Value that varies depending on lot size, number of titles and location. When reviewing those that have reached the approved S181 process, the amounts outstanding range start at \$4,000.

What are the associated costs?

Pricing that was sourced in July 2025 when drafting the Policy, outlined that where a property was formally surrendered to Council and a simple land transfer could be undertaken these costs were more than half that of the S181 process.

Does Council already own some of these parcels?

Council currently owns 3 of these parcels within the Macorna estate area. These are highlighted in red in the map provided.



Has there been any interest to sell in the past?

There are currently 4 properties who have expressed an interest to transfer these properties back to Council, these are not within the current S181 process.

Are properties already within the S181 process?

Currently there are several properties within the estate that have reached and have been approved for Council to now work through the S181 process. This means that no payment for rates and charges has been made on these properties for greater than 3 years.

What happens once a majority of parcels are purchased?

Consultation with the Macorna community would be recommended. This would be to determine if these parcels would be best consolidated into one large parcel and converted back into farming land or consolidated into larger parcels that are able to be developed. These associated costs have not been factored into this report.

A map is provided below to assist in understanding the current land use and where developed properties lie within this estate.

**What is the recommendation to move forward?**

To get a higher take up it is recommended to take a middle ground approach. This would involve:

- getting formal valuation of these estate properties
- writing to all landholders (including those in the S181 process) notifying of options now available and the process involved to gather an initial list of interested ratepayers

RELEVANT LAW

- *Local Government Act 1989*
- *Local Government Act 2020*

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council approved the Surrender of Land Policy in November 2025.

OPTIONS

1. Do nothing and the properties remain will gradually flow through the S181 property process incurring a significant increase in cost and time.
2. Follow the recommendation of staff and commence the process of seeking interest from all landholders in this estate, these instructions are outlined in the recommendation and then come back to Council to seek further advice after valuation is sought.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Any properties that Council acquires will need to be maintained until a final decision is made and action taken prior to resale.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement will be undertaken once a suitable portion of the estate area is under ownership of Council and costings determined based on the potential scenarios for future development.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Each year more properties are added to the S181 process, they are then sold to another ratepayer and the process recommences. By correcting the land sizing issue of these parcels, it will cease the cycle.

COLLABORATION

Discussions on this matter have been held at previous Council Forums and outcomes discussed with Councils' debt collection agency and rates staff.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The cost for valuations is \$4,500 plus GST. There will be a cost associated with this process as each property is transferred. This will return to Council in the long term, but other stages and further costs will need to be undertaken prior to this occurring.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Nil.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Goal 3: Sustainability - Achieve long-term financial and environmental sustainability.

4. Ensure transparent, inclusive decision-making through effective leadership.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in this matter.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

7.4 RESPONSE TO ACTIONS – KOONDROOK LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Author: Fiona Gormann, Manager Planning and Regulatory Services
Authoriser: Geoff Rollinson (Chief Executive Officer), Wade Williams (Director Infrastructure & Development)

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the information in the report as it relates to the implementation of the Koondrook and District Local Development Strategy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Koondrook & District Local Development Strategy (LDS) has been completed following extensive community engagement, technical analysis and collaboration between DEECA, Urban Enterprise, Council officers and the LDS Steering Committee. The Strategy establishes a five-year framework to support economic diversification, tourism activation, agribusiness innovation, improved liveability and long-term township planning for Koondrook and District.

This report provides additional information as requested by Council at the Ordinary Meeting of Council in December 2025.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with additional information regarding the Koondrook and District Local Development Strategy as requested at its Ordinary Meeting of Council in December 2025. The report provides high-level estimated costs associated with the 23 actions to be implemented within the LDS. The report also highlights the Council's involvement with the LDS delivery.

DISCUSSION

At the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 15 December 2025, Council made the following resolution regarding the Koondrook and District Local Development Report.

That Council:

1. Confirm Council's role as Lead Agency for the planning, coordination and delivery of LDS implementation projects in accordance with the Agreement between the Council and the Koondrook Local Development Strategy Steering Committee.
 2. Authorise officers to lodge the required funding application for the \$500,000 Koondrook Structure Plan through Stream 2 of the Community Development Fund (DEECA).
 3. Authorise officers to prepare and submit applications for the \$500,000 for the Agricultural Development project and Cross-border service assessment through Stream 1 of the Community Development Fund.
 4. Authorise officers to prepare and apply for \$250,000 for the Forest Activation Strategy through Stream 2 (competitive funding) of the Community Development Fund.
 5. Request a report to be presented at the February Meeting containing:
 - a. The total estimated cost and estimated useful life of the Koondrook Local Development Strategy
 - b. Council's role, as documented or directed by DEECA, in the development of the Koondrook Local Development Strategy
-

- c. Estimated cost and estimated useful life of the Koondrook Structure plan
- d. Once the structure plan funding is received, how much funding is still available from the Forestry Transition Program
- e. The process and conditions by which the funding is applied
- f. A list of the councils eligible to apply for that funding.

Following the December 2025 meeting, Council officers have prepared information regarding the fifth part of the resolution. This information is presented below.

a. Total estimated cost and estimated useful life of the Koondrook Local Development Strategy

The Koondrook and District Local Development Strategy has been funded through a \$500,000 grant provided by the Victorian Government via the Forestry Transition Program – Community Development Fund. This funding covers engagement, technical analysis, consultant support (Urban Enterprise), and preparation of the LDS document.

The Local Development Strategy is structured as a five-year strategic planning document, guiding priorities, actions and investment pathways for Koondrook's economic transition. While some projects may extend beyond this horizon, the LDS is expected to guide decision-making and funding applications over approximately a 5-year period (2025–2030).

It is worth noting that a structure plan identifies land use for a 30–50-year horizon.

b. Council's role, as documented or directed by DEECA, in the development of the Koondrook Local Development Strategy

Under DEECA program guidelines, the Council's role is primarily that of host and delivery partner of the strategy. Council's responsibilities include acting as the grant recipient and contract manager, supporting and facilitating a community-led engagement process, providing governance oversight, financial management, reporting to DEECA, supporting future implementation and funding applications aligned with the Local Development Strategy. The LDS program is explicitly designed to be community-led, with Council providing enabling support rather than determining content or priorities.

c. Estimated cost and estimated useful life of the Koondrook Structure Plan

Funding for a Koondrook Structural Plan has not yet been confirmed. It is anticipated that funding would be sought through the Forestry Transition Program's Community Development Fund or related DTP planning support streams. Comparable structure plans through State Government programs typically range between \$300,000 and \$500,000, depending on scope, technical studies and consultation requirements. Final costs will be confirmed when funding is secured.

A structure plan typically has a planning horizon of 30-50 years. It provides long-term land use, infrastructure and growth guidance and operates as an enabling document to support future rezonings, infrastructure investment and grant applications.

d. Once structure plan funding is received, how much funding remains available from the Forestry Transition Program

The Forestry Transition Program does not operate as a single capped allocation per town. Funding is available through multiple contestable funding rounds and is subject to project merit, alignment with Local Development Strategy priorities, and available State budget allocations. The Community Development Fund remains open until 30 June 2026. Communities may apply for multiple funding streams, including project management, innovation projects, and, through Innovation Working

Groups, additional investment funding. Securing funding for a structure plan does not exhaust Koondrook's access to Forestry Transition Program funding.

e. Process and conditions by which the funding is applied

Funding under the Forestry Transition Program is accessed through a structured application process. Applicants must confirm eligibility, submit an Expression of Interest, where required and prepare and lodge a full application aligned to merit criteria. A funding agreement will be entered into if successful. Key conditions include alignment with Local Development Strategy priorities, no retrospective funding, potential co-contribution requirements, milestone-based payments, reporting and acquittal obligations, and no expectation of ongoing State Government funding.

f. Councils and communities eligible to apply for the funding

Eligible communities under the Forestry Transition Program include those significantly impacted by the cessation of native timber harvesting. These include Koondrook, Benalla, Corryong, Heyfield, Noojee, Orbost, Nowa Nowa, Swifts Creek, Yarram, Murrindindi and Yarra Ranges. Eligible applicants include local councils, community organisations, Innovation Working Groups, businesses and industry groups, and educational or research organisations.

RELEVANT LAW

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
- *Victorian Forestry Transition Program Guidelines (DEECA)*

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

At the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 15 December 2025, a resolution was moved that a report be presented at the February 2026 Council Meeting containing:

1. The total estimated cost and estimated useful life of the Koondrook Local Development Strategy
2. Council's role, as documented or directed by DEECA, in the development of the Koondrook Local Development Strategy
3. Estimated cost and estimated useful life of the Koondrook Structural Plan
4. Once the structure plan funding is received, how much funding is still available from the Forestry Transition Program
5. The process and conditions by which the funding is applied
6. A list of the councils eligible to apply for that funding.

OPTIONS

- Council may receive and note the information as presented.
- Council may request that additional information be obtained and reported back.
- Council may choose not to receive or to disregard the information.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The LDS supports long-term environmental, economic and social sustainability by improving township resilience, protecting natural assets, supporting agribusiness innovation and guiding responsible land use planning.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A two-stage engagement process was undertaken, including:

- Pop-up and drop-in sessions
- Online surveys

- Interviews with stakeholders
- Agribusiness and Tourism Innovation Working Groups
- Consultation with government agencies and community organisations

The Strategy reflects the community's expressed priorities and aspirations.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The LDS applies the Smart Specialisation (S3) approach, promoting innovation in agribusiness, tourism product development and economic diversification. The Strategy also embeds continuous improvement principles through its action planning and monitoring framework.

COLLABORATION

Collaboration occurred with DEECA, the LDS Steering Committee, Urban Enterprise, local businesses, industry stakeholders and community groups. Ongoing collaboration will continue through established governance arrangements.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Funding applications totalling \$1.25 million will be submitted following adoption of the Strategy. Any future financial implications beyond funded projects will be considered through normal Council budget processes.

Koondrook Actions — Estimated Implementation Costs

#	Action (Summary)	Estimated Cost
1	Koondrook Structure Plan incl. transport, drainage, active transport, land supply, community infra/services, streetscape, family-friendly lens	\$300k
2	Support delivery of Koondrook Levee Bank (council project management/advocacy inputs; excluding full construction by lead agency)	\$100k–\$300k (council share)
3	Community Hub – Feasibility (multi-purpose hub concept, site options, Opex/Capex modelling)	\$120k–\$250k
4	Support community groups and volunteers (small grants, training, coordination)	\$30k–\$100k p.a.
5	Light Industrial Precinct – Feasibility (food/agribusiness focus; site, lots, trunk infrastructure and servicing)	\$200k–\$400k
6	Establish farmers' representative group/coop – support (facilitation, legal setup support, seed funding)	\$50k–\$150k
7	Agribusiness Investment Attraction Strategy & Prospectus	\$80k–\$180k
8	Circular economy initiatives – identify and promote (pilot scoping, comms, partnerships)	\$50k–\$150k

9	Produce/Farmers Market – Feasibility & Pilot Setup (location, permitting, branding, equipment)	\$60k–\$200k (excl. permanent structures)
10	Gunbower Forest/Island Activation Masterplan (walks, platforms, signage, trail link concepts)	\$150k–\$300k
11	Gunbower Forest Discovery Centre – Feasibility (business case, concept design, ops model)	\$200k–\$400k
12	Waterway Activation Plan – Murray and Gunbower Creek (passive/active uses, enabling infra roadmap)	\$120k–\$250k
13	Support MRAT (Barham–Barmah stage) – promotion/readiness	\$30k–\$100k
14	Advocate commercial accommodation investment (park, experiential, boutique—investment facilitation pack, EOI)	\$60k–\$150k
15	Tourism Investment Attraction Strategy and Prospectus	\$80k–\$180k
16	Koondrook Goods Shed – Operator Advocacy/EOI (market sounding, EOI docs, due diligence support)	\$40k–\$120k
17	Funding advocacy – timber heritage experience and raised walkway (Arbuthnot) (grant writing, concept support)	\$25k–\$80k (advocacy only)
18	Support First Nations cultural heritage tours (co-design, training, permits, pilot program)	\$80k–\$200k
19	Encourage diverse & affordable housing (planning scheme updates, overlays, facilitation)	\$80k–\$200k
20	Advocate new retail/hospitality in town centre (activation plan, pop-up program, incentives framework)	\$50k–\$150k
21	Advocate health/childcare/aged care provision (needs analysis, partnerships, case for investment)	\$80k–\$180k
22	Advocate telecoms & digital infrastructure (blackspot mapping, business cases, carrier liaison)	\$50k–\$150k
23	Support cross-border collaboration (joint advocacy agenda, secretariat, engagement)	\$60k–\$180k p.a.

Notes and Assumptions

- **Planning-stage estimates; refine after scoping and market testing.**
- **Exclusions: Major capital delivery costs (e.g., actual levee construction, discovery centre build, platforms, pontoons, roads) are not included unless stated; items here are primarily planning, feasibility, activation, advocacy, and facilitation.**
- **Cost drivers: Scope breadth, stakeholder engagement intensity (incl. Traditional Owner engagement), environmental approvals, and procurement approach.**
- **Timeframes: Most studies are 3–9 months; advocacy/activation streams may be ongoing or annualised.**

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

The LDS aligns with the Victorian Forestry Transition Program, Regional Development Victoria priorities, Murray Regional Tourism planning and the Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

GOAL 1: LIVEABILITY - ENHANCE THE WELL-BEING AND LIVEABILITY OF THE GANNAWARRA THROUGH INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICES.

- 2. Prioritise maintenance, renewal and improvement of assets, including local roads, footpaths, and community infrastructure that support accessibility and safety.*
- 3. Support vibrant town centres by maintaining amenities and enabling businesses and community events to enhance activity and connection.*
- 4. Provide ongoing support for libraries, children's services, community-led initiatives and transport connections within and beyond our shire.*

GOAL 2: GROWTH - GROW THE GANNAWARRA THROUGH A DIVERSE AND BROAD ECONOMY.

- 1. Support local businesses, employment pathways, digital connectivity and attract strategic investment.*
- 2. Promote tourism and events that showcase Gannawarra.*
- 3. Plan land use to enable growth and expand housing opportunities.*
- 4. Support rural productivity and diversify agriculture.*

GOAL 3: SUSTAINABILITY - ACHIEVE LONG-TERM FINANCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY.

- 4. Ensure transparent, inclusive decision-making through effective leadership.*

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in this matter.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Koondrook LDS DRAF T-v 1.0 [7.4.1 - 29 pages]
2. Koondrook Structure Planning Q A Sheet [7.4.2 - 3 pages]



Energy,
Environment
and Climate Action



Koondrook & District Local Development Strategy

This project is funded through the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), and supported by Gannawarra Shire Council.

Draft | August 2025

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Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the input and important contributions made by residents, businesses, community leaders and Government stakeholders who participated in the project, and gave their time, insights and views.

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01

Introduction

The Victorian Government is leading the Forestry Transition Program, which is being provided to 11 different communities across Victoria, including Koondrook.

The Program, which is being led by The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), includes the development of a Local Development Strategy (LDS) for Koondrook and District, which has been prepared by Urban Enterprise in partnership with DEECA, Gannawarra Shire Council and the Koondrook community.

Purpose of the Strategy

This Local Development Strategy aims to identify and prioritise community-led initiatives and projects that will help to facilitate local economic growth, strengthen economic resilience, and enhance liveability.

The Strategy aims to make Koondrook a better place to live, work, play and visit. The LDS will help to inform Council's decision making and funding priorities for economic and community development projects, and provide directions for growth and change in Koondrook over a 5-year period.

The broad objectives of this LDS include:

- Diversify industry in Koondrook.
- Encourage local economic resilience.
- Enhance job security and employment opportunities.
- Enhance liveability.
- Stimulate the economy through innovative and transformative projects.
- Encourage population retention, attraction and residential development.

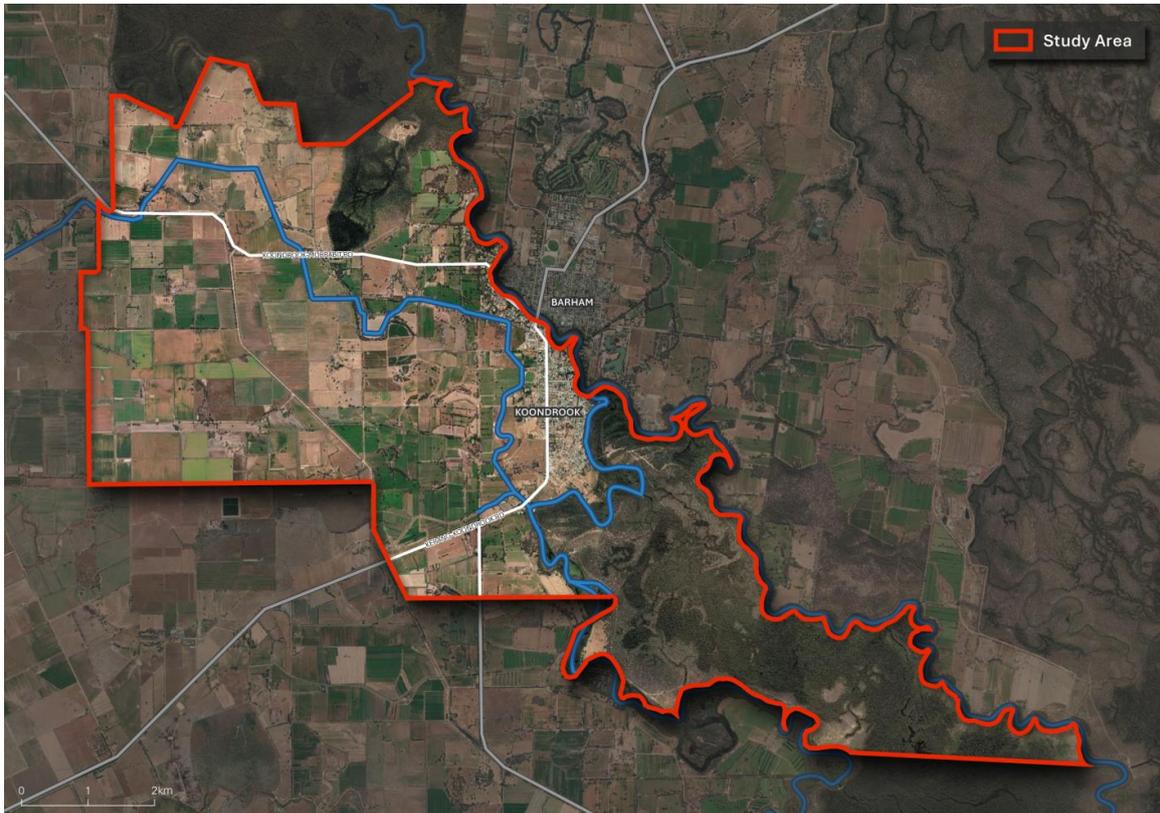


Figure 1. Study Area

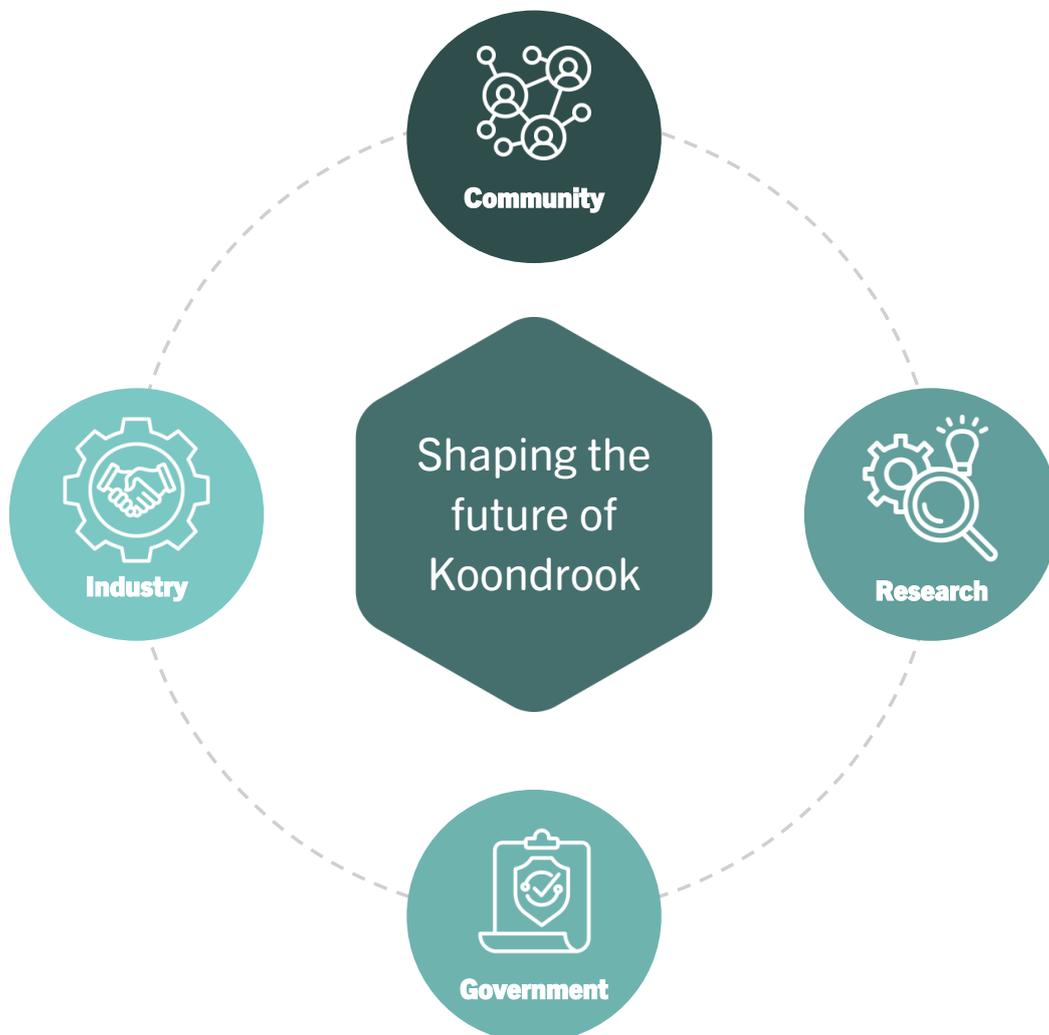
The Koondrook and District study area for the LDS includes the urban area of Koondrook and surrounding rural areas along the Murray River and Gunbower Forest.

Approach

This Local Development Strategy adopts the Smart Specialisation (S3) approach, which is a place based entrepreneurial process of discovery that can reveal economic activity where a region excels or has the potential to excel in the future.

Smart Specialisation is a collaborative policy approach that promotes regional innovation, economic transformation, and sustainability by focusing on a region's existing strengths. It is underpinned by a view that the greatest knowledge of a region and commitment to its prosperity, are held by the people and organisations that are based there.

Smart Specialisation adopts a quadruple helix model, which is based on local stakeholder engagement and participation to ensure initiatives are championed and carried forward by local stakeholders. The model provides equal weighting of importance to the views of community and industry, government priorities, and independent research.



The LDS Process & Staging

The Koondrook LDS process commenced in 2024, and includes two key stages:



The Regional Context and Opportunities stage included comprehensive research, analysis and stakeholder consultation to obtain a detailed understanding of the economic, land use, demographic and geographic context of Koondrook.

A Regional Context and Opportunities Report was prepared for Koondrook and District, and includes the following:

- Strategic objectives and priorities identified through existing local, regional and state strategies.
- Extensive consultation with community, business and government stakeholders to gather views and ideas about the future of Koondrook.
- Targeted research and analysis in relation to Koondrook’s economy, people, land use, and tourism sector.
- Identification of issues, challenges and opportunities to be addressed by the LDS.
- Identify priority sectors, strategic areas of focus and preliminary project ideas to be further explored for the LDS.

The Regional Context and Opportunities Report provides the evidence base that informs this LDS.



Following the Regional Context and Opportunities Report, strategic areas of focus and priority projects were further explored, tested and refined through targeted consultation.

Discovery Reports were prepared for the ‘Agribusiness’ and ‘Tourism’ strategic areas of focus.

To inform the Discovery Reports, separate Innovation Working Groups (IWG) were established for Agribusiness and Tourism to contribute to a nuanced discussion, drawing on local knowledge, sector-specific expertise and strategic perspectives.

Innovation Working Groups are made up of local community and industry leaders who collaborate to explore and develop new ideas, solutions, and opportunities. Forming and collaborating with IWGs is a key step in the Smart Specialisation (S3) place based entrepreneurial process of discovery.

This process ensured that the Discovery Reports and proposed project ideas were grounded in local knowledge and expertise, represent local aspirations, and are considered achievable.

Consultation

The insights and views provided by local stakeholders formed an integral part of informing the vision and priority projects in the LDS.

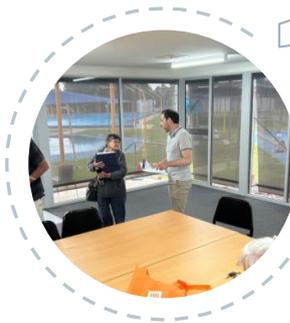
A separate consultation phase was undertaken in Stage 1 and Stage 2. All consultation undertaken through the course of the project is shown below.

Stage 1

Stage 1 consultation occurred throughout November and December 2024, and included pop-up and drop-in sessions, one-on-one interviews with the community, business and industry representatives, as well as Government departments and agencies.

Stage 2

Stage 2 consultation occurred in March 2025, and included two targeted Innovation Working Group workshops with local Agribusiness and Tourism leaders.



1

Half-day community drop-in session held at Willow Park Reserve.

25

Interviews with local residents, businesses, community leaders, Government agencies and tourism bodies.



60 Respondents who completed the online survey.



Innovation Working Group workshops with local Agribusiness and Tourism leaders.

2

Pop-up sessions at the Koondrook Primary School and Post Office.



02

Koondrook

This section provides an overview of the people, the place, the economy and the destination that makes Koondrook a unique place to live, work and visit.

The Place & People

Koondrook is a small, quaint town situated on the Murray River and Gunbower Creek in northern Victoria. Koondrook is characterised by its proximity and access to significant nature based areas, its rich settlement and timber history, and cultural heritage.

Koondrook is located in Gannawarra Shire opposite the NSW township of Barham. The cross-border towns function as a 'twin town' community and economy.

Koondrook is accessible via Kerang-Koondrook Road and Cohuna-Koondrook Road, providing connectivity via the Murray Valley and Loddon Highways.

Koondrook is a 15-minute drive from the Shire's other key townships of Cohuna and Kerang, and a 50 minute to 1 hour drive from the regional centres of Swan Hill and Echuca.

Further south, Koondrook is located around 1 hour 40-minute drive from Bendigo and a 3 hour 30-minute drive from Melbourne.



Residential

The residential area in Koondrook is primarily concentrated south and west of the Murray River and Gunbower Creek and east of Koondrook-Murrabit Road. The core residential area is General Residential Zone (GRZ) and the housing stock is weighted towards detached dwellings at conventional lot densities. The town is, however, bookended by two low density residential areas (LDRZ), which provide larger lot sizes.

The town offers residents with a serene place to live, with many houses located near the Murray River and Gunbower Creek.

Commercial

The commercial core of the town centre is located either side of Main Street. Businesses located in the town centre consists of a Pub, General Store, Post Office, Café, Hair Salon, and office space used by the Arbuthnot Timber Mill.

The waterfront area provides an amenity rich public area for residents and visitors, and includes the key assets of the Koondrook Wharf, Apex Park, the Goods Shed, an all abilities playground, a motel and caravan park. The Arbuthnot Sawmill is located at the juncture of Punt Road and Arbuthnot Streets, adjacent to the Murray River and Koondrook's town centre.

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The Arbuthnot Sawmill is located at the juncture of Punt Road and Arbuthnot Streets, adjacent to the Murray River and Koondrook's town centre.

Industrial

There are two separate industrial precincts located to the north and south of the urban area. The larger northern precinct is Zoned Industrial 3 (IN3Z), and includes the Great Australian Squeeze (juice factory), warehouses and general trade businesses. There are some large vacant landholdings that remain vacant and undeveloped.

The southern precinct is Industrial 1 Zone (IN1Z), and includes Motorcycle and Marine sales, an outdoor Garden Centre and a Flooring business.

Recreation & Open Space

The active open space assets in Koondrook are the Recreation Reserve (Cricket, Mens Shed), Willow Park Reserve (including outdoor pool) and Public Recreation Reserve (Tennis).

The swimming pool at Willow Park Reserve is a highly popular asset that is well utilised by residents in Koondrook, Barham and surrounding areas. The pool is managed by the local community and primarily relies on local volunteers.

The Recreation Reserve is used by the Koondrook-Barham Cricket Club and is also the home of the Koondrook Mens Shed.

Natural Assets

Koondrook has a strong connection to the natural environment, which is underpinned by natural and water-based assets such as the Murray River, Gunbower Creek, Gunbower Forest, Gunbower Island and Koondrook State Forest.

Gunbower Island features two significant forest areas. The State Forest is located to the north and accessible from Koondrook, while the Gunbower National Park is to the south and accessible from Cohuna. The Island is a rich and diverse environment that includes wetlands, swamps, wildlife, bird life and aquatic plants. The Wetlands are of international significance, recognised by the RAMSAR Convention.

Gunbower Island is a popular destination for locals and visitors who undertake nature based and adventure activities such as bushwalking, camping, fishing, hunting, bird watching, canoeing and kayaking.

Regional Natural Resources

Gannawarra Shire and the Murray region experience consistent sunshine. As a result, areas within and surrounding the Gannawarra are well suited to solar farm development.

Mineral sands deposits are found in the Murray and Gippsland Basins in northwest and southeast Victoria. Two types of mineral sands deposits are recognised in the Murray Basin. These deposits are characterised as either strandline deposits or Wimmera-style (WIM) deposits.

Rare earth minerals have been discovered in Gannawarra Shire, west of Kerang and south of Swan Hill. Several areas have been identified and are at varying levels of progression. These include Goschen, Cannie and Nowie.

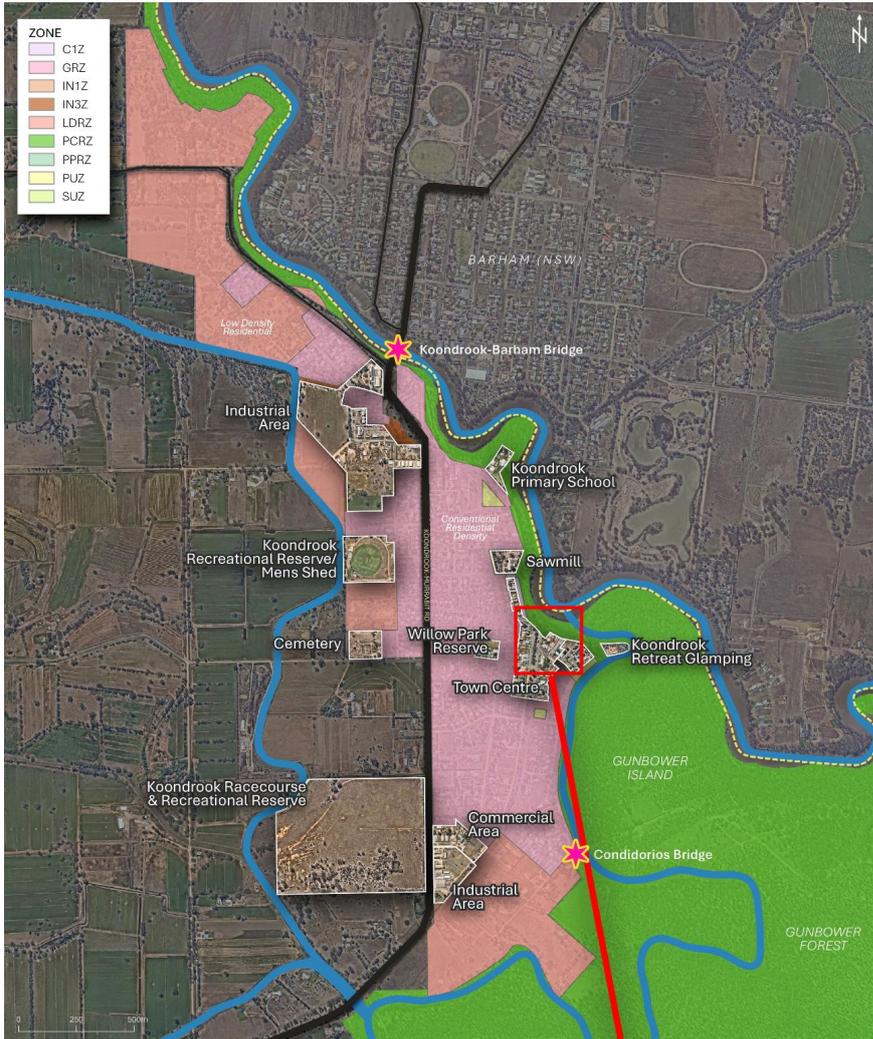


Figure 2. Koondrook Urban Area

The urban area of Koondrook comprises a combination of residential, commercial, industrial and farming land.

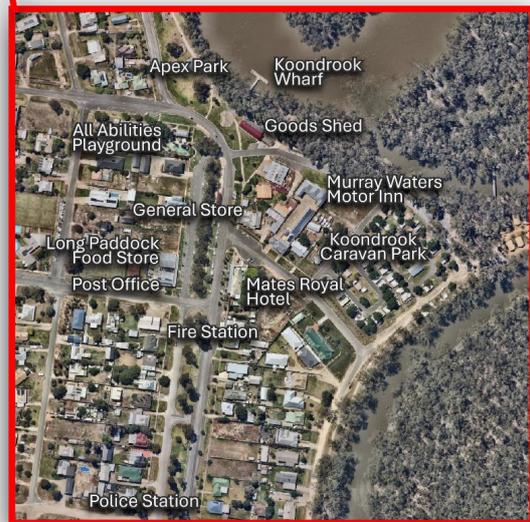


Figure 3. Key Assets and Areas in Koondrook 



The Economy

Koondrook’s economy is primarily driven by agriculture, horticulture and tourism, which is underpinned by natural advantages such as moderately productive soils, favourable climate, and high-quality parks, forests and waterways.

Agriculture, forestry and fishing contributes significant economic output and value to Koondrook’s economy. The sector contributes 63% of annual economic output, 68% of value-added, and 84% of export value.

Gannawarra Shire accommodates a diverse range of agricultural activities, including dairy, cereal and legume cropping, livestock including beef, lamb and pork, viticulture and horticulture comprising walnuts, olives, tomatoes, apples, peaches and citrus along with small plantings of vegetables and herbs.

Other industry sectors that are important to the function of the local economy include manufacturing, construction services, food processing, retail, hospitality, health and education.

THE LOCAL ECONOMY AT A GLANCE



\$204M
VALUE ADD
Koondrook, 2023



\$311M
EXPORT VALUE
Koondrook, 2023



\$456M
OUTPUT
Koondrook, 2023



945
JOBS
Koondrook, 2023



2,800
BUSINESS COUNT
Gannawarra & Murray Shires



\$800M
GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT
Gannawarra Shire, 2023



3.3%
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE
Gannawarra Shire, June 2024

OUTPUT

Proportion of Koondrook’s total annual output



\$299M
Agriculture, forestry & fishing
66% of total output



\$47M
Construction
10% of total output



\$38M
Manufacturing
8% of total output



\$26M
Rental, hiring & real estate services
5.7% of total output



\$9M
Mining
2% of total output

LOCAL EMPLOYMENT

Proportion of all jobs in Koondrook



637
Agriculture, forestry & fishing
68% of all jobs



88
Construction
9% of all jobs



46
Manufacturing
5% of all jobs



39
Other services
4.2% of all jobs



28
Education & training
3% of all jobs

Source: Economic metrics Gannawarra Shire, Remplan Economy, 2023 / Census of Employment, ABS, 2021 / Business counts, Gannawarra Shire, ABS, 2024.

The Destination

Koondrook’s destination appeal is linked to the town’s village character and unique natural surroundings. Koondrook’s strategic location, at the intersection of the Murray River, Gunbower Creek and Gunbower Forest, provides a natural advantage that lends itself to nature based, recreation and outdoor adventure tourism.

Visitation to the area is an important component of the local economy and has potential to grow with investment in new tourism products and experiences, and greater awareness.

On average, Gannawarra Shire attracts 180,000 visitors per year, with 59% staying overnight and 41% visiting for day trips. Over the decade to 2024, visitation to Gannawarra Shire has increased at an average rate of 4.0% per annum.

On average, the tourism sector contributes around \$30 million in output and adds \$14 million in economic value per year, and directly employs approximately 160 people.



\$85M

ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION



161

JOB



\$14.2M

VALUE ADD



180K

VISITORS

P.A. (AVE)

Daytrip **41%**

Overnight **59%**

3.2 LENGTH OF STAY
NIGHTS (AVE)



Visitation to Gannawarra Shire has increased at an average rate of **4.0% per annum** in the 10-year period between 2015 and 2024.



Visitation to Gannawarra Shire accounts for approximately **25% of the broader sub-region** of Swan Hill and Deniliquin.

Tourism Strengths	Primary	Secondary
Nature-based/Outdoor & Adventure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreational Boating & Fishing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
History & Heritage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indigenous Culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Festivals & Events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Local Produce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Source: Tourism Research Australia, National Visitor Survey, 3-year average (Financial Year 2022 to Financial Year 2024) / Economic metrics Gannawarra Shire, Remplan Economy, 2023 .

03

Strategic Framework

A strategic framework for Koondrook and District guides the 5-year LDS, and includes a vision statement, strategic pillars, action and implementation plan.

Vision

“Koondrook and District is a serene, charming and historical area on the banks of the Murray River and Gunbower Creek.

The favourable characteristics of the town will be maintained and enhanced through essential infrastructure, services and high-quality amenity to further improve the liveability for current and future residents.

The comparative economic strengths and natural advantages of Koondrook and District will be leveraged and promoted to attract investment, encourage economic growth, resilience and diversification.

Strategic Pillars

Four strategic pillars have been formulated to deliver the vision statements, and guide the implementation of the LDS over the 5-year strategy period.

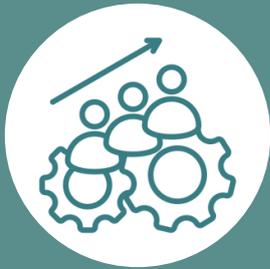




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KOONDROOK
GOODS SHED



1

Enhanced Liveability & Township Improvements

Statement

Enhancing the liveability of Koondrook and improving the amenity and character of the town is a core aspiration for the community.

A high-quality public realm and streetscape environment along with well needed amenity and services will combine to improve Koondrook as a place to place to live, work and visit.

Areas of Focus

- Streetscape and public realm
- Housing (including affordable housing)
- Community services and amenity

Objectives

- Resident attraction and retention
- Suitable housing and services
- Community wellbeing
- Improved liveability
- Increased visitation



What did we hear?

Strengths & Advantages

- The quaint, serene and village character of Koondrook is a major appeal and strength of Koondrook as a place to live, raise and family and retire.
- The small, friendly and close-knit community provides a sense of connection and civic pride.
- There are a lot of nature and water-based assets that are close to Koondrook, including the Gunbower Forest, Pericoota Forest, the Kerang Lakes.
- The town centre and waterfront are great places to visit and spend time.
- Koondrook has the advantage of being a cross-border town with Barham, which allows the towns to function as one and provide support to each other.
- Koondrook is centrally located, with good access to larger regional centres of Swan Hill, Echuca, Bendigo and Shepparton.

Community Aspirations

- Improved drainage, road and active transport networks.
- The pedestrian connection to Barham should be improved to facilitate easier and safer travel between the two towns.
- Koondrook needs more family friendly activities and amenities, especially for kids.
- The northern gateway to the town (coming from Barham) should be improved.
- There are safety concerns for kids walking to a from school due to the lack of formalised pedestrian pathways and crossings.
- Pedestrian connections and signage needs to be improved throughout the town.

Opportunities

- Sealed roads, adequate drainage infrastructure and footpaths would uplift the appeal, function and safety of Koondrook.
- Formal and safe pedestrian connections are needed throughout the town, especially near the Koondrook primary school.
- The proposed levee bank will provide an important safeguard for potential flooding events. A levee could also provide a new open space asset for the community such as walking and cycling tracks.
- An integrated community hub could provide a contemporary space for community groups to utilise. It could also provide multi-purpose rooms that could be booked by the community or local businesses. A redevelopment of Willow Park could be an appropriate location for this.
- More family friendly activities would improve the town. Examples include a splash park, indoor sport and recreation stadium, activation of the Ride Park Motorbike and BMX Track, new recreational boat launches and fishing platforms.

Barriers

- Capital costs and operational costs associated with planning, design, development and construction of infrastructure projects can be onerous and prohibitive.
- Timeframes to progress from planning to construction can be lengthy.



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2

Agribusiness: Diverse, Innovative & Resilient

Statement

Agriculture is at the heart of the local economy and community, and is embedded in the identity and character of Koondrook and District.

Supporting a thriving, diverse, innovative and resilient food and fibre sector will improve its competitiveness on a national and global scale. This is a critical element to achieving economic, employment and community outcomes.

Areas of Focus

- Business development and investment attraction
- Innovation and Collaboration

Objectives

- Sustain and support existing businesses and jobs
- Increase output and value-add
- Increase export opportunities and value
- Business and investment attraction
- Diversification



What did we hear?

Strengths & Advantages

- Well-established irrigation infrastructure, providing secure and reliable access to water.
- Suitable climate for growing and producing.
- Productive soils in large parts of the District.
- Well-established agriculture sector, with high output, employment, value-add and export value.
- A diversity of agricultural land uses and commodities produced.
- Well established dairy and cattle farming sectors.

Community Aspirations

- Encourage industry collaboration, and explore the establishment of a district farming or producer co-operative.
- Promote irrigation and sustainable water use as a key regional advantage.
- Explore emerging agribusiness opportunities in aquaculture and hydroponics.
- Improve regional infrastructure and services to support growth in agribusiness.
- Support youth engagement in farming and agribusiness by promoting pathways into agriculture.
- Develop a regional prospectus to attract growers, producers, and investors.
- Enhance networking and collaboration within and across industries.
- Improve water literacy in the region.
- Streamline processes and reduce duplication of activities.
- Clearly define the advantages of the district and the market positioning. Consider preparing promotional materials to showcase investment opportunities in the region.
- Support informed decision-making in agribusiness through cost-benefit analysis, case studies and research.

Opportunities

- A light industrial precinct in Koondrook that can accommodate and co-locate agriculture supply-chain and value-add businesses.
- Serviced industrial land to support agribusiness development.
- Improved trunk infrastructure, such as water, power and transport networks, for essential services and to support new agribusiness projects.
- Short-term labour accommodation solutions to retain and attract workers.
- Investment in irrigation and water infrastructure to modernise the region's farming capabilities.
- Enhanced manufacturing capabilities to process locally grown products.
- Attract investment interest from international markets.
- Emerging opportunities in alternative farming, such as genetically-modified water-resistant grass to enhance livestock resilience.
- Potential for a cross-border food producers' group and collaboration.
- Unique production opportunities, including aquaculture and hydroponics.

Barriers

- Ageing and inadequate infrastructure for manufacturing and production.
- High costs of doing business and inefficiencies in supply chains.
- Labour force challenges such as an ageing workforce and labour shortages.
- Limited youth participation in farming and agribusiness careers due to perceived barriers.
- Lack of coordination in networking and industry collaboration – networking occurring on an ad-hoc basis rather than through structured initiatives.
- Challenges with biosecurity, insurance and policies affecting agribusiness growth potential.



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3

Tourism Development

Statement

Koondrook’s destination appeal is linked to the town’s village and heritage charactering, along with the unique natural surroundings.

Visitation to Koondrook and District has the potential to grow with investment in new tourism products and experiences that activate these assets, combined with greater market awareness.

Koondrook’s natural advantages lends itself to nature-based, recreation, outdoor adventure, and cultural and heritage tourism.

Areas of Focus

- Water activation
- Nature, outdoor & recreation
- Accommodation, hospitality & events
- Culture & heritage

Objectives

- Investment attraction in the tourism and accommodation sector.
- New business and job creation in the tourism sector.
- Increase visitation and visitor expenditure, including repeat visitation and new market segments.
- Increase in average length of stay and visitor yield.

What did we hear?

Strengths & Advantages

- The Murray River and Gunbower Forest are diverse natural environments, making the region an attractive destination for outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism.
- The natural assets attract visitors, and provide a strong foundation for further activation and enhancement.
- The region has significant heritage and cultural appeal, with sites like the Arbuthnot Mill and opportunities to showcase First Nations cultural heritage.
- The wetlands and forested areas support a rich variety of wildlife, creating strong potential for birdwatching, wetland walks, guided tours and other ecotourism activities.
- Tourism development in Koondrook can deliver broader benefits to the local community by improving amenities, creating jobs and enhancing liveability for residents.

Community Aspirations

- Activate and enhance key natural assets, including Gunbower Island, Gunbower Forest and the Murray River.
- Improve the visitor experience with new and diverse offerings for visitors, including nature and water-based activities, dining and events.
- Improve visitor amenity and the tourism product offering to serve the needs and preferences of visitors, improve visitor satisfaction, attract new visitor markets, support longer stays and yield, and encourage repeat visitation.
- Promote cultural and timber heritage through interpretation and tours, including Arbuthnot Mill and First Nations heritage.
- Job creation and business growth, particularly in tourism services and outdoor recreation.

Opportunities

- Improve awareness and activation of the Gunbower Forest, Gunbower Island and Murray River.
- Support a re-imagining and enhancement of the Koondrook caravan park (e.g. Holiday/Cabin Park).
- Improve access to key waterways through equipment hire services, including equipment hire for kayaks, paddle boards and fishing gear.
- Improved interpretation and maintenance of existing trails and signage, including walking, cycling and canoe trails.
- A central visitor hub and gathering point in Koondrook for visitors to gather information, plan activities and experiences and a base to explore the district.
- New and enhanced dining experiences.
- Improved mooring infrastructure to support paddle seamers and boat charters.
- The region has the potential to host a variety of events and festivals, including river-themed celebrations, music festivals and cultural events.
- Event facilities to assist with event and festival activations in Koondrook.
- Activation of waterways and the ability for visitors to engage with the water is sub optimal. Opportunities for more water-based activities should be explored, including recreational boating, padding (e.g. kayaking, canoeing) and fishing.

Barriers

- Visitor awareness of how to visit and experience Gunbower Forest is relatively low.
 - Poor conditions such as inundation in the Gunbower Forest and Gunbower Island make some trails unsuitable for cycling, trail running and bushwalking.
 - Mooring infrastructure for paddle steamers is inadequate, and varying water levels on the Murray River can be a barrier for paddle steamers to stopover and travel through.
 - Generally, visitors do not bring their own outdoor recreation equipment, such as fishing rods, canoes, kayaks. This is a barrier for visitors to engage with these activities.
 - Funding constraints make it difficult to maintain and improve tourism infrastructure and assets within nature-based areas.
 - Some forms of development within the Gunbower Forest is prohibited and/or restricted.
 - The scale of the local labour force and pool of workers may inhibit tourism business growth.
-



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4

Enabling Infrastructure & Services

Statement

An adequate and market ready supply of zoned land is critical for housing and business growth. This combined with other essential infrastructure and services will provide a conducive environment for investment and enable Koondrook to respond to economic opportunities as they arise.

Areas of Focus

- Residential and employment land supply and activation
- Essential infrastructure and services

Objectives

- New housing growth
- Housing diversity
- Business attraction and creation
- Increased health and community services
- Community wellbeing



What did we hear?

Strengths & Advantages

- Koondrook has the advantage of being a cross-border town with Barham, which allows the towns to function as one and provide support to each other.
- Koondrook is centrally located, with good access to larger regional centres of Swan Hill, Echuca, Bendigo and Shepparton.
- The town's location near the Murray River and Gunbower Creek adds to the lifestyle advantages of the area.
- The public and community assets that already exist in the town are well utilised and cherished by the community. These include the Koondrook Primary School, the swimming pool at Willow Park Reserve, Koondrook Recreation Reserve, the all-abilities playground, Apex Park and the waterfront area.
- The local cricket club and Mens Shed are important assets to the town. The cricket club has high membership and participation in both junior and senior teams.
- There has been quite a lot of new residents that have moved to Koondrook in the past few years, further highlighting the appeal of the place. A lot of young families are living in the area now, and this has translated to strong placements at the Koondrook Primary School.
- The recent attraction of new residents has been a real positive for the town, and added to the vibrancy of the area.

Community Aspirations

- The town centre needs a few more retail and hospitality businesses to improve the vibrancy of the town. A service station would be good for Koondrook.
- More active residential land and housing development is needed to attract and retain working families and provide existing and prospective residents with more housing choices.
- More residential land should be planned for to ensure there is a rolling supply of land that is available for current and future residents.

Opportunities

- New small businesses are needed in the town, such as retail and hospitality.
- More active residential land and housing development is needed to attract and retain working families and provide existing and prospective residents with more housing choices.
- Childcare, health care and aged care services are much needed services in Koondrook.

Barriers

- Investment attraction can be challenging without strong underlying and consistent population growth.
- New business and housing development requires land that is available, developable and market ready, which can be relatively scarce.
- Increased services often requires a suitable level of workers and skills. Labour shortages can present barriers to realisation.

04

Action Plan

An action plan has been prepared to support the implementation of the Strategy over the next 5 years.

An indicative timeframe and relevant lead and partner stakeholders are identified to support implementation. Timeframes are categorised as follows:

- Short term (0-2 years);
- Medium term (2-3 years);
- Long term (3-5 years); and
- Ongoing.

This Local Development Strategy has been prepared in the context of Gannawarra Shire’s planning framework and broader regional priorities.

The Action Plan is subject to Gannawarra Shire Council's standard budget approval process. It is noted that several actions will require external funding assistance. The implementation of the LDS should also be regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure actions remain relevant and deliverable.

Key Partners: Governance Framework

The LDS will be implemented over time in partnership with a range of stakeholders. Delivery of the Strategy is a collaborative process that will involve a range of government, industry and community partners. The key partners that may assist with implementation of the LDS at a local, regional, state and federal level are outlined below.

Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gannawarra Shire Council • Koondrook Development Committee • Innovation Working Groups (e.g. agribusiness and tourism) • Local businesses • Local residents • Community Groups
Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murray Regional Tourism • Murray River Shire Council • Cross-border Commissioner • Murray Connect • Barham Inc.
State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) • Regional Development Victoria (RDA) • Parks Victoria • Invest Victoria • Visit Victoria
Federal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Development Australia (RDA) • Austrade

Actions

1. Enhanced Liveability & Township Improvements

No.	Action	Timeframe	Lead/s	Partner/s
1	<p>Complete a Structure Plan for Koondrook to guide long term change and growth within the urban area.</p> <p>Ensure the Structure Plan considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering sealed roads; • Adequate drainage infrastructure; • Active transport access and connections (e.g. pedestrians, cycling); • Residential and industrial land supply availability; • Community and recreation infrastructure and services; • Streetscape amenity and beautification; and • Family friendly activities and experiences. 	Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gannawarra Shire Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koondrook Development Committee • Local residents and businesses
2	Support the delivery of the Koondrook Levee Bank.	Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gannawarra Shire Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koondrook Development Committee
3	Investigate the feasibility of establishing a contemporary, multi-purpose community hub.	Medium term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gannawarra Shire Council • Koondrook Development Committee 	
4	Support community groups and volunteers who are critical to community development, social cohesion and civic pride.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gannawarra Shire Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koondrook Development Committee

* forms part of Action 1.

Actions

2. Agribusiness: Diverse, Innovative and Resilient

No.	Action	Timeframe	Lead/s	Partner/s
5	<p>Investigate the feasibility of developing a light industrial precinct in Koondrook, with a focus on food innovation and agribusiness supply chain and value-add activities. Ensure the feasibility study considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The optimal location and site, including land capability, ownership and developability; Land requirements and optimal lot sizes; Trunk infrastructure requirements (e.g. drainage, water sewer); and Servicing requirements. 	Medium to long term*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gannawarra Shire Council DEECA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Koondrook Development Committee Local agribusinesses, farmers and producers
6	<p>Support the establishment of a representative group for farmers and producers in Koondrook and District such as a Farmers Cooperative. This will provide a support system for producers in the region to encourage collaboration, innovation, industry growth and development.</p>	Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Koondrook Development Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local agribusinesses, farmers and producers Gannawarra Shire Council
7	<p>Prepare an 'Agribusiness Investment Attraction Strategy and Prospectus' for Koondrook and District. The collateral should seek to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and promote strengths and advantages of the region that relate to agribusiness; Identify and promote value-adding opportunities; and Identify and promote intensive and alternative farming opportunities. 	Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gannawarra Shire Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local agribusinesses, farmers and producers Koondrook Development Committee
8	<p>Identify and promote circular economy initiatives that are relevant to Koondrook's agriculture and horticulture sector.</p>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gannawarra Shire Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEECA
9^	<p>Investigate the potential to establish a produce/farmers market in Koondrook that showcases and sells the produce of the District and surrounding region.</p>	Medium term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local agribusinesses, farmers and producers Koondrook Development Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gannawarra Shire Council

*Action 1 (Structure Plan) would need to be completed first.

^Action 6 would need to be completed first.

Actions

3. Tourism Development

No.	Action	Timeframe	Lead/s	Partner/s
10	<p>Prepare a 'Gunbower Forest and Gunbower Island Activation Masterplan'.</p> <p>This should support passive and active product and experience development, visitor activations and visitor dispersal such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wetlands walk and viewing platform; • Passive and active recreation experiences (e.g. bushwalking, bird watching, sightseeing, nature-based immersion); • Interpretive and wayfinding signage; and • Koondrook to Cohuna trail ride. 	Medium term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gannawarra Shire Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEECA • Parks Victoria • Murray Regional Tourism
11	<p>Investigate the feasibility of developing a 'Gunbower Forest Discovery Centre' in the Koondrook town centre; a central hub and starting point in Koondrook for visitors to experience the Gunbower Forest.</p> <p>The Centre could provide visitor information on guided walks, trail rides, indigenous history, local flora and fauna, as well as equipment hire for activities such as recreational boating (kayak, canoe), trail cycling and fishing.</p>	Long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gannawarra Shire Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koondrook Development Committee • Murray Regional Tourism
12	<p>Prepare a 'Waterway Activation Plan' for Murray River and Gunbower Creek. Ensure the Plan considers passive and active water activities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational boating; • Fishing • Paddling (kayak, canoe, stand up paddle); • Commercial boat tours / river cruises; and • Enabling infrastructure (mooring, boat launch, pontoons, signage). 	Medium term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gannawarra Shire Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEECA • Koondrook Development Committee • Murray Regional Tourism
13	<p>Support the delivery of the Murray River Adventure Trail (MRAT). Promote the Barham to Barham stage of MRAT once complete and operational.</p>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gannawarra Shire Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murray Regional Tourism • Murray River Shire Council

Actions

3. Tourism Development (Continued)

No.	Action	Timeframe	Lead/s	Partner/s
14	<p>Advocate for commercial accommodation investment in Koondrook and District, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Riverfront Holiday/Tourist Park; • Experiential accommodation (e.g. farm stays); and • Contemporary boutique short stay accommodation. 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gannawarra Shire Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murray Regional Tourism
15*	<p>Prepare a 'Tourism Investment Attraction Strategy and Prospectus'.</p> <p>This should seek to Identify and promote strengths and advantages of the region that relate to tourism, as well as specific investment opportunities.</p>	Long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gannawarra Shire Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murray Regional Tourism
16	<p>Advocate for a suitable commercial hospitality/function operator to activate the Koondrook Goods Shed.</p>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gannawarra Shire Council • Goods Shed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koondrook Development Committee • Murray Regional Tourism
17	<p>Advocate for funding to assist with the delivery of the timber heritage experience and raised walkway at Arbuthnot Sawmill.</p>	Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arbuthnot Sawmill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gannawarra Shire Council • Murray Regional Tourism
18	<p>Support the establishment of First Nations cultural heritage tours in Koondrook and District to showcase the local cultural significance of the area.</p>	Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barapa Barapa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gannawarra Shire Council • Koondrook Development Committee • Murray Regional Tourism

*Action 10 and 12 would need to be completed first.

Actions

4. Enabling Infrastructure & Services

No.	Action	Timeframe	Lead/s	Partner/s
19	Encourage new, diverse and affordable housing in Koondrook to meet the needs of residents and key workers.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gannawarra Shire Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Koondrook Development Committee
20	Advocate for new retail and hospitality business and services to establish in Koondrook's town centre.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gannawarra Shire Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Koondrook Development Committee
21	Advocate for the adequate provision of health care, childcare and aged care services in the region to support the current and future needs of residents and workers.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gannawarra Shire Council Murray River Shire Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victorian State Government Koondrook Development Committee Cross-border Commissioner
22	Advocate for new telecommunications and digital infrastructure to ensure businesses have reliable and secure internet access and coverage.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gannawarra Shire Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Koondrook Development Committee Victorian State Government Cross-border Commissioner
23	Support cross border collaboration to strengthen advocacy priorities, especially for major economic and infrastructure projects with regional scale benefits (e.g. transport, water, energy, digital).	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross Border Commissioner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gannawarra Shire Council Koondrook Development Committee Murray River Shire Council



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KOONDROOK STRUCTURE PLAN

QUESTION AND ANSWER TABLE

Question	Answer
<p>What is a Structure Plan?</p>	<p>A structure plan is a strategic framework that guides the development or redevelopment of an area by defining future land use patterns, infrastructure, and key features.</p> <p>Its key aims are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to plan for and develop a shared vision for the activity centre/town, and, • to identify the type and scope of change projected within the activity centre over time. <p>It provides a comprehensive guide for urban development, outlining how land will be used and developed over time. It aims to ensure that growth is managed effectively, balancing various needs such as housing, employment, infrastructure, transportation, and public spaces.</p>
<p>Why is a Structure Plan needed for Koondrook?</p>	<p>To work with Koondrook’s residents, businesses, service agencies and associated parties to develop a vision and methodology to plan and implement its growth, including how best to provide housing and employment in coming years.</p>
<p>How long does it take to prepare a Structure Plan?</p>	<p>It is general experience in local government that a minimum of 12 months is required to prepare a Structure Plan and have it ready for adoption by Council.</p>



<p>What process is involved in preparing a Structure Plan?</p>	<p>A Structure Plan is prepared through a seven-step process. Council is involved throughout the life of the project.</p> <p>A formal report seeking Council approval is provided through step 1 (project establishment and adoption of a project plan) and step 5 (adoption of the Structure Plan).</p> <p>Council will be briefed on preparation of a discussion paper (step 3) and a draft Structure Plan (step 4).</p> <p>The structure planning process</p>
<p>Where will new housing, commercial and industrial development be directed and will there be any land rezonings needed?</p>	<p>This will be a key element of the Structure Plan. Any expansion of the town or intensification of development within its current boundaries will be planned using local knowledge with input from community members and Councillors along with input from organisations such as the State Government, Murray River Council and servicing agencies.</p>
<p>How much will it cost to service any new or more intense development? Factor in drainage, sewer, electricity, flood control, fire control....</p>	<p>It is likely that new trunk infrastructure will connect to existing services which should reduce costs.</p>



<p>How will the community benefit from Structure Planning?</p>	<p>The Structure Plan will benefit the community in providing a plan they had a strong role in developing and will be vested in its implementation.</p> <p>The community will understand how land should be used and how it should be developed, including any expansion of the town outside of its current boundaries to accommodate new housing, shops, commercial buildings and industry.</p> <p>The Plan will identify locations for jobs and provide action to implement their creation. Council's Economic Development will be a core contributor to this element of the plan.</p> <p>The Plan will identify locations for new public open space</p> <p>Urban design – will provide recommendations for improvements to existing and future public spaces. These improvements, making our communities more livable, will attract more residents and more development.</p>
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7.5 QUARTERLY BUDGET REPORT - QUARTER ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2025

Author: Deanne Caserta, Manager Financial Services
Authoriser: Phil Higgins (Acting Director Corporate Services)

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the report outlining the 2025/2026 Quarterly Budget Report as of 31 December 2025, including the budget amendments for the financial year to date.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council was last presented with its quarterly budget report in November 2025; this was for the September 2025 quarter.

This report has seen a refresh of the format with greater detail and reaffirm alignment with the statements and content with the Financial Statements and to reinforce to the Councillors and public about the financial health of Council.

As of 31 December 2025, Council is showing an underlying surplus YTD of \$8.85 million, which is \$1.87 million more than budgeted for the same period. Income has a variance of \$0.39 million, and there is a \$1.47 million variance for expenditure YTD.

Council is forecasting a \$4.33 million underlying deficit for 30 June 2026, which is an increase in the deficit of \$3.85 million on the 2025/26 adopted budget.

The adopted capital budget for 2025/26 is \$19.320 million. There has been an increase in the forecasted capital works budget by \$1.481 million to recognise multiyear projects carried over from 2024/25. Anticipated budgeted spend by 30 June 2026 is \$20.801 million. 38% of the forecasted capital works budget had been either spent or committed by 31 December 2025. This was 30% as of 30 September 2025.

PURPOSE

Council prepares a quarterly financial report as of 30 September, 31 December and 31 March each year. The purpose of the report is to ensure that the financial position of the Council is being managed and that the Council remains financially sustainable.

DISCUSSION

The Quarterly Budget Report (QBR) presents the interim financial position to 31 December 2025.

The attached report has been updated to bring the format into line with that as presented within the Annual Financial Statements. It also provides commentary on any major variations between year-to-date budget versus year-to-date actuals.

This report has been presented and discussed at the Council Briefing in February along with presentation at the recent Audit and Risk Meeting.

RELEVANT LAW

Section 97 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) requires a quarterly report to be presented to Council at a Council meeting which is open to the public, showing a comparison of the actual and budgeted results to date and an explanation of any material differences.

In accordance with Section 97 (3) of the Act the Chief Executive Officer states that this second quarterly report of a financial year does not require a revised budget.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

The Quarterly Budget Report links to the budget process and the Council decision relating to the budget adoption on 18 June 2025.

OPTIONS

This report is presented to discuss in more detail the Council's financial position as of 31 December 2025.

Council has the option to either adopt the report or refer certain items for a further report or investigation.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Council staff review the financial position of Council every month and with Councillors and Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) every quarter, this ensures that Council assesses and complies with both financial and compliance risks.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The 2025/26 Budget went through extensive consultation. No further community engagement has been undertaken.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The attachment provided includes all components required from a compliance position, and other information that has been seen as relevant to Councillors.

COLLABORATION

Council Officers with responsibility for line budgets have had input into the report.

This report was discussed at the Audit and Risk Committee meeting on 3 February 2026.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

This QBR presents the interim financial position to 31 December 2025, and comparing these results to the four key budget principles identified in the Financial Plan reveals the following analysis:

- Underlying Result deficit – the overall deficit is \$4.33 million, but there are one-off issues that need to be considered to get back to an adjusted underlying result. These one-off items include VGC income \$3.603 million, operating grants net cost \$90K favourable and flood expenditure \$212K. This results in an adjusted underlying result of \$605K deficit. This is a deterioration of \$127K.
- Asset Renewal ratio – For 2025/26, the original budget was 94.9%. The revised forecast is 120.8%. This reflects the change in forecasted depreciation.
- Debt – The Council remains debt-free.
- Cash flow – the forecast balance for Cash and Cash Equivalents and Other Financial Assets for 2025/26 in the original budget was \$12.86 million. The revised forecast is \$17.8 million.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

The Budget and Annual Financial Statements are prepared in accordance with the accounting standards. Provision of financial reports on at least a quarterly basis is a requirement of the Local Government Act.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

Goal 3: Sustainability - Achieve long-term financial and environmental sustainability.

1. Manage Council's budget responsibly by delivering cost-effective services, pursuing new revenue opportunities, and ensuring long-term financial sustainability.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in this matter.

ATTACHMENTS

1. QBR - December 2025 - Council Meeting Format [7.5.1 - 10 pages]

GANNAWARRA SHIRE

QUARTERLY REPORT

QUARTER ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2025



1. Introduction

This is the first report produced in a varied format to what has been presented to Council and the Audit and Risk Committee previously and this will continue to grow and develop as the quarters pass. Staff will continue to seek feedback to ensure this report provides relevant information to inform not only these audiences but also the Gannawarra community as a whole.

During quarter two of 2025/26 the financial statements for 2024/25 were completed, with sign off by the Victorian Auditor General's Office on 13 October 2025 after adoption 'in principle' was received by Councillors on 17 September 2025. After this milestone was completed, work commenced on the 2026/27 budget and is on schedule to meet the 30 June 2026 adoption timeframe.

2. Financial Statements

2.1 Comprehensive Income Statement

	Note	As at 31 December 2025			Projected Year End		
		YTD Budget \$000	YTD Actual \$000	YTD Variance \$000	FY Budget \$000	FY Forecast \$000	FY Adjustments \$000
Income							
Rates and charges	1	16,669	16,655	(14)	16,573	16,744	172
Statutory fees and fines	2	106	138	32	267	274	8
User fees	3	1,368	1,434	66	2,699	2,714	15
Grants operating	4	5,578	5,498	(81)	12,493	9,505	(2,989)
Contributions and donations		45	134	89	47	47	-
Reimbursements		40	59	19	79	79	-
Sale of assets		347	571	223	490	490	-
Cost of assets sold		(199)	(237)	(38)	(258)	(258)	-
Interest earned		150	276	126	300	300	-
Other income		183	155	(28)	366	366	-
Total income		24,287	24,681	394	33,056	30,262	(2,794)
Expenses							
Employee costs	5	(7,528)	(7,059)	469	(14,885)	(15,308)	(423)
Operational materials and services	6	(5,431)	(4,371)	1,061	(9,496)	(10,563)	(1,067)
Bad and doubtful debts		-	(7)	(7)	-	-	-
Finance costs - Leases	7	-	(26)	(26)	-	(51)	(51)
Depreciation	8	(4,164)	(4,084)	79	(8,729)	(8,085)	644
Depreciation - Right of use assets	9	-	(79)	(79)	-	(159)	(159)
Other expenses		(187)	(210)	(23)	(424)	(424)	-
Total expenses		(17,309)	(15,836)	1,474	(33,534)	(34,590)	(1,056)
Underlying surplus/(deficit)		6,978	8,845	1,867	(478)	(4,327)	(3,850)
Grants - Capital and major projects	10	5,662	5,571	(91)	9,710	12,036	2,326
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		12,640	14,416	1,776	9,233	7,709	(1,524)

2.2 Balance Sheet

	2024/25 Actual	YTD Actual	Projected Year End 30 June 2026
	\$000	\$000	\$000
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	10,031	18,788	13,351
Trade and other receivables	5,132	16,148	5,132
Financial assets	15,304	4,448	4,448
Inventories	222	144	222
Other assets	693	0	693
Total current assets	31,383	39,663	23,846
Non-current assets			
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	341,568	343,448	353,867
Right-of-use assets	1,271	1,191	1,112
Investment assets	1,100	1,100	1,100
Total non-current assets	343,938	345,739	356,078
Total assets	375,321	385,402	379,924
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	3,386	-1	3,386
Trust funds and deposits	766	2,849	766
Contract and other liabilities	2,962	0	0
Lease liabilities (CL)	144	147	150
Provisions (CL)	3,876	3,876	3,876
Total current liabilities	11,134	6,872	8,178
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions (NCL)	966	966	966
Lease liabilities (NCL)	1,136	1,062	986
Total non-current liabilities	2,102	2,028	1,952
Total liabilities	13,236	8,900	10,130
Net assets	362,085	376,502	369,794
Equity			
Accumulated surplus	117,305	131,721	125,014
Reserves	244,780	244,779	244,780
Total equity	362,085	376,501	369,794

2.3 Statement of Capital Works

	Not	Adopted Budget \$000	YTD Actuals \$000	Commitments \$000	Total Expenditure \$000	Projected Forecast - Total Cost \$000	Permanent Adjustments \$000
PROPERTY							
Land							
Various water levee projects		\$ 898	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 898	\$ -
Various waterfront projects		\$ 3,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,000	\$ -
Building improvements							
Building renewal		\$ 150	\$ 28	\$ 11	\$ 38	\$ 150	\$ -
TOTAL PROPERTY		\$ 4,048	\$ 28	\$ 11	\$ 38	\$ 4,048	\$ -
PLANT AND EQUIPMENT							
Plant, machinery and equipment							
Heavy plant replacement		\$ 1,310	\$ 358	\$ 470	\$ 828	\$ 1,310	\$ -
Light plant replacement		\$ 355	\$ 184	\$ 104	\$ 288	\$ 355	\$ -
Other plant and equipment		\$ 20	\$ -	\$ 30	\$ 30	\$ 20	\$ -
Computers and telecommunications							
Information technology program renewals	1	\$ 180	\$ 4	\$ -	\$ 4	\$ 305	\$ 125
Library books							
Library book replacement		\$ 100	\$ 69	\$ 21	\$ 90	\$ 100	\$ -
TOTAL PLANT AND EQUIPMENT		\$ 1,965	\$ 615	\$ 625	\$ 1,240	\$ 2,090	\$ 125
INFRASTRUCTURE							
Roads							
Bitumen roads reseal program		\$ 1,061	\$ 463	\$ -	\$ 463	\$ 1,061	\$ -
Gravel re-sheeting program		\$ 1,210	\$ 678	\$ 1	\$ 679	\$ 1,210	\$ -
Sealed roads rehabilitation program		\$ 1,022	\$ 768	\$ 30	\$ 798	\$ 1,022	\$ -
Flood betterment works		\$ 1,050	\$ 172	\$ 71	\$ 243	\$ 1,050	\$ -
Safer local roads and streets program	2	\$ 2,000	\$ 26	\$ -	\$ 26	\$ 1,724	\$ (276)
Bridges							
Bridge renewal		\$ 100	\$ 73	\$ -	\$ 73	\$ 100	\$ -
Footpaths and cycleways							
Footpath replacement program		\$ 180	\$ 134	\$ 16	\$ 150	\$ 180	\$ -
Kerb and channel							
Kerb replacement program		\$ 300	\$ 51	\$ 78	\$ 129	\$ 300	\$ -
Drainage							
Drainage renewal program		\$ 300	\$ 90	\$ -	\$ 90	\$ 300	\$ -
Recreational, leisure and community facilities							
Swimming pool renewal program		\$ 150	\$ 61	\$ 14	\$ 75	\$ 150	\$ -
Parks, open space and streetscapes							
Open space renewal		\$ 50	\$ 10	\$ -	\$ 10	\$ 50	\$ -
Other infrastructure							
Strategic project development and planning	3	\$ 250	\$ 28	\$ -	\$ 28	\$ 162	\$ (88)
Development open space program		\$ 500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 500	\$ -
Aquatic program developmnet		\$ 1,280	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,280	\$ -
TOTAL INFRASTRUCTURE		\$ 9,453	\$ 2,554	\$ 210	\$ 2,764	\$ 9,089	\$ (364)
TOTAL NEW CAPITAL WORKS		\$ 15,466	\$ 3,196	\$ 846	\$ 4,042	\$ 15,226	\$ (239)

	Note	Adopted Budget \$000	YTD Actuals \$000	Commitments \$000	Total Expenditure \$000	Projected Forecast - Total Cost \$000	Permanent Adjustments \$000
Works carried forward from the 2024/25 year							
PROPERTY							
Buildings							
Library development projects	4	\$ 558	\$ 1,415	\$ 287	\$ 1,702	\$ 1,561	\$ 1,003
TOTAL PROPERTY		\$ 558	\$ 1,415	\$ 287	\$ 1,702	\$ 1,561	\$ 1,003
PLANT AND EQUIPMENT							
Computers and telecommunications							
Major project implementation		\$ 648	\$ 244	\$ 253	\$ 497	\$ 626	\$ (22)
TOTAL PLANT AND EQUIPMENT		\$ 648	\$ 244	\$ 253	\$ 497	\$ 626	\$ (22)
INFRASTRUCTURE							
Drainage							
Flood betterment	5	\$ 744	\$ -	\$ 181	\$ 181	\$ 938	\$ 194
Waste management							
Landfill renewal works		\$ 584	\$ 29	\$ 13	\$ 42	\$ 584	\$ -
Parks, open space and streetscapes							
Water sustainability projects	6	\$ 1,320	\$ 1,212	\$ -	\$ 1,212	\$ 1,412	\$ 91
TOTAL INFRASTRUCTURE		\$ 2,649	\$ 1,241	\$ 194	\$ 1,435	\$ 2,934	\$ 285
TOTAL CARRIED FORWARD CAPITAL WORKS 2024/25		\$ 3,855	\$ 2,900	\$ 734	\$ 3,634	\$ 5,120	\$ 1,265
Other projects							
Flood repairs		\$ -	\$ 6	\$ -	\$ 6	\$ -	\$ -
Levee design program		\$ -	\$ 33	\$ 17	\$ 51	\$ 50	\$ 50
Township protection levee program	7	\$ -	\$ 53	\$ 88	\$ 141	\$ 265	\$ 265
Levee acquisition	8	\$ -	\$ 11	\$ -	\$ 11	\$ 140	\$ 140
TOTAL OTHER PROJECTS		\$ -	\$ 104	\$ 105	\$ 209	\$ 455	\$ 455
TOTAL WORKS 2025/26		\$ 19,320	\$ 6,201	\$ 1,685	\$ 7,885	\$ 20,801	\$ 1,481

2.4 Statement of Cash Flows

Description	2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Year to Date	Projected Forecast To 30 June 2026
Cash flows from operating activities			
Rates and charges	15,211	4,775	16,744
Statutory Fees and Fines	344	132	274
User fees	1,588	1,736	2,985
Grants - operating	14,078	5,123	9,130
Grants - capital	8,303	2,984	9,450
Contributions monetary	173	134	47
Interest received	1,284	276	300
Trust funds and deposits taken	(649)	-	-
Other receipts	636	214	490
Net GST refund	(305)	402	2,814
Employee costs	(13,546)	(7,059)	(15,308)
Materials and services	(8,747)	(4,442)	(11,604)
Trust funds and deposits paid		2,105	-
Other payments	(600)	(210)	(466)
Net cash provided by operating activities	17,770	6,170	14,856
Cash flows from investing activities			
Payment for property, infrastructure, plant and	(14,681)	-	(22,881)
Proceeds from property, infrastructure, plant and	449	571	539
Payment for investments	(28,804)	-	-
Proceeds from sale of investments	28,707	10,856	10,856
Net cash used in investing activities	(14,329)	11,427	(11,486)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Proceeds from borrowings			-
Finance costs	(28)	(26)	(51)
Loan redemption	(53)	-	-
Net cash used in financing activities	(81)	(26)	(51)
Net increase / (decrease) in cash and invest.	3,360	17,571	3,320
Cash and investments at beginning of year	6,671	10,031	10,031
Cash and investments at end of financial period	10,031	27,602	13,351
Investments on hand at year end	15,304	4,448	4,448
Total cash, cash equivalents and investments	25,335	32,050	17,799

3. Notes to the Statements

3.1 Comprehensive Income Statement

1 – Rates and charges (favorable \$172K)

- Some rate income has been reclassified under PiLoR, with further new agreements coming into effect in 2025/26.
- PiLoR income is projected to increase in 2025/26 due to the commencement of electricity generation by two new solar farms.

2 – Statutory fees and fines (favorable \$8K)

- Local Government election fines and penalties from residents who did not vote in prior council elections, Council does not budget for this unknown item.

3 – User fees (favorable \$15K)

- Additional income received from VicRoads and V/Line and has now been included in the 2025/26 budget.

4 – Grants – operating (unfavorable \$2,989K)

- Unearned grant income on 30 June 2025 has been recognised in 2025/26.
- Grant funding is projected to be received for a Local Development Strategies project for Koondrook and surrounding districts. It is to support these communities in their transition away from reliance on the native forest timber industry towards new and sustainable industries.
- Adjustment to reflect the 50% upfront payment of the 2025/26 Victorian Grants Commission grants which were received in June 2025.

5 – Employee costs (unfavorable \$423K)

- Staffing adjustments, some services have seen a reduction with current vacancies in place while others have seen a slight adjustment to hours or banding to reflect the work required.
- Resources in the flood service have been adjusted to ensure the development and oversight of a range of flood recovery initiatives and ensure community recovery information, events and activities are tailored to meet local needs. This is fully funded by a grant received in 2022/23. A funded role also exists for a temporary Finance Officer role to assist with flood-related claims for reimbursement.
- There have been additional costs as a result of the implementation of the EBA.
- An increase to WorkCover premiums for 2025/26.

6 – Operational materials and services (unfavorable \$1,067K)

- Expenditure associated with unearned grant income on 30 June 2025 carried forward for the completion of the programs.

- Balance of Council Flood Support Fund \$250K grant provided in 2023/24 to support immediate clean-up activities on council owned and managed public land and restoration of community services after the December 2023 Victorian flood and storm event.
- Commitment to complete activities related to the Community Recovery Hubs funding received in 2022/23 to support local recovery after the October 2022 Flood event.
- Expenditure related to completing the Local Development Strategies for Koondrook and districts full externally funded project.
- Additional expenditure VGC 2025/26 grant allocation to support this transition, the Commission has commenced a Local Roads Data Reconciliation Project (LRDRP) which aims to reconcile local road length data collected by councils for the Commission with corresponding local road length data in Vicmap.
- Commencement of the service review project.
- Additional expense in relation to the office supplies and postage costs associated with rate notice reminder notices missed in budget process.

7 – Finance costs (leases) – (unfavorable \$51K)

- This relates to leasing costs associated with Right of Use Assets, no budget was allocated in 2025/26.

8 – Depreciation (favorable \$644K)

- Depreciation is forecasted to be lower than budgeted as a result of a reduction in asset values as of 30 June 2025 of some infrastructure assets.

9 – Depreciation (right of use assets) – (unfavorable \$159K)

- This relates to depreciation associated with Right of Use Assets, no budget was allocated in 2025/26.

10 – Grants – capital (favorable \$2,326K)

- Final grant instalment due for Local Roads Community Infrastructure Phase 4.
- Multiyear levee design project was carried over from 2024/25 to be completed this financial year.
- Township Protection Levee Design - Grant funding received to deliver this project.
- Library major project has grant funding carried over to 2025/26.
- Sustainable Recreational Water project will have a final grant payment expected in 2025/26.
- Safer Local Roads and Streets Program - the reduction in grant funding to reflects five fully grant-funded projects that have been scoped and are scheduled for completion by 30 June 2026.

3.2 Statement of Capital Works

- 1 - ICT capital renewals – various large projects carried over from 2024/25.
- 2 - Safer Local Roads and Streets Program - the reduction in expenditure reflects five fully grant-funded projects that have been scoped and are scheduled for completion by 30 June 2026.
- 3 - Strategic project development and planning - Saving allocated towards Council's contribution for the large township protection levee design project.
- 4 – Library works - The large project in this category is now complete but was carried over from 2024/25.
- 5 - Council Flood Support Fund for stormwater and flood affected infrastructure improvements - unspent grant funding for betterment has been carried over to 2025/26 to complete works associated with the October 2022 floods.
- 6 – Water sustainability projects - multi-year project carried over from 2024/25.
- 7 - Township protection levee program- partly grant funded project.
- 8 - Levee acquisition- costs associated with finalising this multi-year project in 2025/26.

7.6 G12-2025 DRFA FLOOD BETTERMENT WORKS

Author: Leigh Hollingworth, Manager Projects & Design
Authoriser: Wade Williams (Director Infrastructure & Development)

RECOMMENDATION

That Council Award contract G12-2025 DRFA Flood Betterment Works to Eco Infrastructure & Engineering Pty Ltd for the lump sum amount of \$697,729.69 (excluding GST), not subject to rise and fall.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines the proposed G12-2025 DRFA Flood Betterment Works, which aim to enhance the resilience of Council infrastructure impacted by recent flood events. The projects are funded under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) and will deliver targeted improvements to reduce future flood risk and improve community safety and road network resilience.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to award contract G12-2025 DRFA Flood Betterment Works to the preferred contractor, enabling the delivery of critical flood mitigation and infrastructure upgrades. The project is made possible through the DRFA Betterment Fund, jointly funded by the Federal and State governments, which is intended to rebuild essential infrastructure damaged by natural disasters to a more resilient standard.

DISCUSSION

The Betterment Fund, as part of the DRFA, provides an opportunity to not just restore an asset to its pre-disaster state, by funding enhancements that will improve the performance and resilience of Council assets in the face of future disasters. Gannawarra Shire has been allocated \$1 million as part of this program with a \$50,000 co-contribution required.

The DRFA Flood Betterment Works have been developed in response to vulnerabilities identified during recent flood events across the Gannawarra municipality. The projects were developed using Council officer knowledge of flooding, along with insights from flood wardens and adjacent landholders to identify higher priority areas and ensure that the proposed works address the needs and concerns of those most affected by flooding.

The project scope includes improvements to roads, drainage, and associated infrastructure in high-risk areas, with the objective of reducing the frequency and severity of flood-related disruptions. Works are only able to be completed on roads that were impacted by the October 2022 floods and were rehabilitated as part of the already completed Rehabilitation of Public Assets (REPA) works.

A total of 11 projects were approved under the DRFA program, these are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Approved Betterment Projects

Location	Project
Gilmour Lane	Construct a 40 m concrete floodway over existing multi-cell culvert.
Kenny Road	Install new 6 cell 1200 x 600mm box culvert with concrete floodway. Lower level of existing roadway.
Suttie Road	Upgrade existing culvert to 4 cell 1200 x 450 mm box-culvert with concrete floodway and shoulder protection.
Connelly Road	Upgrade existing culvert to 600mm diameter with headwalls.
Lalbert–Kerang Road	Install headwalls to existing 1.2m culvert.
Lalbert–Kerang Road	Upgrade existing 600mm culvert to two cells with addition of headwalls.
Normanville Road	Install headwalls to suit 1.2 m × 0.6 m RCBC.
O'Donoghue's Bridge Road	Install new headwalls to suit 600mm culverts.
Potter Lane	Construct a 40m long concrete floodway and install scour protection using 150 mm rock spalls.
Wishart Road	Upgrade existing culvert to 2 cell 1.2 m × 1.2 m RCBC with addition to headwalls and scour protection.
Knight Rd	Replacement of existing causeway with a 2400mm x 600mm box culvert. Concrete floodway and scour protection.

The Knight Road project was completed as part of the Recreational Water for Quambatook project. The remaining 10 projects were advertised for tender, and submissions evaluated based the evaluation criteria below in Table 2.

Table 2: Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Weighting	Sub Weighting	Sub Criteria
Demonstrated skills, experience & capacity to undertake the prescribed works	30%	10%	Experience of contractor & any sub-contractors
		10%	OH&S Policy, procedures and performance record
		10%	Resources & Methodology
Delivery timeline	30%	30%	Ability to coordinate works and deliver within prescribed timelines. Delivery history
Contractor's fees for the works	30%	30%	Comparison based on standard formula
Local Benefit & Environmental Sustainability	10%	5%	Benefits to local employment and economy
		5%	E.g. use of sustainable materials, emission minimisation etc

A total of seven (7) submissions were received for the prices shown in Table 3. Due to completion of the Knight Road project, design work for Suttie Road and Kenny Road, and project management allocation there is a \$796,458 budget to complete the remaining projects. Upon receipt of the tender submissions, it was determined that not all the projects could be delivered within the allocated program budget.

Table 3: Tendered Prices

Tenderer	Full Scope	Revised Scope
Tenderer 1	\$1,384,809.89	\$ 1,048,624.96
Tenderer 2	\$1,747,683.84	\$ 1,362,738.34
Tenderer 3	\$1,127,700.00	\$ 831,750.00
Tenderer 4	\$2,926,269.00	\$ 1,819,529.25
Tenderer 5	\$1,462,665.51	\$ 1,289,912.74
Tenderer 6	\$1,043,213.60	\$ 832,908.00
Eco Infrastructure & Engineering	\$ 994 677.88	\$ 697,729.69

As a result, Council officers refined a prioritised package of works and asked all tenderers to submit pricing and work programs based on this reduced scope. Projects proposed to be completed under this contract are displayed in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Prioritised Betterment Projects

Location	Project
Gilmour Lane	Construct a 40 m concrete floodway over existing multi-cell culvert
Kenny Road	Install new 6 cell 1200 x 600mm box culvert with concrete floodway. Lower level of existing roadway.
Suttie Road	Upgrade existing culvert to 4 cell 1200 x 450 mm box-culvert with concrete floodway and shoulder protection
Connelly Road	Upgrade existing culvert to 600mm diameter with headwalls
Lalbert–Kerang Road	Install headwalls to existing 1.2m culvert

Prices submitted for the revised scope of works are also displayed in Table 3. All tenders were re-evaluated based on the original submission of documentation and the revised pricing and works programs.

RELEVANT LAW

1. *Road Management Act 2004* (VIC): Council is responsible for management of roads for which it is the coordinating road authority. These works will reduce maintenance and rehabilitation costs and improve safety by reducing damage.
2. *Local Government Act 2020* (VIC): requires Councils to manage finances prudently, these projects will reduce future costs to Council for rehabilitation after floods.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

3 January 2023 Council Meeting

Award of contract G09-2022 Flood Recovery Works – Roads, Drainage and Associated Works: Award of schedule of rates contract associated with DRFA rehabilitation works.

20 September 2023 Council Meeting

Award of contracts G05-2023, G06-2023, G07-2023, G08-2023 and G09-2023 relating to flood rehabilitation works under the DRFA.

OPTIONS

1. Award contract G12-2025 DRFA Flood Betterment Works to Eco Infrastructure & Engineering Pty Ltd for the lump sum amount of \$697,729.69 (excluding GST), not subject to rise and fall.
2. Award a contract to an alternate tenderer, noting potential risks to project delivery, compliance, or value for money.
3. Not proceed with the betterment works.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

By improving the design and resilience of local infrastructure, the works will enhance the natural flow of floodwaters, reducing the severity and duration of inundation during future flood events.

In the long term, these measures will contribute to the environmental, social, and economic sustainability of the region by reducing the frequency and cost of emergency repairs, supporting community safety, and ensuring that Council assets are better prepared for the impacts of climate change.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council officers have consulted directly with local flood wardens and adjacent landholders to identify priority areas and ensure that the proposed works address the needs and concerns of those most affected by flooding. Feedback from these stakeholders has informed the scope and design of the project, ensuring that local knowledge and lived experience are incorporated into decision-making

Ongoing communication will be maintained throughout the delivery of the works, with regular updates provided to the community.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Lessons learned from previous flood events and recovery projects have been carefully reviewed and applied to the planning and design of these works.

This includes the adoption of best-practice engineering solutions and the use of resilient materials. Council has also adapted the project designs and construction methods to enhance project outcomes and deliver greater value for money and community benefit.

COLLABORATION

Opportunities for collaborative procurement with other Councils are limited for this project, as the works are funded under the DRFA and each Council has established its own contracts for the delivery of their specified works.

Council officers have engaged with relevant agencies and stakeholders to share knowledge, ensuring alignment with regional floodplain objectives.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The DRFA Flood Betterment Works are underpinned by a funding arrangement that requires Council to contribute \$50,000 to match \$1 million provided through the DRFA. This co-contribution ensures that the project is fully funded and can proceed without placing undue strain on Council's budget.

Importantly, the works are expected to deliver long-term financial benefits by reducing the need for costly rehabilitation following future flood events and minimising disruptions to road access during and after floods. By investing in resilient infrastructure now, Council is taking a proactive approach to managing future risks and safeguarding the community's assets.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

State Emergency Management Plan 2024 (SEMP)

Councils are a participating agency for flood mitigation infrastructure. Council also works with the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) to identify and assess hazards/risks and implement/coordinate specific risk treatments for identified risks.

North Central Regional Floodplain Management Strategy 2018

Regional Priority 2. Construct new flood mitigation infrastructure, resolving ownership and maintenance accountability, and improving floodplain function.

Regional Priority 7. Create a flood-resilient transport system.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

GOAL 1. LIVEABILITY - ENHANCE THE WELLBEING AND LIVEABILITY OF THE GANNAWARRA THROUGH INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

2. Prioritise maintenance, renewal and improvement of assets including local roads, footpaths, and community infrastructure that support accessibility and safety.

GOAL 3. SUSTAINABILITY - ACHIEVE LONG-TERM FINANCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

2. Protect our environment and prepare our community for a changing climate.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in this matter.

ATTACHMENTS

1. G 12-2025 Evaluation [7.6.1 - 2 pages]

Gannawarra Shire Council
 Contract name: DRFA Flood Betterment Works
 Contract number: G12-2025

Criteria	Weighting	Sub-criteria	Sub Weighting	Tenderer 1		Tenderer 2		Tenderer 3		Tenderer 4		Tenderer 5		Tenderer 6		Eco Infrastructure	
				Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score										
1	30%	Experience of contractor & any sub-contractors	10%	7.70	0.77	7.70	0.77	8.70	0.87	7.00	0.70	9.30	0.93	7.30	0.73	6.30	0.63
		OH&S Policy, procedures and performance record	10%	8.30	0.83	8.50	0.85	8.30	0.83	8.70	0.87	8.30	0.83	7.70	0.77	6.70	0.67
		Resources & Methodology	10%	7.30	0.73	6.50	0.65	8.20	0.82	7.30	0.73	8.00	0.80	6.30	0.63	7.20	0.72
2	30%	Ability to coordinate works and deliver within prescribed timelines. Delivery history.	30%	6.00	1.80	4.00	1.20	4.00	1.20	6.00	1.80	4.00	1.20	5.00	1.50	7.00	2.10
3	30%	Contractor's fees for the works	30%	5.00	1.50	2.00	0.60	7.67	2.30	0.00	0.00	2.70	0.81	7.06	2.12	8.35	2.50
4	10%	Benefits to local employment and economy	5%	4.70	0.24	4.30	0.22	5.00	0.25	4.30	0.22	5.00	0.25	7.00	0.35	7.30	0.37
		E.g. use of sustainable materials, emission minimisation etc.	5%	5.70	0.29	5.00	0.25	5.70	0.29	5.30	0.27	6.00	0.30	5.00	0.25	5.00	0.25
TOTAL WEIGHTED SCORE :				6.15		4.54		6.38		4.58		5.12		6.35		7.24	

Criteria	Weight	Sub-criteria	Weighting	Comments	Comments	Comments	Comments	Comments	Comments	Comments
1	30%	Experience of contractor & any sub-contractors	10%	Demonstrates good experience, showing a strong track record on comparable civil works and providing solid evidence of capability.	Demonstrates good experience, showing a strong track record on comparable civil works and providing solid evidence of capability.	Demonstrates extensive experience, with comprehensive evidence of delivering complex civil projects with high performance.	Demonstrates good experience, showing a strong track record on comparable civil works and providing solid evidence of capability.	Demonstrates extensive experience, with comprehensive evidence of delivering complex civil projects with high performance.	Demonstrates good experience, showing a strong track record on comparable civil works and providing solid evidence of capability.	Demonstrates satisfactory experience, meeting the required criteria with adequate evidence of completing similar civil projects to an acceptable standard.
		OH&S Policy, procedures and performance record	10%	3rd party OHS, Enviro and QMS	3rd party OHS, Enviro and QMS	3rd party OHS, Enviro and QMS	3rd party OHS, Enviro and QMS	3rd party OHS, Enviro and QMS	Issued with an improvement notice in 2025 by Worksafe.	Currently in the process of obtaining certification for OHS, EMS and QMS. Existing documentation, policies and procedures are satisfactory.
		Resources & Methodology	10%	Full road closures except for Latbert-Kerang Rd. Detailed methodology provided.	Road closures at all sites. Detailed methodology provided. Works insurance by GSC.	CBR testing at all sites. Minor departures from contract conditions. Detailed methodology provided.	Detailed methodology provided.	Generalised detailed methodology.	Detailed methodology provided.	Full road closures except for Latbert-Kerang Rd. Methodology sufficiently detailed for the scope of works.
2	30%	Ability to coordinate works and deliver within prescribed timelines. Delivery history.	30%	Capacity, resources and experienced staff. 17 June 2026 completion. No conflicting commitments	Capacity, resources and experienced staff. 25 June 2026 completion.	Capacity, resources and experienced staff. 22 June 2026 completion	Capacity, resources and experienced staff. 5 June 2026 completion.	4 major projects underway - 2 nearing completion. 8 July 2026 completion.	Capacity, resources and experienced staff. 24 June 2026 completion.	Have capacity, resources and experienced staff. to undertake the works. 4 June 2026 completion.
3	30%	Contractor's fees for the works	30%	Auto Calculation	Auto Calculation	Auto Calculation	Auto Calculation	Auto Calculation	Auto Calculation	Auto Calculation
4	10%	Benefits to local employment and economy	5%	Echuca based	Echuca based	Echuca based	Based in Melbourne. Procure local materials and services subject to availability	Echuca based. Staff located in Northern Victoria and Southern NSW.	Work delivery by local contractor. Swan Hill based.	65% of work delivery by local contractor. Sponsor local sport team
		E.g. use of sustainable materials, emission minimisation etc	5%	Sourcing all materials including: concrete, pre-cast units & quarry products from local suppliers. Mawsons 100% renewable energy. Modern plant with emission reduction technology.	Possible use or recycled materials e.g. RAP & geotextiles. Timber for formwork sourced from FSC or PEFC certified suppliers.	Incorporate recycled aggregates and RAP. Modern fuel efficient plant. Dust, erosion and sediment management plans. Waste sorting to recover recyclable materials.	Dust and sediment control measures on all civil sites. Commitment to carbon reduction through logistics optimisation. Use locally sourced and recycled materials. Fuel-efficient modern plant.	Modern fuel efficient plant. Energy-efficient infrastructure, including solar systems at depots. Separation and recycling of materials. Erosion and sediment management plans.	Recycling of concrete at own plant for reuse as road base.	Use of locally sourced and recycled materials where possible. Recycle concrete, steel and excess materials, and reusing suitable spoil onsite. Comprehensive erosion, sediment and water management controls prevent impacts on waterways.

Gannawarra Shire Council

Contract name: DRFA Flood Betterment Works
Contract number: G12-2025

<i>Based on "Lump Sum" only</i>	Tenderer 1	Tenderer 2	Tenderer 3	Tenderer 4	Tenderer 5	Tenderer 6	Eco Infrastructure
Tender price:	\$ 1,048,624.96	\$ 1,362,738.34	\$ 831,750.00	\$ 1,819,529.25	\$ 1,289,912.74	\$ 832,908.00	\$ 697,729.69
Median Price	\$ 1,048,624.96	\$ 1,048,624.96	\$ 1,048,624.96	\$ 1,048,624.96	\$ 1,048,624.96	\$ 1,048,624.96	\$ 1,048,624.96
(Median Price -Tender Price)	\$ -	-\$ 314,113.38	\$ 216,874.96	-\$ 770,904.29	-\$ 241,287.78	\$ 215,716.96	\$ 350,895.29
10 x (Median \$ -Tender \$) / Median \$	0.00	-3.00	2.07	-7.35	-2.30	2.06	3.35
Financial Criteria Score:	5.00	2.00	7.07	0.00	2.70	7.06	8.35

Median Price: \$

Financial Criteria Score =
$$\frac{5 + 10 (\text{Median Conforming Tender Price} - \text{Tender Price})}{\text{Median Conforming Tender Price}}$$

7.7 COMMUNITY ASSET COMMITTEE

Author: Phil Higgins, Acting Director Corporate Services
Authoriser: Geoff Rollinson (Chief Executive Officer)

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the report on activities and performance of the Community Asset Committees.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) provides for councils to establish Community Asset Committees for the purpose of managing community assets within the municipality and requires the CEO to submit an annual report to Council in relation to the activities and performance of Community Asset Committees.

This report relates to the activities and performance of the Community Asset Committees for 2024/25.

PURPOSE

This report summarises the activities and performance of the three Council Community Asset Committees during 2024/25 in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

DISCUSSION

In August 2020, the Council established, and appointed members to the following Community Asset Committees in accordance with section 65 of the Act:

- Leitchville War Memorial Swimming Pool Community Asset Committee
- Quambatook Caravan Park Community Asset Committee
- Community Halls Community Asset Committee.

In accordance with section 47 of the Act, the CEO delegated a range of powers, duties and functions to members of the Community Asset Committees to facilitate management of each community asset.

Council acknowledges and appreciates the commitment of these community volunteers in supporting the management of these important community assets.

Community Asset Committee 'activities' are summaries of general information and feedback provided by the committees, whilst 'performance' has been assessed against the respective powers, duties and functions formally delegated to members by the CEO.

Quambatook Caravan Park Community Asset Committee

Activities:

Quambatook Caravan Park patron numbers remained steady this year. The Committee has continued to undertake improvements and maintenance where possible. In 2024/2025, the Caravan Park completed minor improvements to 8 ensuites, including the installation of shelves, benches,

and draft stoppers. A number of upgrades were also seen this financial year through upgrades to the Recreation Room bookcase, dinner setting as well as a cabin upgrade including a new bed, mattress and air conditioner. Broken or damaged items were repaired or replaced. The Caravan Park also secured \$5000 in flood funding to paint and decal ensuite with artworks by local primary school students. Next financial year, the Caravan Park has their sights set on the installation of a triple bay carport for caretaker use and continued refurbishment of bunkhouses.

Performance:

The Committee has been able to operate within the powers, duties and functions delegated to its members, holding its AGM in July and a number of general meetings throughout the year. The Committee meets and keeps in contact with Council staff who provide guidance and support as required.

Community Halls Community Asset Committee:

Activities:

At the most recent meeting of the Community Halls Community Asset Committee, held on 14 October 2025, members reported a positive and steady usage rate during 2024/25, with several regular hirers returning monthly and an increase in ad-hoc event bookings across a number of the facilities including birthday parties, a family reunion and a visit from the Swan Hill Motorcycle Club. Regular events included monthly dinners, community meetings, Christmas functions, lunches, old time dances. Some highlights included Myall Hall's unveiling of a renowned local artist's painting; Lake Charm Hall offered several yoga classes to those in the community, and Dingwall Hall held an annual plant sale. The Sub-Committees, which manage the day-to-day operations of each of the halls, have been active in ensuring regular maintenance of the halls is undertaken.

Performance:

The Committee has operated the powers, duties and functions delegated to its members during this period, with all required meetings held. Committee Chair, Cr Link provides a delegate report to Council on Committee activities following each Committee meeting.

Leitchville Pool Committee:

Activities:

Council staff met with representatives of the Leitchville Pool Committee on site on 13 October 2025. This meeting focused on ensuring that the Leitchville Pool Committee is acting within their delegation and that the pool was ready to open for the upcoming summer season. Whilst the committee was yet to conduct their annual general meeting and have not completed their financial returns, they did have adequate lifeguards ready to be employed for the upcoming season.

Liaison between the committee and Council staff has continued, and whilst the late Spring weather has been mild, it has meant that the pool has not opened as of the report's date. The committee plans to open on the weekend commencing 22 November 2025.

Councillors and staff met with representatives of the pool on 3 February 2026, whilst the pool was in operation. Council was advised that the committee had met and conducted their AGM and had a copy of their financial accounts. These documents are to be provided to Council.

Performance:

The Committee has operated the powers, duties and functions delegated to its members during this period. There are areas for improvement around reporting compliance, financial information, and meeting procedures.

RELEVANT LAW

Local Government Act 2020

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council received a report on the activities of the Community Asset Committees on 19 February 2025. This report was considered by Council on 17 December 2025. At that meeting the Council resolved to lay Item 7.3 - Community Asset Committee on the table until the next Council Meeting in February 2026.

OPTIONS

Whilst this report is a requirement of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council has a number of options in the way that it manages community assets. These include:

- Directly run the facility itself, through Council staff or contractors; or
- Delegate authority to a Community Asset Committee;

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The Community Asset Committees provide services that enhances the social fabric in our communities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The make-up of these committees adds to the community's involvement in the planning, operations and decision making on services in the community. Community members can join these committees.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Community Asset Committees allows a different style of service delivery that may provide innovative methods of service provision.

COLLABORATION

Not applicable.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Community Asset Committees allows a different style of service delivery that provides cost effective methods of service provision. These committees have operated within their allocated budgets.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Compliance with various industry practices and guidelines in the operations of caravan parks, swimming pools and halls apply to Community Asset Committees.

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

GOAL 1. LIVEABILITY - ENHANCE THE WELLBEING AND LIVEABILITY OF THE GANNAWARRA THROUGH INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

2. Prioritise maintenance, renewal and improvement of assets including local roads, footpaths, and community infrastructure that support accessibility and safety.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in this matter.

ATTACHMENTS

1. CHCAC MINUTES OCT 2025 [7.7.1 - 2 pages]
2. QCP AGM MINUTES 2025 [7.7.2 - 6 pages]

Date: 14 October 2025		Time: 6.00pm		Location: Senior Citizens Centre, Kerang	
Chairperson:		Dylan / Mel		Minutes: Dylan	
Invitees:		Keith Link, Melissa Mathers, Dylan Taylor			
		Murrabit Hall – Neil Hopkins, Jeanette Coulter Myall Hall – Graham Cockroft, Gary Napier Dingwall Hall – Alan Bott, Brian Fletcher		Koroop Hall – Stuart Richardson, Alan Pryor Lake Charm Hall – Clarie Gillen, Carol Caldwell Gannawarra Hall – Linda Spence Stanton, Jenny Spence	
Meeting Objective:		To provide a forum for the Community Halls Committee to collaborate and advise on the management and use of their halls.			
No.	Item	Details	Who	Minutes	
1	Apologies*		All	Keith Link, Neil Hopkins, Graeme Cockroft, Gary Napier, Brian Fletcher, Stuart Richardson, Claire Gillen, Linda Spence Stanton, Jenny Spence.	
2	Minutes from previous Meeting*	Confirmation of Minutes of Ordinary Meeting held on 3 February 2025.	All	Confirmed.	
3	Review of Actions*		All	Most actions have been completed. Katrina from Council to update Grant Opportunities email list, to include all Hall members.	
4	Grant Opportunities*		All		
5	Asset Committee Operational Review	Sub-Delegation to Committee has been reviewed and implemented. This has led to changes in the operation of the Halls including the need for a Secretary to organise meetings and create agendas & minutes.	Dylan / Mel	Question has been posed – does this Committee need to exist? Officers to investigate. At next meeting, present options for disbandment, or a new secretary to create agendas / minutes and schedule meetings. Must have a large portion of the Committee attending.	
6	General Business*		All	Koroop Hall given details of a funding opportunity by Lake Charm Hall to potentially buy new chairs.	
7	Preferred day / time for next meeting*		All	7pm, unknown date as yet. Will occur sometime after the November Council Meeting.	
Rules for our Meeting:					
1. We start on time and finish on time 2. We all participate and contribute – everyone is given opportunity to voice their opinions 3. We use improvement tools that enhance meeting efficiency and effectiveness 4. We actively listen to what others have to say, seeking first to understand, then to be reflected on.			5. We follow-up on the action for which are assigned responsibility and complete them on time. 6. We give and receive open and honest feedback in a constructive manner 7. We use data to make decisions (whenever possible) 8. We strive to continually improve our meeting process and build time into each agenda		

Action List:

Meeting Date	Action	Who is responsible	Action Due Date	Completed
22 October 2018	Provide information relating to funding opportunities as they arise via Council's Grants Officer.	Council	As information becomes available	Ongoing
28 November 2024	Investigate who to send account to for Social Meals (Murrabit)	Council/Committee	ASAP	COMPLETE
28 November 2024	Fees and Charges – what is appropriate (Dingwall and Lake Charm)	Council/Committee	ASAP	COMPLETE
28 November 2024	Purchase of new chairs for Koroop Hall	Council/Committee	March 2024	Ongoing
28 November 2024	Council and Gannawarra Reps to meet.	Council	ASAP	COMPLETE

QUAMBATOOK CARAVAN PARK COMMUNITY ASSET COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Annual General Meeting

7:00pm, Tuesday, 15 July 2025 at Quambatook Caravan Park Rec Room

Meeting Opened: 7.02pm

Chaired by: Russell Waldron

Welcome ...

Present: Russell Waldron, Julie Barber, Gary Barber, Esmae Barnes, Ron Charlton, Jacqueline Charlton, Julie Cooper, Gareth (Buc) Kirby, Jack Holt, Pam Holt, Margie Groves, Susan Bremner, Helen Trotter, Bill Skirving, Tamarra Van Ingen.

Apologies Dean Bremner, Andrew Osborne

Confirmation of minutes from last AGM (16/07/24):

Moved: Russell Waldron

Seconded: Gary Barber

BUSINESS ARISING from last AGM:

1. Contribution to Trust - as per motion passed at 248/04/2024 meeting, 10% of QCP's 2023/2024 net profit (being \$4,228) was paid into the Trust's A/c on 30/07/2024.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I am pleased to be able to present this annual report and while it may seem a bit repetitious from last years, it also shows how well the park has been run.

Firstly, I would like to thank all of the volunteers that have served on the committee for the last Year. I am still surprised at the sound financial position the park has been in the last 2 years, and look forward to being able to grow on future asset projects.

Our caretakers Gary and Julie arrived just before Easter, last year and the Tractor Pull, so their introduction was full on for the first week. As usual the Easter weekend was a big event for the Caravan Park with all sites full.

This year's Easter week was still just as eventful, with water leaks, blocked toilets, disruptive patrons, however with the previous years' experience under their belts Gary and Julie managed very well.

Both of our caretakers have involved themselves in the local community and they are both a credit to the way they have helped and become involved. Gary has also been very involved in the restoration of the golf course which has benefited the park as visitors have a great area to exercise. Not only for a hit of golf but it seems to be very popular for dog walkers.

I must also mention the relationship that Julie has developed with Mick from the Council as she has been able to get emergency works done out of hours with what seems to be a minimum of fuss.

Another focus last year concerned the Land Trust and thanks to Esmae’s tireless work we now have a new Trust to discuss and guide the future of the land use and the caravan park. We also seem to have another layer of approval to go through to increase any new assets to be introduced into the park.

Some of the challenges that we have before us last year may have struggled to get off the ground. However, with a few fresh faces and renewed enthusiasm we face another year ahead to build on these projects.

I am thankful for opportunity to be a part of the Park and look forward to it’s exciting future.

Regards,

Russell Waldron
15 July 2025

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**TREASURER’S REPORT**

QUAMBATOOK CARAVAN PARK  
Treasurer Report  
1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

Figures are presented on a cash basis of accounting. Income is recorded when cash is received and expenses are recorded when cash is paid out. It does not take into account any income earned during the financial period (that has not yet been received/deposited) or expenses incurred (that are yet to be paid).

| <u>FINANCIAL YEAR</u> | <u>INCOME</u> | <u>EXPENDITURE</u> | <u>PROFIT/(LOSS)</u> | <u>CAPEX</u> |
|-----------------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| 2016/2017             | 35,231.32     | 33,776.39          | 4,454.93             | 12,465.03    |
| 2017/2018             | 40,350.00     | 26,616.01          | 13,733.99            | 7,167.59     |
| 2018/2019             | 26,050.95     | 13,397.99          | 6,652.96             | 398.00       |
| 2019/2020             | 37,191.50     | 46,183.16          | (8,991.66)           | 23,933.82    |
| 2020/2021             | 29,439.50     | 31,889.17          | (2,449.67)           | 20,256.33    |
| 2021/2022             | 65,350.10     | 46,926.39          | 15,423.71            | 11,426.90    |
| 2022/2023             | 57,272.00     | 38,293.59          | 18,978.41            | 1,971.30     |
| 2023/2024             | 81,236.89     | 38,297.58          | 42,939.31            | 2,470.00     |
| 2024/2025             | 91,089.56     | 47,422.28          | 43,667.28            | 24,649.60    |

At a glance, Quambatook Caravan Park has had another good year financially. While the Profit and Loss Statement shows a healthy profit of \$44K (based on actual income & expenditure of QCP funds) in reality, without the Shire’s contribution towards other costs associated with the running of the park, the result would be a barely “break even” amount of approx. \$7K. It should also be noted that this is without the cost of Public Liability insurance being included in the figures. Shire is unable to provide us with an amount for this as their policy covers an amalgamation of similar assets across the council area ie lumped together.

The good news is that the income stream continues to grow without the need to increase fees. This suggests an increase in patronage and supports the importance of the facility as the main accommodation provider in town. Occupancy throughout the year was steady, with the Easter Tractor Pull weekend and Graincorp’s use of the bunkhouses for harvest workers being the busiest and main income generating periods.

An additional term deposit account was opened during the year. Committee now has two term accounts of approx. \$50K & \$58K respectively. These mature on a rotating basis to allow quick access to funds should they be needed. The purpose of the accounts are to quarantine funds for use as leverage in grant applications, for major projects and to generate some interest earnings. Previously, all funds were kept in the operating account, earning no return.

Expenditure of approx. 50K is higher than the previous financial year. This is mostly attributable to

- the purchase of several pieces of maintenance equipment valued at around \$1K each,
- the planned replacement of older equipment, fittings and furnishings and
- a major project to repair and paint the external roofs of the bunkhouses.

An understatement of approx. \$500 exists with regards rubbish removal expenditure. This is due to the supplier not having issued any invoices for the 6 months Jan-Jun 2025. They are aware of this and are taking steps to reconcile the problem. Retrospective invoice(s) will be issued in due course and should not have a material impact on overall figures for the new financial year.

No grants were pursued during the period however quotes have been sought with a view to seeking grant funding to give the bunkhouses an overdue facelift by painting the bathrooms/toilets and a feature wall in the main living area.

The semi-contra arrangement (approx. value \$21K<sup>1</sup> pa) to have caretakers live on-site is working well. General feedback from patrons and the Quambatook community is very positive. The caretakers have immersed themselves into community life. They have joined local clubs, assisted with the reinstatement and ongoing maintenance of the 6 golf course holes for the aptly named "Wackery" and volunteer with local organisations. Patrons love the park's clean, well-kept facilities and many of the improvements have been at the caretakers (and friends) instigation. Well done and many thanks to Julie, Gary, Robin and Leonie.

Finally, QCP is the only remaining "going concern" on Trust land. Unlike other users of the reserves, QCP has never paid annual fees to the Trust. In recognition of this, at the 2024 AGM, Committee agreed that moving forward, QCP would contribute 10% of its annual net profit (up to a maximum of \$5,000 pa) towards the operations of the Trust. This year's contribution will be \$4,370 (rounded).

QCP's cash position at 30/06/25 is as follows:

|                       |               |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Operating A/c         | \$ 44,381.82  |
| Term Deposit #1       | 58,416.74     |
| Term Deposit #2       | 50,591.79     |
| Caretaker Expense A/c | 333.07        |
| Change kitty          | <u>130.00</u> |
|                       | \$ 153,853.42 |

Esmæ Barnes  
2024/2025 Treasurer

15 July 2025

**ALL REPORTS**

**Moved:** Gary Barber

**Seconded:** Julie Coope

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<sup>1</sup> Powered site (value \$35x 7nights-10%=\$221pw), a private ensuite (value \$5x 7nights=\$35) and \$150pw cash retainer.

**ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS:**

Russell Waldron surrendered the Chair and was replaced by Susan Bremner for the conducting of the election of Office Bearer’s for 2025/2026. All positions were declared vacant and nominations called for.

|                       | <b><u>Nominee</u></b> | <b><u>Nominated by</u></b> | <b><u>Seconded by</u></b> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>President</b>      | Russell Waldron       | Jack Holt                  | Ron Charlton              |
| <b>V. President</b>   | Pam Holt              | Julie Barber               | Jack Holt                 |
| <b>Secretary</b>      | Tamarra Van Ingen     | Tamarra Van Ingen          | Gary Barber               |
| <b>Treasurer</b>      | Esmæ Barnes           | Esmæ Barnes                | Margie Groves             |
| <b>Asst Treasurer</b> | Margie Groves         | Margie Groves              | Esmæ Barnes               |

| <b>General Committee</b> |                     |                     |                     |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
|                          | Helen Trotter       | Helen Trotter       | Susan Bremner       |
|                          | Gareth (Buc) Kirby  | Gareth (Buc) Kirby  | Julie Cooper        |
|                          | Ron Charlton        | Ron Charlton        | Jacqueline Charlton |
|                          | Jack Holt           | Jack Holt           | Pam Holt            |
|                          | Jacqueline Charlton | Jacqueline Charlton | Ron Charlton        |
|                          | Julie Cooper        | Julie Cooper        | Gareth (Buc) Kirby  |
|                          | Bill Skirving       | Bill Skirving       | Tamarra Van Ingen   |
|                          | Susan Bremner       | Susan Bremner       | Esmæ Barnes         |

All in favour? YES  
Carried

**GENERAL BUSINESS:**

1. Appointment of bank signatories to have access to both physical and internet banking.
  - o President – Russell Waldron
  - o Treasurer – Esmæ Barnes
  - o Asst Treasurer – Margie Groves
  - o Caretaker – Julie Barber

All transactions for Operating Account, Term Deposits and transfers between accounts to require two signatures/authorisations.

2. It was agreed that fees would remain unchanged from those set in 2023-2024. Rates for 2026-2027 will be:

|                                                | Current (2025/2026) | 2026/2027    |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| <b>OFF PEAK</b>                                |                     |              |
| Powered site per double per night              | 35.00               | 35.00        |
| UNpowered site per double per night            | 25.00               | 25.00        |
| Cabin and bunkhouse per double                 | 90.00               | 90.00        |
| Cabin and bunkhouse per double – extra person  | 25.00               | 25.00        |
| Cabin and bunkhouse per double – 7 days        | 420.00              | 420.00       |
| 7+ day stay bookings (powered/unpowered site)  | 10% discount        | 10% discount |
| <b>PEAK/EASTER</b>                             |                     |              |
| Powered site per person per night              | 25.00               | 25.00        |
| UNpowered site per person per night            | 20.00               | 20.00        |
| Cabin/Bunkhouse per night (up to 6 people)     | 170.00              | 170.00       |
| <b>CHILD - Primary School Age - power site</b> | 10.00               | 10.00        |
| <b>CHILD - Primary School Age - unpowered</b>  | 8.00                | 8.00         |
| <b>CHILD - Pre-School</b>                      | No Charge           | No Charge    |
| <b>EXTRAS</b>                                  |                     |              |
| Ensuite                                        | 5.00                | 5.00         |
| Linen                                          | Included            | Included     |

3. As per motion passed at QCP's General Meeting 24/04/24:

*"That each year, immediately following the QCP AGM, QCP [will] remit 10% of the net profit as reported at QCP's AGM (up to a maximum of \$5,000 p.a.) to the Quambatook Public Park & Recreation Ground Reserve Trust."*

Based on the 2024/2025 net profit of \$ 43,667, this year's contribution will be \$4,370 (rounded)

4. Dates for 2025/2026 general meetings are scheduled for 6.30pm on the following Tuesday(s):  
16/09/25, 18/11/25, 20/01/26, 10/03/26 and 12/05/26

Meeting Closed – 7.44pm

Next AGM – 14/07/2026 (Time and venue to be confirmed closer to the event)

# APPENDIX

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## COMMITTEE

Committee's official title is "Quambatook Caravan Park Community Asset Committee" (QCPCAC).

It is established under an Instrument of Sub-Delegation by the CEO of the Gannawarra Shire, effective 1 September 2020.

Relevant sections of the *Local Government Act [2020]*

### Part 2—Councils

47 Delegations by Chief Executive Officer (p62)

### Part 3—Council decision making

65 Community Asset Committee (p77)

66 Meetings to be open to the public unless specified circumstances apply

Governance of the Committee is outlined in the Schedule attached to the Instrument. The Schedule details the Committee's Powers, Exceptions, Requirements & Responsibilities.

Prior to 1 September 2020, Committee operated as a s86 Committee of the Gannawarra Shire Council, governed by a Deed of Grant.

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## LAND

The land on which the Caravan Park, Football ground and Golf Course sit was purchased by residents of Quambatook for public use and is held in a private trust (established in 1925).

It is not owned by the Gannawarra Shire although Shire installed the ensuites and assisted with the installation of the bunkhouses. Shire continues to assist with some of the costs associated with the running of the park as some of the public utilities run off park connection points.

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## SHIRE CONTRIBUTION

Gannawarra Shire Council makes an annual contribution towards the running of the Caravan Park. The contribution is in the form of expenses paid by Shire on QCPCAC's behalf.

These include:

- Telephone
- Electricity
- Water
- Fire Services
- Park Registration
- Operational Services eg plumbing, septic cleaning, electrical etc
- Operational materials and some labour

Buildings and Public Liability insurances are covered under Shire policies.

Some "Contents" are also insured under Council's policy. Other "contents" insurance is at the discretion of the Committee.

## **7.8 GANNAWARRA URBAN GROWTH STRATEGY ADDENDUM**

**Author:** Paul Laughton, Senior Strategic Planning Officer  
**Authoriser:** Fiona Gormann (Manager Planning and Regulatory Services)

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council adopts the Addendum to the Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy 2023**

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Council adopted the Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy 2023 (GUGS) at its Ordinary Meeting of Council on 16 August 2023. The purpose of the adopted GUGS is to support the future rezoning of residential and industrial land in Cohuna, Kerang, the Kerang Lakes and Koondrook by undertaking an evidence-based assessment of urban land supply and demand, to prepare population forecasts, and reconcile them within a set of implementable strategic planning directions that are consistent with State, regional and local policies.

Since the adoption of the Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy, several significant policy and regulatory changes have been introduced by the Victorian Government which directly impact residential, commercial and industrial development through Victoria. These changes include:

- Plan for Victoria
- Victoria's Housing Statement
- A suite of regulatory reforms that apply to residential development

In addition, the Gannawarra Council Plan 2025 - 2029 has been released.

These changes have necessitated a review of the Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy to ensure that it remains relevant, is evidence-based, and will support sound and orderly planning for the municipality.

Following a competitive tender process SGS Economics and Planning was appointed to undertake an independent peer review of the GUGS, and, with oversight of Council officers, prepare an Addendum which would address the policy changes and provide the clear direction required.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy is to undertake an evidence-based assessment of urban land supply and demand, to prepare population forecasts, and to reconcile them within a set of implementable strategic planning directions that are consistent with State, regional and local policies.

An addendum to the existing GUGS is needed to respond to and address recent changes in State Policy, updated population and housing forecasts, and provide improved strategic justification for the staging of future settlement structure planning processes.

**DISCUSSION**

The draft Addendum provides updated content relevant to the following sections of the Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy:

- Section 2.1: Policy context
- Section 6.2: Dwelling forecasts
- Section 7 and subsections 7.1, 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4: Managing future growth

It is intended to inform and build upon the existing Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy in consideration of this updated content.

*Key findings include:*

The importance of undertaking Structure Planning in the towns of Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook as a priority.

Future rezoning opportunities will be guided by upcoming structure planning. Structure planning will be revisiting land supply analysis taking into consideration as development ready, which will investigate all potential residential, commercial and industrial land options including previously identified areas to support well-planned development.

The following strategic directions replace the directions contained in section 7 of the GUGS.

**Kerang**

- Facilitate coordinated subdivision and residential development on infill sites identified with the DPO1 (revise DPO1)
- Consolidate commercial and 'mixed-use' development in the town centre
- Direct future growth in population and employment to District Towns to support their continued function as services hubs.
- Resolve planning for infrastructure associated with managing flooding and drainage to inform future structure planning processes.
- Prepare a structure plan for Kerang following the completion of planning for drainage and flooding infrastructure works. The structure planning process should:
  - Provide an updated evaluation of natural hazard risks, with particular emphasis on resolving and consistently applying flood controls.
  - Deliver a refined, locally specific assessment of zoned land availability for residential, industrial and commercial land uses.
  - Confirm the status of areas identified for urban expansion in the GUGS with reference to the updated land supply assessment. Where additional zoning is deemed unnecessary, identify appropriate mechanisms to formally resolve and clarify the status of these areas within the GUGS framework.
  - If further urban land is required, suitable locations should be identified through a strategic process taking into consideration location, existing patterns of development and use, expected demand, land ownership, natural hazards risks, servicing etc.
  - Review the application of zones to ensure support for preferred development outcomes.

- Identify existing infrastructure assets and networks, highlighting any gaps or constraints that may impact preferred patterns of growth.
- Integrate land use and transport considerations to maintain the safe and efficient operation of the principal road network, including planning for appropriate access arrangements.
- Identify areas suitable for medium and higher density residential development outcomes to support urban consolidation and align zoning to support these outcomes.
- Establish a preferred staging program for infrastructure delivery aligned with the desired growth pattern.
- Establish a clear settlement boundary for Kerang.
- Facilitate the airport expansion to the south (currently under consideration)
- Work with VicTrack on redevelopment options south of the station building (potential aged care / medium density / worker accommodation)

### **Cohuna and Koondrook**

- Direct future growth in population and employment to Cohuna and Koondrook to support their continued function as municipal services hubs.
- Prioritise the preparation of a structure plan for Cohuna ahead of Kerang, and Koondrook.
- Ideally, undertake structure planning for Koondrook in parallel with structure planning for Barham this should occur with the implementation of the local development strategy for Koondrook.
- Promote continued residential, industrial and commercial development within the extent of existing urban zoned land where there is good access to services and infrastructure.
- Facilitate coordinated subdivision and residential development on infill sites identified with the DPO1 (revise DPO1) in Cohuna and Koondrook.
- Consolidate commercial and 'mixed-use' development in the town centre (using current zone controls) in Cohuna and Koondrook.
- Investigate interest in long-term 'very large format' industrial use in Cohuna.

Future structure planning processes will look to refine estimates of industrial land supply and demand through more detailed analysis of local factors affecting development-readiness, current and expected future business requirements (particularly for those associated with mining and renewables projects), vacancy rates, and the identification of locations that have potential for further development intensification. Also to be considered are those existing industrial zone sites in Kerang which may require a change of use, as identified in the adopted Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy.

The proposed Addendum therefore provides strategic direction to underpin the preparation of structure plans which are to be undertaken for Cohuna, Kerang and Koondrook.

### **RELEVANT LAW**

1. *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
  2. *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*
  3. *The Gannawarra Planning Scheme, in particular:*
    - *Clause 11.01-1R Settlement – Loddon Mallee North. This clause identifies Kerang as a town where growth will be supported.*
-

- *Clauses 11.01-1L-01, 11.01-1L-02 and 11.01-1L-03 contain one-page structure plans for Cohuna, Kerang and Koondrook respectively. All plans were prepared around 2006.*
- *Clause 11.01-1L-07 Settlement in Gannawarra, includes strategies that seek to support development that helps generate employment and economic activity.*
- *Clause 11.02-1S Development Capacity, seeks to ensure a sufficient supply of land is available to meet and forecast demand for current and future Victorians to satisfy their residential, commercial, retail, industrial, recreational, institutional and other community needs.*

### **RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS**

- Ordinary Meeting of Council 17 May 2023: - Council resolved to: “Endorse the Draft Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy for community feedback for a period of 28 days.”
- Ordinary Meeting of Council 16 August 2023: - Council resolved to “Adopt the final draft of the Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy 2023.”

### **OPTIONS**

1. To adopt the draft Addendum to the Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy as recommended by this report.
2. Choose not to adopt the draft Addendum to the Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy.

### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Strategic rezoning can attract diverse industries and foster economic growth, while designated green zones and conservation areas promote environmental sustainability.

Forward-thinking urban planning and rezoning, where appropriate, can lead to well sited mixed-use developments, sustainable designs, and higher density housing, optimising land use, employment opportunities and infrastructure development.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

An extensive community engagement process was applied for the adopted Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy. It included:

1. Direct engagement with the Cohuna, Koondrook and The Lakes Progress Associations.
2. Public community feedback between May 2023 and July 2023 in the following ways:
  - completing a have your say form (website).
  - emailing Council.
  - writing to Council.

17 submissions were received.

The proposed Addendum was not subject to a community consultation process as its purpose is to build upon the existing Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy. External consultation was targeted, centering upon input from the following organisations:

- Department of Transport and Planning
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
- North Central Catchment Management Authority

- Loddon Murray Water
- Agriculture Victoria
- Environmental Protection Authority

### **INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

The Shire of Gannawarra is proactively planning for growth in population, housing, and employment, driven by factors such as the appeal of riverside towns, advancements in agriculture, strong manufacturing and construction sectors, natural surroundings, and investments in mining, energy, and transmission.

### **COLLABORATION**

The draft Addendum has been prepared by key Council staff and the SGS Economics and Planning consultancy.

Consultation was targeted during its development, as the Addendum will support the existing adopted Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy.

### **FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

The preparation of the Addendum has been funded by the State Government.

### **REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES**

- Plan for Victoria 2025
- Victoria's Housing Statement 2024-2034

### **COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES**

- Urban & Rural Strategy Plan 2007
- Gannawarra Shire Council Economic Strategy 2019-2024
- Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy 2023

Gannawarra Shire 2025-2029 Council Plan and Gannawarra Community Vision 2040

#### ***GOAL 1. LIVEABILITY - ENHANCE THE WELLBEING AND LIVEABILITY OF THE GANNAWARRA THROUGH INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES***

*3. Support vibrant town centres by maintaining amenity and enabling businesses and community events to enhance activity and connection.*

#### ***GOAL 2. GROWTH - GROW THE GANNAWARRA THROUGH A DIVERSE AND BROAD ECONOMY***

- 3. Plan land use to enable growth and expand housing opportunities.*
- 4. Support rural productivity and diversify agriculture.*

#### ***GOAL 3. SUSTAINABILITY - ACHIEVE LONG-TERM FINANCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY***

- 2. Protect our environment and prepare our community for a changing climate.*
- 4. Ensure transparent, inclusive decision-making through effective leadership.*

**TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS**

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in this matter.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy 2023

Proposed Addendum to the Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy 2023

# Addendum to the draft Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy 2023

Prepared January 2026

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this addendum is to provide updated direction and strategic justification to inform future strategic planning processes, including review of the Gannawarra Planning Scheme and the preparation of structure plans for the Shires three main settlements – Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook.

It updates limited sections of the Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy (GUGS) (adopted August 2023) to account for changes in policy, updated population and housing forecasts, and provide improved strategic justification for the prioritisation of future settlement structure planning processes.

Specifically, this addendum provides updated content relevant to the following sections of the GUGS:

- Section 2.1: Policy context
- Section 6.2: Dwelling forecasts
- Section 7 and subsections 7.1, 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4: Managing future growth
- Section 8: Conclusion and recommendations

It introduces new content to the GUGS relating to:

- Comparison of the updated dwelling demand forecasts with the existing assessment of residential land supply to determine the sufficiency of zoned land to 2044 and alignment with Victorian Government directions regarding planning for housing and settlements.
- Estimates of demand for industrial land across Gannawarra Shire Council to 2044, and comparison with the existing assessment of industrial land supply to determine sufficiency of zoned land supply.
- High level consideration of the supply of commercial zoned land across the Shire.

This addendum should be read in conjunction with the detailed content and policy directions set out in the GUGS.

## 2. Updated policy context (GUGS section 2.1)

### Policy context

Since the adoption of the Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy, 2023 (GUGS), several significant policy and regulatory changes have been introduced by the Victorian Government, directly impacting residential development. These include:

- Plan for Victoria
- Victoria's Housing Statement
- A suite of regulatory reforms that apply to residential development

In addition, the Gannawarra Council Plan 2025–2029 has been released. The following section outlines the relevance of these updates in the context of the GUGS and their implications for future land use planning and housing delivery across the Shire.

### Plan For Victoria (2025)

The Victorian Government's *Plan for Victoria (2025)* outlines long-term strategy to guide housing and settlement planning across the state, including regional areas. The plan aims to deliver 2.24 million new homes by 2051, with a strong emphasis on ensuring regional communities are part of the solution to housing supply and affordability. Plan for Victoria aims to deliver on the Victoria's Housing Statement released in September 2023 (summarised below).

Vision statement:

*By 2050, Victoria will be a vibrant, accessible and connected community, valued for its diverse cultures, sustainable environmental practices and respect for the First Peoples of Victoria.*

*Building a state that provides choices and opportunities for current and future generations of Victorians in quality housing, transport, employment, environment and connectivity will require input from the community, government, local businesses and industry alike.*

*We will create a society that caters to the unique needs of all Victorians, nurturing individual health through physical and cultural recreation.*

Plan for Victoria is structured under five pillars:

1. Self-determination and caring for Country (underpinning and informing the other pillars)
2. Housing for all Victorians
3. Accessible jobs and services
4. Great places, suburbs and towns
5. Sustainable environments

The plan outlines a series of short-term actions for implementation by the State Government. It will be periodically reviewed and updated, with new actions introduced over time to support the delivery of its core pillars and long-term objectives.

Key actions included in the plan relevant to planning for settlements, housing and employment in Gannawarra are:

- **Action 1: Implement housing targets for every local government.** Each local government area is assigned housing targets. These housing targets seek to ensuring that planning controls enable the 'realisable development opportunities' to support the delivery of 2.24 million homes across the state.

This action will be implemented through amendments to the Planning Policy Framework (PPF) Clause 11 (Settlement), release of a related Planning Practice Note, and update of local planning schemes.

- **Action 3: Carefully manage the outward sprawl of regional cities and towns.** The plan supports careful management of the outward sprawl of regional cities and towns. This includes the establishment of settlement boundaries around regional cities to protect regional landscapes, manage environmental risks and support efficient infrastructure planning.

This action will be implemented through amendments to PPF Clause 11 (Settlement), release of a related Planning Practice Note, and inclusion of settlement boundaries in VicPlan.

- **Action 4: Increase the number of social and affordable homes.** The plan states that the affordability of homes in new development and the amount of dedicated social housing will become explicit matters considered in the planning system when changing planning schemes or considering development application.

This action will be implemented through consideration of policy targets for a percentage of new homes as social or affordable and review the legislative framework that supports the delivery of social and affordable homes.

- **Action 8: Ensure new industrial and commercial land is ready for development.** The plan identified the need to ensure there is a sufficient supply of land for new industry.

This action will be implemented through further strategic work to develop a 10-year plan for unlocking industrial land.

- **Action 11: Coordinate public infrastructure and service delivery to support more homes.** The plan acknowledged that Infrastructure for growing communities in growth areas will be delivered in a timely manner.

This action will be implemented through the release of a new Planning Practice Note Coordinating infrastructure delivery in greenfield areas.

- **Action 19: Better communicate and manage flood, bushfire and climate hazard risks.** Fewer homes will be built in high-risk areas without being designed to be resilient to the risk, and people will better understand the risks they face.

This action will be implemented through the publication of data and guidance related to planning for natural hazards management.

Limited further information has been released regarding the status or implementation of the above action items, although noting that Housing Targets have been implemented into clauses 11.01 and 16.01 of the Planning Policy Framework. Including the specific strategic work councils will be required

to do to demonstrate to the State Government that housing capacity targets can be met, settlement boundaries will be set and risks appropriately considered in settlement planning.

#### **Victoria's Housing Statement 2024-2034 (2024)**

*Victoria's Housing Statement 2024-2034* is the principal state-level strategic document that establishes a coordinated approach to tackle housing supply and affordability. It aims to deliver 80,000 new homes each year across the state, equal to 800,000 over the next decade and 2.24 million homes by 2051.

The Statement includes a target to build 425,600 of the 2.24 million homes in regional Victoria. Actions to achieve this target include:

- A Regional Housing Fund worth \$1 billion to deliver 1,300 regional homes, including social and affordable housing.
- A further \$150 million will be invested into regional communities through the Regional Worker Accommodation Fund.
- Continuation of the Big Housing Build, a \$1.25 billion investment into social and affordable homes in regional areas.
- Expansion of the Development Facilitation Program to streamline the planning process for regional housing developments which are worth at least \$15 million and at least 10 per cent affordable housing.
- Introduction of a Short Stay Levy, revenue of which will go to Homes Victorias and 25 per cent of which will be invested into regional areas.

#### **Changes to planning regulations and assessment pathways**

Since the release of Victoria's Housing Statement and Plan for Victoria, the state government has implemented a range of regulatory reforms to the planning system with the intent of streamlining residential development assessment.

Key among these relevant to regional Victoria are:

- **Codification of residential development standards.** Fourteen residential development standards for single dwellings, townhouses, and low-rise apartments (up to four storeys) have been codified in clause 54 and 55 of planning schemes. This means that if a development meets the codified standard, it is automatically considered to meet the planning objective. However, councils still retain discretion to assess alternative design solutions, allowing flexibility in unique or context-sensitive cases.
- **VicSmart 10-Day permit process for small lots.** Single dwellings on lots smaller than 300 square metres now qualify for the streamlined 10-day VicSmart permit process in several zones (Mixed Use Zone, Township Zone, Residential Growth Zone, General Residential Zone and Neighbourhood Residential Zone). To be eligible, developments must comply with specific standards in Clause 54 of the planning scheme, including setbacks, daylight access, overshadowing, and overlooking protections.
- **Permit for dwellings on small lots.** Planning permits are no longer required for single dwellings or extensions on lots of 300 square metres or more in the Township, General Residential, and Neighbourhood Residential Zones.

- **Facilitated assessment for Significant Residential Development with Affordable Housing.** A new fast-track pathway has been introduced under Clause 53.23 for significant residential developments that include affordable housing. This pathway nominates the Minister for Planning the responsible authority for determining these applications, centralising decision-making.
- **Facilitated Assessment for Significant Economic Development.** A parallel fast-track pathway has been established under Clause 53.22 for significant economic development proposals. This includes major retail, commercial, and industrial projects. Like the residential pathway, the Minister for Planning now oversees these applications.

These changes effectively provide councils with less discretion in scheduling in alternative design requirements for residential development and centralising decision-making to the state government for major developments. The implications for planning for housing are that Council should ensure that applied residential zoning patterns align with preferred development outcomes in areas zoned for residential use.

### **Gannawarra Council Plan 2025-2029 (2025)**

Gannawarra Shire Council (GSC) has prepared a Council Plan setting out Council's strategic direction over the period 2025 to 2029. The Council Plan is a requirement of the *Local Government Act 2020* and is guided by the *Community Vision 2040*.

The Council Plan 2025-2029 also integrates the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan (MHWP) and identifies goals and strategies alongside partners to improving the health and wellbeing of the community. The MHWP is a requirement of the Public Health and Wellbeing Act.

The Council Plan 2025-2029 sets out the Community Vision as follows:

*"Our community is proud, connected and inclusive actively seek opportunities that enhance lifestyle and liveability.*

*Gannawarra is growing and is economically diverse, with unique tourism destinations, cultural and natural assets.*

*We recognise and appreciate the value of the natural environment, and how it connects our communities. We are resilient to a changing environment with innovation and collaboration."*

It includes the following goals:

1. **Goal 1 - Liveability:** Enhance the wellbeing and liveability of the Gannawarra through infrastructure and services.
2. **Goal 2 - Growth:** Grow the Gannawarra through a diverse and broad economy.
3. **Goal 3 – Sustainability:** Achieve long term financial and environmental sustainability.

In relation to land use and settlement planning, the plan provides high-level directions embedded under Goal 2 and 3 that relate to planning appropriately for housing and employment growth and diversity, supporting agricultural productivity, and protecting the environment and preparing the community for a changing climate. The strategic nature of council plans means that the GSC plan does not include further detailed or place specific directions regarding managing growth.

### 3. Updated dwelling forecasts (GUGS section 6.2)

This section updates the dwelling forecasts presented in Chapter 6.2 of the GUGS and includes discussion regarding the preferred approach to allocating demand to planning areas into the future.

Forecast of total dwellings for the whole shire and by planning area are a primary input to understanding growth patterns and future residential land requirements.

*Victoria in Future 2023 (VIF23)* is the Victorian Government's official source of population, household, and dwelling projections. For Local Government Areas (LGAs), VIF23 provides dwelling forecasts spanning from 2021 to 2036.

Given that the GUGS horizon extends to 2046, and VIF23 data concludes at 2036 for LGA-level projections, there is a need to extend these forecasts to ensure consistency and alignment with the strategy's timeframe.

To achieve alignment with the GUGS horizon year of 2046, the projections have been extended by applying the Compound Average Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) observed in the VIF23 dwelling forecasts for Gannawarra Shire Council between 2031 and 2036 to the subsequent years through to 2046.

Figure 1 presents the annual total dwelling count—covering both historical data and forward projections - alongside the applied CAGR. It is noted that VIF23 adopts a consistent CAGR across each five-year inter-Censal period.

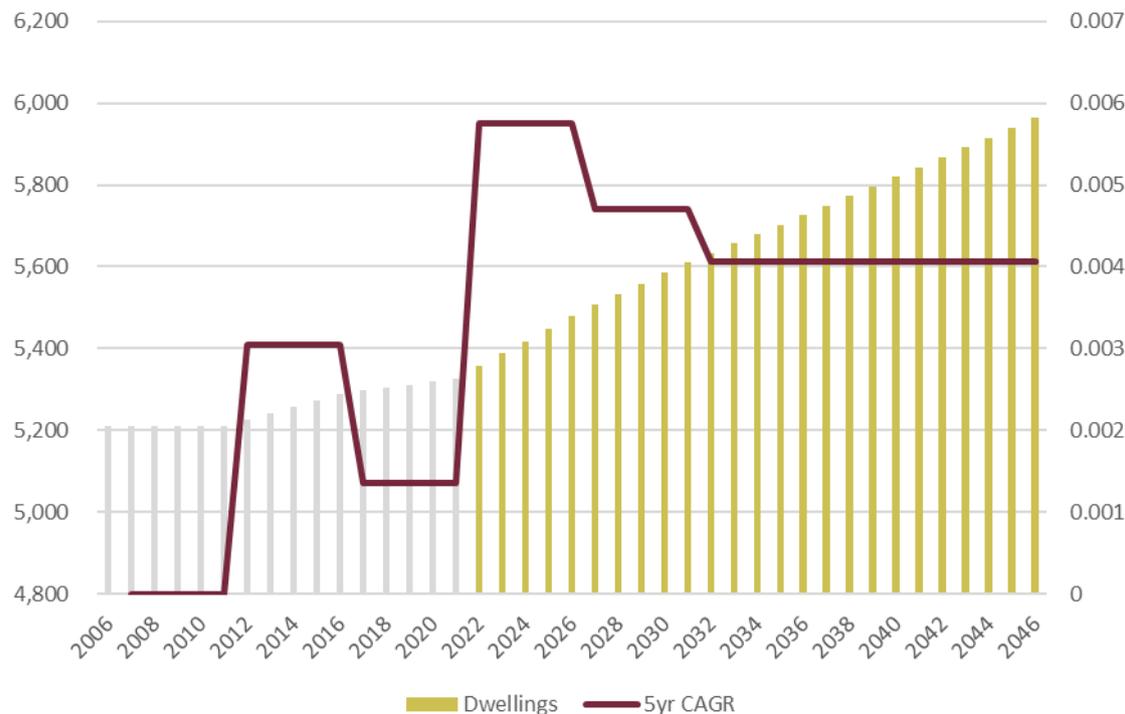
As shown in Table 1, the number of dwellings is projected to grow from 5,326 in 2021 to 5,963 by 2046. This reflects a total increase of 637 dwellings, averaging approximately 25 new dwellings per year, and corresponds to an overall CAGR for the whole period of 0.45 per cent.

**Table 1: Forecast total dwellings, Gannawarra Shire Council, 2021 to 2046**

| Forecast                          | 2021  | 2046  | Total change<br>2021-46 | Annual change<br>2021-46 | CAGR<br>2021-46 |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Extended VIF23 forecast dwellings | 5,326 | 5,963 | 637                     | 25                       | 0.45%           |

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025); Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006, 2011, 2016 and 2021); Victorian Government (2023), *Victoria in Future 2023*.

Figure 1: Historic and forecast total dwellings and CAGR, Gannawarra Shire Council, 2006 to 2046



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025); Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006, 2011, 2016 and 2021); Victorian Government (2023), Victoria in Future 2023.

To understand how growth is likely to be distributed across the shire in the future, the GUGS includes forecast estimates of dwellings by planning area to 2046. These assume 48 per cent of growth will be directed to Cohuna, 24 per cent will go to Kerang and 21 per cent to Koondrook. Notably, this pattern of dwelling demand appears to diverge from historic trends where over half of the new dwelling development (53 per cent) has been realised in Kerang, followed by 17 per cent in Cohuna and 16 per cent in Koondrook. The GUGS implies that growth rates have been adjusted to account for more recent trends in dwelling approvals, and as a result of expected, large-scale investments and business activity – as identified in background research to the strategy (refer GUGS Appendix A and B).

To account for this, two dwelling demand distribution scenarios have been used to explore the potential distribution forecast growth across the municipality, using the updated shire-wide dwelling forecast as the basis. These scenarios are:

- **Scenario 1** references the share of growth implied in the GUGS.<sup>1</sup>
- **Scenario 2** references historic trends in development activity, drawn from the ABS Census 2021.

There may be sound strategic reasons for Council to encourage an alternative pattern of growth and facilitate this through adjustments to planning controls, investment in infrastructure, or other interventions. However, without significant intervention or change in the underlying drivers influencing the current patterns of growth – and assuming that enough development-ready land is available - it is

<sup>1</sup> Shares are derived from Table 13 of the UGS.

more likely that future demand patterns will align more closely with the market-driven trends of the past.

Given the inherent uncertainty of long-term forecasting and the need for further detailed analysis through structure planning, this update to the GUGS uses both demand distribution scenarios. This approach reflects the range of potential outcomes and supports a conservative approach to planning for future residential land supply (discussed further in the following section).

Table 2 presents a comparison of the outcomes of the two scenarios and shows the large differences in the expected number of additional dwellings by planning area. For example, under the growth pattern assumed in the GUGS, Kerang is expected to grow by 152 dwellings between 2021 and 2046. However, if historic development trends continue, this number would increase to 340.

**Table 2: Forecast total dwellings, Gannawarra Shire Council, 2021 to 2046**

| Planning area                 | Total dwellings 2021 | Scenario 1: GUGS share of growth by planning area |                 |                      | Scenario 2: Historic share of growth by planning area |                 |                      |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
|                               |                      | Total dwellings 2046                              | Share of change | Total change 2021-46 | Total dwellings 2046                                  | Share of change | Total change 2021-46 |
| Kerang                        | 1,888                | 2,040                                             | 24%             | 152                  | 2,228                                                 | 53%             | 340                  |
| Cohuna                        | 1,111                | 1,418                                             | 48%             | 308                  | 1,219                                                 | 17%             | 108                  |
| Koondrook                     | 468                  | 601                                               | 21%             | 134                  | 572                                                   | 16%             | 104                  |
| Kerang Lakes                  | 171                  | 193                                               | 3%              | 22                   | 171                                                   | 0%              | -                    |
| Rural balance                 | 1,688                | 1,715                                             | 4%              | 26                   | 1,773                                                 | 13%             | 85                   |
| <b>Gannawarra Shire Total</b> | <b>5,326</b>         | <b>5,963</b>                                      | <b>100%</b>     | <b>637</b>           | <b>5,963</b>                                          | <b>100%</b>     | <b>637</b>           |

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025); Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006, 2011, 2016 and 2021); Victorian Government (2023), Victoria in Future 2023.

#### 4. Dwelling demand and capacity compared (new content)

Comparing projected dwelling demand with the measured supply of residential land, both across the municipality and by planning area, allows the identification of any existing or emerging gaps in land supply over the life of the GUGS.

State planning policy, as set out in the Planning Policy Framework (PPF), requires councils to plan for residential land supply at the municipal level. However, a settlement-by-settlement approach is more appropriate in regional contexts where settlement patterns are characterised by many, smaller and more diverse communities which each represent distinct housing markets.

**Accordingly, this section supplements Section 5.1 of the GUGS by offering a more detailed, settlement-level analysis that builds upon the broader strategic findings presented in the GUGS.**

The residential land supply estimates presented in the GUGS are derived from a high-level assessment of both zoned and unzoned land across the municipality. It considers all existing zoned residential land, areas identified for potential future rezoning in the Gannawarra Planning Scheme, and a specific site in Cohuna identified for potential rezoning based on its attributes.

The GUGS identifies three categories of land supply in Gannawarra Shire Council. These are:

- **Unzoned englobo land** – referring to large, residential zoned lots with potential for further subdivision. These areas have been identified by council through previous strategic planning work and are included in the Planning Policy Framework or an adopted housing or settlement strategy. Capacity estimates for unzoned englobo land are based on a lot yield assumption of 10 dwellings per hectare.
- **Zoned englobo land** – referring to land that is currently zoned for residential use and is available for subdivision into retail lots. This land is primarily in the General Residential Zone with some in the Mixed Use Zone and is limited to lots larger than one hectare. Capacity estimates for zoned englobo land are based on a lot yield assumption of 10 dwellings per hectare for lots with subdivision potential.
- **Retail lots** – referring to proposed lots and lots with title. It is assumed in the GUGS that these lots do not have potential for further subdivision and will yield one dwelling per lot.

For the purposes of understanding likely timing for housing delivery, the above categories have been classified as ‘short term supply’ (retail lots), ‘medium term supply’ (zoned englobo land), and ‘long term supply’ (unzoned englobo land). A summary of the residential land supply assessment is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Residential land supply, Gannawarra Shire Council, 2021 to 2046**

| Settlement / Locality         | Short term<br>(retail lots with<br>title) | Medium term<br>(zoned infill) | Long term<br>(unzoned<br>greenfield) | Capacity total |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| Kerang                        | 90                                        | 318                           | 633                                  | 1,041          |
| Cohuna                        | 53                                        | 230                           | 539                                  | 822            |
| Koondrook                     | 67                                        | 73                            | -                                    | 140            |
| Kerang Lakes                  | 25                                        | -                             | -                                    | 25             |
| GSC balance                   | -                                         | -                             | -                                    | -              |
| <b>Gannawarra Shire Total</b> | <b>235</b>                                | <b>621</b>                    | <b>1,172</b>                         | <b>2,028</b>   |

Source: REMPLAN (2023), Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy (replicated from Table 10 of the GUGS)

Dwelling demand to 2046 by planning area for Scenarios 1 and 2 (Table 2) is assessed against the supply of zoned residential land, as presented in Table 4.

The purpose of this comparison is to evaluate whether the existing supply of residentially zoned land is sufficient to accommodate projected future housing across the municipality.

The analysis shows that Gannawarra Shire has sufficient residential land to accommodate 34 years of growth across the municipality based on current development trends; well above the State Government’s minimum requirement of 15 years. The housing target for Gannawarra set out in Clause 16.01-1S of the Gannawarra Planning Scheme is 850.

The residential land supply far exceeds this number. While the distribution of demand varies between the two scenarios, Table 4 shows that there is enough residential land supply to accommodate growth in all planning areas over the life of the strategy (noting that land supply was not assessed for areas outside the four planning areas).

In relation to the Victorian Government’s Housing Target for Gannawarra, the Shire has sufficient existing zoned residential land supply to meet the nominated target of 850 dwellings by 2051.

**Table 4: Comparison of dwelling demand to 2046 and residential land supply, Gannawarra Shire Council, 2023**

| Planning area           | Total short and medium term land supply | Scenario 1: GUGS share of growth by planning area |                 | Scenario 2: Historic share of growth by planning area |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
|                         |                                         | Total additional dwellings 2021-46                | Years of supply | Total additional dwellings 2021-46                    | Years of supply |
| Kerang                  | 408                                     | 152                                               | 67              | 340                                                   | 30              |
| Cohuna                  | 283                                     | 308                                               | 23              | 108                                                   | 65              |
| Koondrook               | 140                                     | 134                                               | 26              | 104                                                   | 34              |
| Kerang Lakes            | 25                                      | 22                                                | 28              | -                                                     | 25              |
| GSC Balance             | Not assessed                            | 26                                                | Not assessed    | 85                                                    | Not assessed    |
| <b>Gannawarra Total</b> | <b>856</b>                              | <b>637</b>                                        | <b>34</b>       | <b>637</b>                                            | <b>34</b>       |

Source: REMPLAN (2023), Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy (replicated from Table 10 of the GUGS)

Given that the Shire has sufficient zoned residential land to meet both projected housing demand for a minimum of 15 years (as required by policy) and its established Housing Target, it appears – at a high level – that additional greenfield land may not be required.

Based on this finding, the status of identified residential growth areas warrant further review through settlement-level structure planning processes. This will provide Council, the community, and the development sector clarity regarding the future of these sites.

In addition, it is recommended that future structure planning processes look to refine estimates of residential land supply taking into consideration:

- Exclusion of land affected by natural hazards (e.g. flooding), environmental constraints infrastructure limitations, and heritage overlays.

- Informed by on-ground ecological assessments (including native vegetation assessments), particularly in areas adjacent to sensitive environmental assets, Ramsar-listed wetlands and ecologically significant native vegetation.
- Clarification of the role of the Mixed Use Zone in each settlement, particularly its suitability for residential development.
- Local validation of the 10 dwellings per hectare yield assumption.
- Refined staging of development based on site-specific constraints.
- Potential for infill and higher-density redevelopment within established residential areas.

### 5. Industrial land demand (new content to GUGS)

To assess whether the supply of industrial-zoned land in the GSC (as outlined in Section 6.2 of the GUGS) is adequate to support a well-functioning industrial sector, an estimate of future demand for industrial land is needed.

Demand for industrial land to 2046 was estimated using two distinct methodologies. These methods are outlined as follows:

- **Scenario 1 – Historic take up:** Satellite imagery was used to identify the number of industrial sites developed over the past five years. This observed rate of development was then projected forward across the forecast period to 2046. The approach captures recent trends in industrial activity and assumes that these patterns will continue.
- **Scenario 2 – Forecast employment:** Employment forecasts to 2046 were used as the basis for estimating floorspace and land area requirements. This scenario reflects expected long-term structural changes in the economy and industrial sector, with forecasts configured to state and regional-level expectations regarding employment projections.

The detailed method and results associated with both scenarios are outlined below.

#### Scenario 1: Historic take-up

Future demand for employment land under Scenario 1 was estimated based on observed development trends. Nearmap satellite imagery was used to identify industrial site development across each settlement between 2019 and 2024. The number of developed sites was converted into land take-up in hectares, and this rate of development was projected forward to 2046 to inform long-term land demand. The results are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5: Scenario 1 industrial land demand by settlement, Gannawarra Shire Council, 2019-2025**

| Town   | Number of sites developed (2019-2024) | Total land area developed (2019-2024) (ha) | Total additional land demand to 2046 (ha) | Yearly land demand (ha) |
|--------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Kerang | 4                                     | 2.9                                        | 14.3                                      | 0.6                     |
| Cohuna | 1                                     | 0.3                                        | 1.5                                       | 0.1                     |

|              |          |            |             |            |
|--------------|----------|------------|-------------|------------|
| Koondrook    | 2        | 1.5        | 7.5         | 0.3        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>4.7</b> | <b>23.3</b> | <b>0.9</b> |

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025)

Between 2019 and 2024, a total of seven industrial sites were developed on previously vacant land across the region, amounting to 4.7 hectares. Of these, four sites were located in Kerang, accounting for 2.9 hectares; one site was developed in Cohuna, totalling 0.3 hectares; and two sites were developed in Koondrook, comprising 1.4 hectares.

Based on this observed rate of development, it is projected that approximately 23 hectares of vacant industrial land will be needed by 2046, including 14 hectares in Kerang, 1 hectare in Cohuna, and 8 hectares in Koondrook.

### Scenario 2: Forecast employment

The following method was utilised to calculate industrial land demand using forecast employment:

1. Gross floor area (GFA), floor area ratio (FAR) and average floorspace per worker were established for zoned industrial areas in each settlement.
2. Forecast employment was derived from SGS's Small Area Model (SAM) for each of the three main settlements (for more information on the SAM see Appendix A).
3. Industrial employment growth to 2046 was converted to demand for floorspace and employment land using the current floorspace per worker observed in each settlement.
4. Floorspace demand was converted to land demand using the average FAR seen across each township.

The metrics captures in step 1 above are shown in Table 6. This shows Kerang as having the largest industrial footprint and workforce, while Koondrook shows the highest floorspace per worker, indicating a lower employment density.

**Table 6: Summary of Industrial GFA, FAR, total employment and floorspace by worker, by settlement, Gannawarra Shire Council, 2025**

| Town         | Industrial gross floor area (GFA) | Average Floor Area Ratio (FAR) | Traditional Industrial Employment (number of workers) | Average floorspace per worker (sqm) |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Kerang       | 73,687                            | 0.18                           | 441                                                   | 167                                 |
| Cohuna       | 50,652                            | 0.13                           | 311                                                   | 163                                 |
| Koondrook    | 12,944                            | 0.16                           | 38                                                    | 344                                 |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>137,283</b>                    | <b>0.15</b>                    | <b>790</b>                                            | <b>174</b>                          |

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025)

Settlement-level employment forecasts were generated using SGS's SAM. These forecasts, combined with the existing metrics presented in Table 6, were used to estimate the required industrial floorspace

and the corresponding land demand, measures in hectares. The results are presented in Table 7. This shows that, based on employment forecasts, there is expected to be demand for an additional 7 hectares of land to 2046, including 2.8 hectares in Kerang, 4.7 hectares in Cohuna and 0.6 hectares in Koondrook.

**Table 7: Scenario 2 Industrial land demand by settlement, Gannawarra Shire Council, 2046**

| Town         | Industrial jobs (2021) | Industrial jobs (2046) | Total additional jobs (2021-2046) | Total additional land demand to 2046 (ha) | Yearly land demand (ha) |
|--------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Kerang       | 441                    | 470                    | 29                                | 2.8                                       | 0.11                    |
| Cohuna       | 311                    | 349                    | 38                                | 4.7                                       | 0.19                    |
| Koondrook    | 38                     | 40                     | 3                                 | 0.6                                       | 0.02                    |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>790</b>             | <b>860</b>             | <b>70</b>                         | <b>7.9</b>                                | <b>0.31</b>             |

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025)

## 6. Industrial land supply and demand compared (new content to GUGS)

Table 8 summarises the industrial land supply estimates presented in the GUGS, detailing total zoned industrial land by settlement, the area of currently occupied lots, the extent of vacant land, and the potential number of additional lots that could be created on existing vacant parcels based on an assumed average lot size of 3,000 square metres.

Currently there exists a total of 56 ha of vacant zoned industrial land within the municipality, 16 ha of which is in Kerang, 38 ha in Cohuna and 8 ha in Koondrook. Vacant land accounts for 39 per cent of all industrial land.

**Table 8: Industrial land supply by settlement, Gannawarra Shire Council, 2023**

| Settlement   | Total zoned land (ha) | Occupied zoned land (ha) | Vacant zoned land (ha) | Share of vacant land (%) | Potential additional lots from vacant land |
|--------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Kerang       | 58                    | 42                       | 16                     | 28%                      | 54                                         |
| Cohuna       | 71                    | 39                       | 38                     | 54%                      | 127                                        |
| Koondrook    | 16                    | 8                        | 8                      | 49%                      | 27                                         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>145</b>            | <b>89</b>                | <b>56</b>              | <b>39%</b>               | <b>187</b>                                 |

Source: REMPLAN (2023), Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy (replicated from Table 10 of the GUGS)

The results of the take up analysis and forecast employment land demand are aligned with estimates of industrial land supply in Table 9 to assess the expected total years of supply under both industrial land demand scenarios.

Unlike residential land use, the PPF does not provide specific direction to council's regarding the quantum of industrial land supply that is considered sufficient. However, the industrial land supply and demand analysis indicates that, under both projection scenarios, there is expected to be a surplus of industrial land through to 2046, with total years of supply ranging between settlements and by demand

scenario. A chart showing the “draw down” of industrial land supply stock over time is shown in Figure 2.

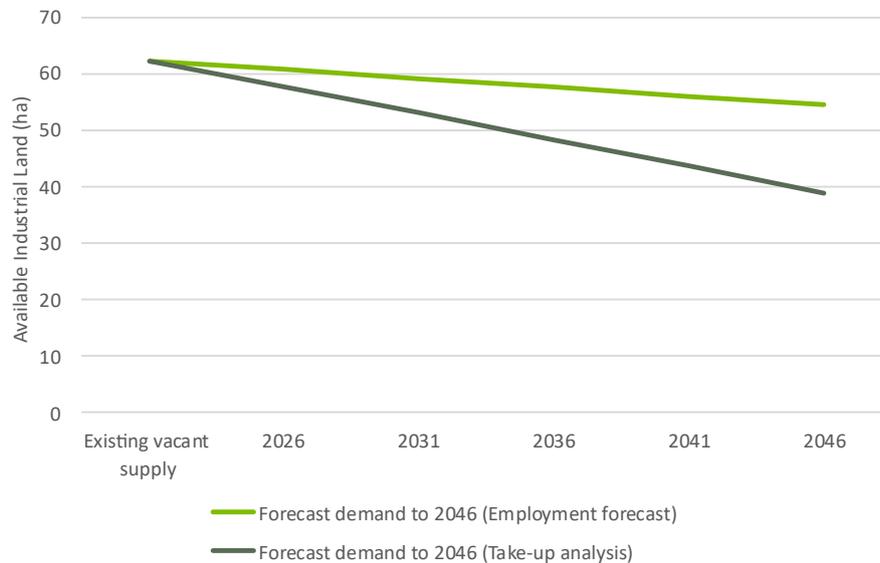
Future settlement structure planning processes should look to refine estimates of industrial land supply and demand through more detailed analysis of local factors affecting development-readiness, current and expected future business requirements (particularly for those associated with mining and renewables projects), vacancy rates, and the identification of locations that have potential for further development intensification. Also to be taken into account are those existing industrial zone sites which may require change of use, as identified in the GUGS for Kerang.

**Table 9: Comparison of industrial land demand to 2046 and industrial land supply, Gannawarra Shire Council, 2046**

| Town         | Industrial land supply | Scenario 1                                |                 | Scenario 2                                |                 |
|--------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------|
|              |                        | Total additional land demand to 2046 (ha) | Years of supply | Total additional land demand to 2046 (ha) | Years of supply |
| Kerang       | 16.2                   | 14.3                                      | 28              | 2.8                                       | 147             |
| Cohuna       | 38.0                   | 1.5                                       | 633             | 4.7                                       | 201             |
| Koondrook    | 8.1                    | 7.5                                       | 27              | 0.6                                       | 328             |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>62.4</b>            | <b>23.3</b>                               | <b>67</b>       | <b>7.9</b>                                | <b>198</b>      |

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025)

**Figure 2: Years of supply of industrial land, 2023 to 2046**



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025)

## 7. Commercial land demand and supply (new content to GUGS)

The GUGS currently does not include consideration of the demand and supply of Commercial 1 Zone land within the Shire. However, given the strategy's focus on 'urban land', some acknowledgement of the role of commercial activity centres and their potential to accommodate growth has been included. In Gannawarra, the key settlements with designated Commercial 1 Zones are Kerang, Cohuna, and Koondrook. Table 10 provides an overview of Commercial 1 Zone land by settlement across the Shire.

**Table 10: Commercial 1 Zone land, 2025**

| Town         | Total C1Z zoned land (ha) | Total floorspace (sqm) |
|--------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Kerang       | 10.0                      | 27,807                 |
| Cohuna       | 21.8                      | 61,867                 |
| Koondrook    | 8.5                       | 4,541                  |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>40.3</b>               | <b>94,216</b>          |

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025)

Estimating future commercial and retail needs in a regional context is complex. This is due to the greater potential for redevelopment and intensification within existing Commercial 1 zoned sites, as well as the limitations of conventional demand modelling approaches.

Given these challenges, a more pragmatic method involves analysing current employment densities within Commercial 1 zoned areas and benchmarking them against other regional centres. This can offer a useful indication of relative land use efficiency and help identify potential gaps or opportunities for future commercial development.

Figure 3 shows SGS's estimate of the density of employment per hectare of zoned land within properties (i.e. excluding roads) for a range of centres across Regional Victoria, highlighting the relative positions of Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook.

**Figure 3: Density of employment (per hectare of zoned land in properties) in a range of centres in Regional Victoria**



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025)

From this data, an approximate maximum density of employment for regional centres below the scale of Bendigo can be established at around 140 to 150 jobs per hectare (noting that the geographic areas included in this analysis include land at the fringe of centres with lower employment densities).

The estimated density of employment within the Commercial 1 Zone area of Kerang is 91 jobs per hectare, followed by 91 in Cohuna and 83 in Koondrook, well below the 140 to 150 jobs per hectare range at which more land may be needed to accommodate employment.

This analysis is based on a broad understanding of typical densities of employment. However, it may not reflect some local factors. It is also possible that employment growth will accelerate in the future. As a result, this modelling should be combined with monitoring of the health of the centre, likely through the vacancy rate and an understanding of local business requirements. These are considerations which should inform future structure planning processes.

**MINING AND RENEWABLES PROJECTS**

The Victorian Government’s *Victorian Transmission Plan (VTP) (2025)* and the *Victorian Critical Minerals Roadmap – Resources for Net Zero (2024)* identify north-west Victoria as a region positioned to host significant critical minerals and renewable energy projects over coming decades. These emerging industries represent one of the most substantial potential influences on the region’s economy and communities in many decades. Their expansion is likely to generate a range of local impacts, including increased demand for housing to support both temporary construction workforces and longer-term operational roles, as well as the need to accommodate new and expanding businesses servicing the sector.

While the precise impacts of mining and renewable energy development are not yet fully understood, coordinated, proactive planning will be essential. Strategic planning and policy direction from the Victorian Government will be required to guide the rollout of projects in these sectors, ensuring that regional communities can realise local benefits while being equipped to manage growth. This includes

planning for appropriate housing, employment land, transport networks, road upgrades, and supporting community infrastructure.

For Gannawarra Shire, planning for future growth should emphasise flexibility, innovation, and regular review and monitoring. This approach will ensure the Shire remains responsive and adaptable to the impacts associated with the expansion of renewable energy and critical minerals production. In parallel, strong advocacy for early State and regional leadership will be vital to coordinate activities and support responsible, sustainable development. Such leadership will help secure outcomes that deliver net community benefit for the local communities hosting these emerging industries.

## 8. Growth directions (GUGS section 7 and 8)

The **settlement hierarchy** set out below replaces Section 7 of the GUGS, including subsections 7.1, 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4 relating to the growth directions for Kerang, Cohuna, Koondrook, and Kerang Lakes. These directions are

It also updates broader planning and non-regulatory actions set out in section 8 of the GUGS.

### Settlement hierarchy

Clause 11.01-1R Settlement – Loddon Mallee North Settlement Framework identifies Kerang as a District Town.

The pattern of settlements in GSC is addressed at Clause 02.03-1 (Settlement) of the Gannawarra Planning Scheme. Clause 02.04 provides a map showing ‘Principal Towns’ and ‘Other Towns’.

In Clause 02.03 (Settlement):

- **Kerang** is identified as the Shire’s regional and community centre, characterised by having the largest population and its recent growth in households and dwellings.
- **Cohuna** is identified as having the second largest residential population and performing a service centre role like that of Kerang for the south-eastern half of the municipality.
- **Koondrook** is identified as a riverfront township with strong ties to Barham (NSW), serving as a heritage, tourism, and retiree destination.
- **Quambatook** is identified as performing the role of a local community centre for the surrounding dryland farming community.
- **Leitchville** performs the role of an employment and residential centre based on the dairy industry and piggeries.
- **Murrabit** performs an important service role to the surrounding rural community and has a unique small town character related to its proximity to the Murray River. Infill and expansion of the township are facilitated through the introduction of sewerage.
- **Mystic Park, Lalbert, Lake Charm, Macorna** and **Kangaroo Lake** are all small village communities that provide basic services to the surrounding rural hinterland. At Macorna the suitability of vacant land for residential development is limited due to the lack of services and limited capability of the land for the treatment and disposal of wastewater.

The Strategic Framework Plan at Clause 02.04 identifies Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook as 'Principal Towns'. It identifies Quambatook, Murrabit, Leitchville, Mystic Park, Lalbert, Marcona and Lake Charm as 'Other Towns'. Kangaroo Lake is not identified on the plan,

Strategic directions outlined in Clause 02.03-1 support growth in the principal towns of Kerang, Cohuna, and Koondrook, encouraging infill development and the expansion of commercial, industrial, community, and educational facilities. No directions regarding the growth potential of 'Other Towns' is provided.

The current settlement framework and policy directions in the planning scheme do not clearly articulate the preferred locations for growth, making it difficult for community members, development proponents, and decision-makers to understand where future development should occur.

To provide stronger direction, each locality identified in the current Strategic Framework Plan at Clause 02.04 has been assessed and categorised considering:

- Zoning and overlays
- Land use patterns
- Existing and forecast dwellings
- Amount of undeveloped residential and industrial land
- Existing and planned infrastructure servicing
- Exposure to risk from natural hazards.

A Settlement Hierarchy has been developed based on this assessment. The settlement categories included in the Settlement Hierarchy are defined below. These are adapted for local relevance from the related categories in the Loddon Mallee North Regional Growth Plan:

- District town
- Rural town
- Small rural town
- Rural settlement
- Seasonal settlement
- Rural localities

Table 11 sets out the role and function of each settlement category, and the settlements relevant to each. Further sections outline the policy directions for each settlement category.

**Table 11: Gannawarra Shire Council Settlement Hierarchy, 2025**

| Settlement type | Role and function                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Settlements | Strategic directions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
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| District town   | <p>Kerang serves as a sub-regional hub, with strong economic ties to higher-order settlements (for example, Swan Hill and Echuca).</p> <p>It provides essential community services to Gannawarra communities, including education (primary and secondary), primary and allied healthcare services, and civic infrastructure, supporting both residents and surrounding rural communities.</p> <p>Kerang has a distinct civic and commercial centres, industrial areas, and offers opportunities for social and economic participation.</p> <p>Kerang fully serviced by reticulated potable water and sewerage infrastructure. Ongoing development of the settlement is impacted in the short to medium term (5-10 years) by existing issues associated with localised pooling water and maintenance associated with the levee which protects the town from flooding.</p> | Kerang      | <p>The following strategic directions <b>replace</b> the directions contained in Section 7 of the GUGS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Facilitate coordinated subdivision and residential development on infill sites identified with the DPO1 (revise DPO1)</li> <li>▪ Consolidate commercial and ‘mixed-use’ development in the town centre</li> <li>▪ Direct future growth in population and employment to District Towns to support their continued function as services hubs.</li> <li>▪ Resolve planning for infrastructure associated with managing flooding and drainage to inform future structure planning processes.</li> <li>▪ Prepare a structure plan for Kerang following the completion of planning for drainage and flooding infrastructure works. The structure planning process should:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide an updated evaluation of natural hazard risks, with particular emphasis on resolving and consistently applying flood controls.</li> <li>- Deliver a refined, locally specific assessment of zoned land availability for residential, industrial and commercial land uses.</li> <li>- Confirm the status of areas identified for urban expansion in the GUGS with reference to the updated land supply assessment. Where additional zoning is deemed unnecessary, identify appropriate mechanisms to formally resolve and clarify the status of these areas within the GUGS framework.</li> <li>- If further urban land is required, suitable locations should be identified through a strategic process taking into consideration</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

|            |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|            |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                     | <p>location, existing patterns of development and use, expected demand, land ownership, natural hazards risks, servicing etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review the application of zones to ensure support for preferred development outcomes.</li> <li>- Identify existing infrastructure assets and networks, highlighting any gaps or constraints that may impact preferred patterns of growth.</li> <li>- Integrate land use and transport considerations to maintain the safe and efficient operation of the principal road network, including planning for appropriate access arrangements.</li> <li>- Identify areas suitable for medium and higher density residential development outcomes to support urban consolidation and align zoning to support these outcomes.</li> <li>- Establish a preferred staging program for infrastructure delivery aligned with the desired growth pattern.</li> <li>- Establish a clear settlement boundary for Kerang.</li> <li>- Facilitate the airport expansion to the south (currently under consideration)</li> <li>- Work with VicTrack on redevelopment options south of the station building (potential aged care / medium density / worker accommodation)</li> </ul> <p>Structure planning processes will revisit the land supply and demand assessment to ensure that assumptions reflect updated information regarding natural hazards and other local conditions influencing the timing of development. The need for any further land will be considered at this time based on this assessment.</p> |
| Rural town | Rural towns have small to medium population and operate as municipal serve centres within Gannawarra Shire Council. They provide a range of employment opportunities, education and community facilities. | Cohuna<br>Koondrook | The following strategic directions <b>replace</b> the directions contained in Section 7 of the GUGS:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                         | <p>Cohuna performs a service centre role for the south-eastern half of the municipality. Koondrook, with its close ties to Barham, serves as a heritage, tourism, and retiree destination. Future development of is tied to and should be linked to that of Barham’s given these links.</p>                                                        |                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Direct future growth in population and employment to Cohuna and Koondrook to support their continued function as municipal services hubs.</li> <li>▪ Prioritise the preparation of a structure plan for Cohuna ahead of Kerang, and Koondrook.</li> <li>▪ Ideally, undertake structure planning for Koondrook in parallel with structure planning for Barham.</li> <li>▪ Promote continued residential, industrial and commercial development within the extent of existing urban zoned land where there is good access to services and infrastructure.</li> <li>▪ Facilitate coordinated subdivision and residential development on infill sites identified with the DPO1 (revise DPO1) in Cohuna and Koondrook.</li> <li>▪ Consolidate commercial and ‘mixed-use’ development in the town centre (using current zone controls) in Cohuna and Koondrook.</li> <li>▪ Investigate interest in a long term ‘very large format’ industrial use in Cohuna.</li> </ul> <p>Structure planning processes will revisit the land supply and demand assessment to ensure that assumptions reflect updated information regarding natural hazards and other local conditions influencing the timing of development. The need for any further land will be considered at this time based on this assessment.</p> |
| <p>Small rural town</p> | <p>Small rural towns have lower population levels and more limited, local commercial, retail and community services, typically including a primary school and basic retail such as a general store.</p> <p>They contain community and recreational facilities that provide an important focal point for residents and surrounding communities.</p> | <p>Leitchville</p> | <p>Promote continued residential, industrial and commercial development within the extent of existing urban zoned land where there is good access to services and infrastructure.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                     | <p>Leitchville serves as a servicing town for surrounding agricultural communities.</p> <p>Small rural towns are fully serviced by reticulated potable water and sewerage infrastructure.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Rural Settlement    | <p>Rural Settlements are characterised by small clusters of housing with low population densities and limited commercial activity, typically zoned Township Zone.</p> <p>They typically include infrastructure that serves as a focal point for the surrounding community, such as a fire station, community hall, or recreation facilities (e.g. a tennis court).</p> <p>While they are unsewered and have limited infrastructure, they play an important role in supporting local communities by offering housing, with potential to provide accommodation and services for visitors or key workers within existing zoned urban boundaries.</p> <p>Their sustainability is important and opportunities for growth are supported, leveraged by new investment or employment</p> | <p>Quambatook</p> <p>Murrabit</p> <p>Lalbert</p> <p>Macorna</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support Rural Settlements to remain vibrant and promote social connectivity by consolidating housing, commercial and any community services/ facilities within existing urban zoned boundaries.</li> <li>▪ Prepare a Rural Land Use and Settlement Strategy that, amongst other things:                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identifies areas of productive agricultural land and facilitates their protection, in alignment with state planning policy.</li> <li>- Reviews the housing capacity of residentially zoned land in Rural Settlements.</li> <li>- Audits existing social, community and physical infrastructure capacity.</li> <li>- Defines clear settlement boundaries</li> <li>- Identifies opportunities and constraints for each settlement that will guide future land use planning decisions and align planning controls.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| Seasonal settlement | <p>The Kerang Lakes area (including Lake Charm and Mystic Park) are not settlements.</p> <p>These areas provide recreation facilities and tourism accommodation abutting the lakes' edges.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>Lake Charm</p> <p>Mystic Park</p>                            | <p>The following strategic directions <b>replace</b> the directions contained in Section 7 of the GUGS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prevent further subdivision of Farming Zone Land in the Kerang Lakes area for the purpose of development that is not in alignment with the purpose of the zone.</li> <li>▪ Support holiday and tourism use in alignment with the policy and purpose of the Farming Zone.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

|                  |                                                             |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                  |                                                             |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify the status of Farming Zone land for productive agriculture for the Kerang Lakes area through the preparation of a Rural Land Use and Settlement Strategy.</li> </ul> |
| Rural localities | Characterised by clusters of housing in Farming Zone areas. |  | Further subdivision and development in rural localities are not supported where not directly linked to the productive use of agricultural land and activities.                                                         |

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025)

### Planning and non-regulatory actions

In relation to the table of recommendations outlined in Section 8 of GUGS, this Addendum provides the following updates:

**Table 12: Updated recommendations**

| No. | GUGS original recommendation                                                                                                                                                                        | Status from GUGS   | Revised recommendation for Addendum                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Commencing a process to update the Structure Plan's for Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook as a priority (Structure Plans for Leitchville, Murrabit and Quambatook could be reviewed in the medium term). | Updated            | Structure planning process to occur in alignment with that set out in the Settlement Hierarchy in Table 11.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 2   | Reviewing the Development Plan Overlays (DPO1 and DPO2) to ensure that they will facilitate coordinated development across multiple sites and ownerships.                                           | Unchanged          | Reviewing the Development Plan Overlays (DPO1 and DPO2) to ensure that they will facilitate coordinated development across multiple sites and ownerships.                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 3   | Investigate several smaller sites recommended for rezoning (identified in Section 7 of the GUGS – Managing Future Growth).                                                                          | No longer relevant | Structure planning processes will revisit the land supply and demand assessment to ensure that assumptions reflect updated information regarding natural hazards and other local conditions influencing the timing of development. The need for any further land will be considered at this time based on this assessment (refer Table 11). |
| 4   | Review the Planning Policy Framework and update (including updated Council adopted strategic plans, population and dwelling forecasts)                                                              | Unchanged          | Review the Planning Policy Framework and update (including updated Council adopted strategic plans, population and dwelling forecasts)                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 5   | Assisting private sector led proposals that are consistent with the Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy 2023, where the Development Plan approach has been identified.                                 | Updated            | Assisting private sector led proposals that are consistent with the Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy 2023 and associated Addendum (2025), where the Development Plan approach has been identified.                                                                                                                                          |
| 6   | Assisting private sector led investigations into further lakeside living options, including worker accommodation, at Lake Charm and Kangaroo Lake.                                                  | No longer relevant | No longer considered relevant (refer Table 11).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7  | Investigating opportunities for the Tate Drive Industrial Precinct to be extended to the east.                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | No longer relevant        | Structure planning processes will revisit the land supply and demand assessment to ensure that assumptions reflect updated information regarding natural hazards and other local conditions influencing the timing of development. The need for any further land will be considered at this time based on this assessment (refer Table 12). |
| 8  | Facilitating discussions between large employers (needing worker accommodation), accommodation providers / developers and larger landowners in Kerang with a view to getting additional short-term / seasonal worker accommodation delivered to support large scale investments and seasonal worker shortages. | Unchanged                 | Facilitating discussions between large employers (needing worker accommodation), accommodation providers / developers and larger landowners in Kerang with a view to getting additional short-term / seasonal worker accommodation delivered to support large scale investments and seasonal worker shortages.                              |
| 9  | Engaging with VicTrack on options for underutilised land at the Kerang Train Station site (this may require a masterplan to be prepared for the site first, to ensure future transport needs can be accommodated).                                                                                             | Unchanged                 | Engaging with VicTrack on options for underutilised land at the Kerang Train Station site (this may require a masterplan to be prepared for the site first, to ensure future transport needs can be accommodated).                                                                                                                          |
| 10 | None.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Additional recommendation | Investigate the suitability of a requirement for development contributions to fund infrastructure serving future development                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

# Appendix A: Small Area Model

## 9. Modelling approach

### 1. Overview

SAM23 is a set of population, dwelling, and employment forecasts that captures the demographic data and trends (including impacts of COVID) to create a suite of forecast variables which are:

- A combination of *top-down* state and regional demographic trends with *bottom-up* local level development supply and timing information, ensuring macroeconomic drivers are integrated with micro spatial data and trends to provide a projection set that is robust and data-driven.
- Disaggregated to a fine-grained (sub-SA1) spatial scale (~20,000 across Victoria), allowing for custom geographies to be defined.
- Developed using a dynamic and systematic algorithm that enables robust scenario testing and impact analysis using a modular framework to facilitate continuous development over time to understand how places are growing, changing, their strengths, and the challenges they face.

Table 13 presents the variables that are produced by the SAM23 forecasts.

**Table 13: Modelled Variables**

| Variable   | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dwellings  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Structural private dwellings                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Occupied private dwellings</li> <li>o Unoccupied private dwellings</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Non-private dwellings</li> </ul> |
| Population | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Total estimated resident population</li> <li>- Disaggregated by 'Service' age groups: 0-4, 5-11, 12-17, 18-25, 26-64, 65+</li> </ul>                                                                                         |
| Employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Total employed persons, measured at their place of work</li> <li>- Disaggregated by ANZSIC 1-digit industries</li> </ul>                                                                                                     |

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2023

### 2. Key data sources

Key data sources used in the development of these forecasts are listed below in Table 14.

**Table 14: Key data sources**

| Data source   | Use in SAM23                    |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| ABS ERP, 2021 | - Base year population estimate |

|                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Centre for Population, 2022                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- State and GCCSA population forecast control totals</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                              |
| ABS Census, 2021                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Historical population</li> <li>- Historical employment</li> <li>- TZ population and employment distributions</li> <li>- Disaggregated variable distributions (dwelling types, ages, industries)</li> </ul> |
| ABS Labour Force Survey, 2022                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Historical employment</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Department of Transport and Planning Urban Development Program, 2021  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refined population and employment distributions in greenfield areas</li> </ul>                                                                                                                             |
| City of Melbourne City Forecasts, 2022                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refined population and employment distributions in the City of Melbourne</li> </ul>                                                                                                                        |
| VPA and Geelong PSP data, 2022                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refined population and employment distributions in growth areas</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                 |
| SRL Business Case, 2021                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refined population and employment distributions in SRL precincts</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                |
| Multiple location-specific supply datasets and planning policy inputs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Small area development capacity and timing</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                      |

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2023

## 10. Understanding SAM23 and its limitations

The extremely detailed nature of the SAM23 forecasts, with millions of datapoints across 10+ variables, 30 years, and 20,000+ spatial units, results in some limitations that should be considered.

### 3. Limitations of small area land use forecasts

SAM23 forecasts have been developed to suit varying use cases, with the high level of detail required for data-intensive uses such as strategic transport modelling. To ensure compliance with the requirements of strategic transport models, SAM23 forecasts are internally consistent, meaning that **all people in the state are allocated to a zone**. This means there cannot be undefined/unallocated locations or variable categories, and that there must be exact alignment between all data variables throughout the model (i.e., there must be an internal consistency between all population and demographic variables). This use case creates some data limitations, which are particularly relevant to population variables (e.g., estimates do not have to be integers).

The **SAM zone level dataset should be seen a strategic-scale dataset**. A high degree of caution should be exercised when using the data for any other purposes, particularly when analysing a small number of zones or using the more detailed/granular data variables.

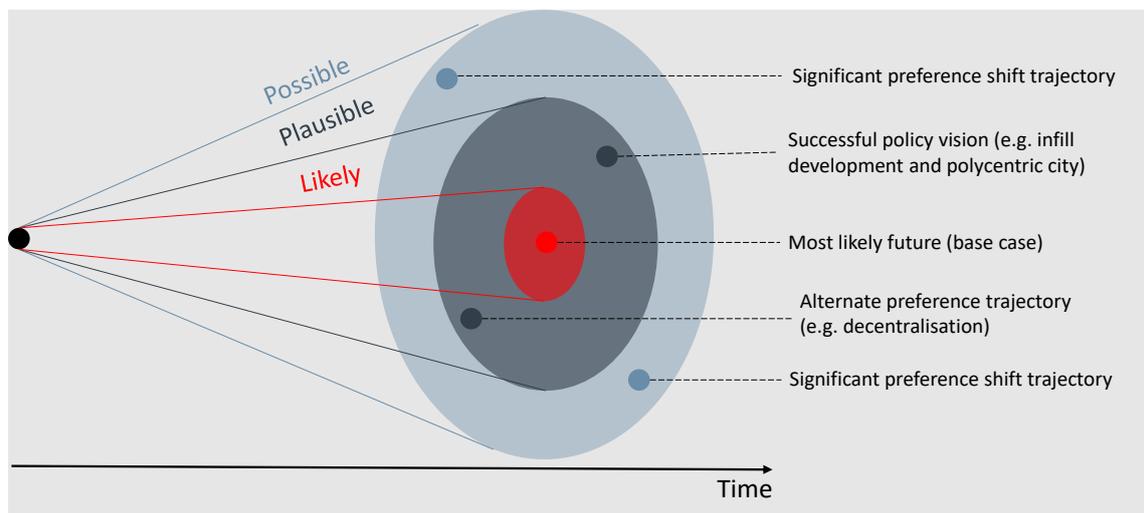
The projections merge macroeconomic factors with small area information on development patterns, resulting in a combined ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ approach that ensures all relevant information is considered and balanced. The projections have been developed with the best available information and it is noted that a wide range of credible third-party data inputs have been used. SGS has not audited

these data inputs or completed separate analyses of individual sites/precincts across the analysis study area. Given this, figures for an individual zone in isolation should not be considered accurate, even in base or historic years, as source data is generally not available at this geographic extent; instead, estimates have been derived using robust rules to disaggregate source data from larger geographic areas down to this level. This approach ensures confidence in small area data variables increases as data is more aggregated (spatially or by variable) or for earlier time periods (where more information is available).

**4. Limitations due to uncertainty**

When modelling any future land use, it should be understood there is no one single future. Uncertainty, ranging from future macroeconomic shocks (e.g., migration rates or major global events) to government priorities (particularly around infrastructure investment and urban growth strategies/incentives) is a limitation faced by any forecasting endeavour. While there may be a most likely future scenario, there is a wide range of plausible alternatives that may eventuate.

**Figure 4 Conceptualising Alternate Land Use Futures**



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2023

These projections seek to represent the ‘most likely’ urban future based on current data and assumptions related to various trends and a current understanding of policy/structural changes.

However, as of June 2023, there is still a high degree of uncertainty when forecasting within this context and, as a result, a degree of caution should be exercised when interpreting the population projections. Users of the data should evaluate the projections against the latest actual events/outcomes before any future use.



## Council Meeting Agenda

18 February 2026

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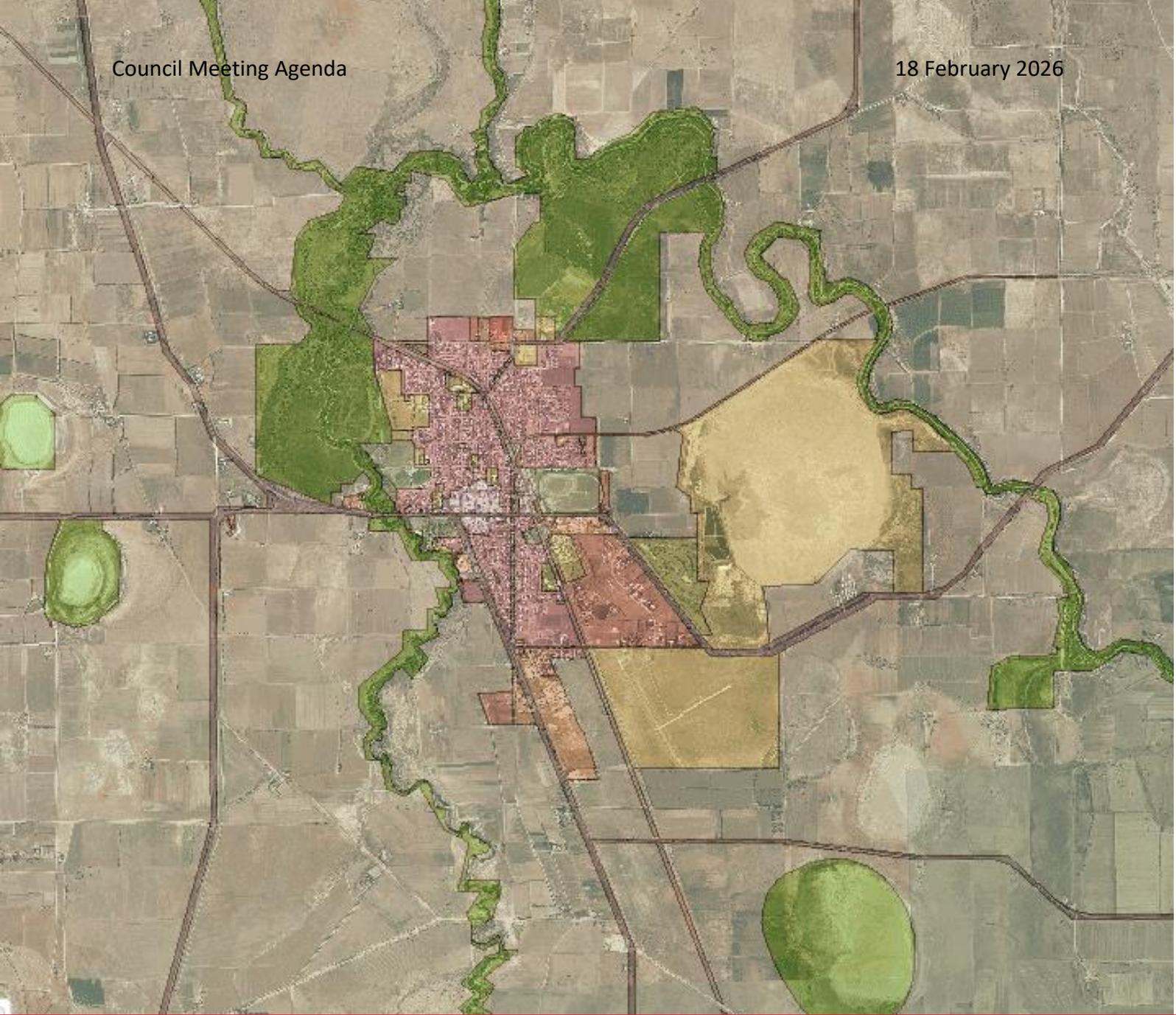
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NGAMBRI/NGUNNAWAL/NGARIGO, MUWININA/PALAWA, WURUNDJERI, AND GADIGAL PEOPLES.



# Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy

Project undertaken for the  
Gannawarra Shire Council

8 August 2023

## Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy

**This project has been conducted by REMPLAN**

### **Project Team**

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8 August 2023

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## Glossary

The following acronyms and abbreviations are used in this report.

|          |   |                                                |
|----------|---|------------------------------------------------|
| DPO      | - | Development Plan Overlay                       |
| GSC      | - | Gannawarra Shire Council                       |
| GPS      | - | Gannawarra Planning Scheme                     |
| PPS      | - | Planning Policy Framework                      |
| VIF 2019 | - | Victoria in Future 2019 population projections |
| VPA      | - | Victorian Planning Authority                   |
| GRZ      |   | General Residential Zone                       |
| LDRZ     |   | Low Density Residential Zone                   |
| IN1Z     |   | Industrial 1 Zone                              |
| IN3Z     |   | Industrial 3 Zone                              |

## Executive Summary and Key Recommendations

The Shire of Gannawarra is actively planning for population, housing and employment growth. This growth is being driven by the region's increasing appeal of its riverside towns as places to live, work and visit, its rapidly evolving agriculture sector, strong manufacturing and construction sectors, its natural environment, and significant investments in mineral sands mining and processing, electricity transmission and renewable energy generation and storage.

Previous estimates from the State Government had Gannawarra's population continuing to decrease over the next decade or so, something that is not uncommon in rural and regional areas. However recent trends and forecasts completed as part of this project indicate a more positive story. The historic decline in population experienced up to 2011 has reversed with the municipality experiencing a positive growth trend over the last 10 years. The population is now forecast to grow by between 317 and 782 people over the next two decades (from 10,612 in 2021 to between 10,929 and 11,394 people in 2046). Dwelling numbers are also forecast to increase by between 315 and 551 over the same period (from 5,387 in 2021, to between 5,702 and 5,938 dwellings in 2046).

The population and dwelling forecasts represent a range between a 'Base case' scenario (the lower end of the range) and a 'Growth' scenario (the upper end of the range). The forecasts factor in many different variables of population growth to provide a robust and defensible set of projections. The Growth scenario is based on successful delivery of the large-scale projects and investments that are proposed, in planning or approved. When delivered, it will result in slightly higher growth rates and a faster uptake of housing and residential land when compared to the Base case scenario. While the full impacts of the proposed investments and projects are still to be seen, it is important that Gannawarra's Planning Policy Framework (PPF) is updated to reflect these projects (several are of National significance) and stand ready to facilitate well-designed, well-planned residential, commercial and industrial developments that will accommodate Gannawarra's future residents, workers and visitors.

This study is the first stage (of three) required to update the PPF. It provides a high-level strategic review that provides the broad direction and guidance for the second stage of work– township structure planning. The structure planning stage will include a greater level of involvement with the local community, and it is the stage where detailed local knowledge and wisdom can contribute to the development of a plan that will guide how each town will grow and develop into the future. Following adoption of the structure plans, the final stage (in the planning process) is to undertake changes to planning controls (where necessary). This is done through the Planning Scheme Amendment. It is a much more formal process, where contentious issues can be examined by an independent panel. Once finalised, planning controls are updated, and it is over to the community and private sector to incrementally deliver the vision embedded in each structure plan.

### **Results of investigations**

While this study has found that Gannawarra's previous strategic planning has served it well in terms of planning for future growth, there is now a need to refine and update these plans to provide the additional support needed to those areas that are seeing higher demand and faster growth rates. While residential land supply is usually considered at a local government level, the size, unique characteristics, and drivers of demand have indicated that in the Gannawarra, this needs to be done at a localised level. Therefore, this project has focused on the towns of Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook. The Kerang Lakes area has also been included, as it has long been identified as having the potential to cater for a unique lakeside living option subject to it meeting a range of environmental and land management considerations.

The result of the investigations undertaken as part of this strategy for each township are summarised below.

Kerang:

- Kerang is forecast to grow from 3,757 people in 2021 to a range of 3,850 – 4,009 in 2046 (an additional 93 – 252 people requiring an extra 75 – 164 dwellings). The projects driving growth in Kerang include mineral sands mining, energy and transmission and agriculture.
- There is sufficient zoned residential land to cater for current demand, however planning should commence (in the medium-term) for its next urban expansion area.
- Kerang has 16ha of vacant industrial land (28% of total industrial land) and needs to plan to expand its industrial land stocks in the short-term.

Cohuna:

- Cohuna is forecast to grow from 2,139 people in 2021 to a range of 2,410 – 2,746 in 2046 (an additional 271 – 607 people requiring an extra 152 – 310 dwellings). Cohuna is experiencing growth in agriculture, relocation, manufacturing and construction.
- In the short term, the Shire needs to facilitate comprehensive planning of its next urban expansion area.
- Cohuna has 32ha of vacant industrial land (35% of total industrial land). It is considered that there is an adequate stock of industrial land available, however consideration could be given to investigating a site suitable for a 'very large format' industrial use.

Koondrook:

- Koondrook is forecast to grow from 927 people in 2021 to a range of 1,027 – 1,040 in 2046 (an additional 100 – 113 people requiring an extra 63 – 66 dwellings). Koondrook is attracting retirees, families relocating and is accessible to many of the major projects underway.
- In the short-term the Shire should assist landowners with vacant residential land to bring it to the market. In the medium-term, an incremental(residential) growth area will need to be planned.
- Koondrook has 8ha of vacant industrial land available (49% of total industrial land). The demand for industrial land is comparatively low, however a reconfiguration of the northern 'light industrial' precinct and some additional 'highway frontage' light industrial land to the south is recommended.

The Kerang Lakes:

- The Kerang Lakes area is forecast to remain relatively steady in terms of population and dwelling numbers.
- The priority for this area is to ensure that any new residential lots are meeting relevant environmental (and land management) standards and to investigate the potential of the eastern side of Kangaroo Lake for additional holiday / worker accommodation.

The Gannawarra Balance area:

- The Gannawarra Balance area (the remaining areas of Gannawarra) is forecast to decrease slightly in population but is expected to add a small number of additional dwellings. This could change when the mining, renewable energy and agriculture developments proceed. Many of the smaller regional towns have potential to link in with the developments.

### **Key recommendations**

The key recommendations required to deliver the housing and industrial development needed to support Gannawarra's now growing community primarily relate to reviewing the Shire's key strategic land use planning documents and update the Planning Policy Framework (PPF) in the Gannawarra Planning Scheme (GPS). This will provide the development and construction sector with clear guidance on the location and type of development that the Shire wants and needs, and the community is expecting.

Once the statutory planning related actions are completed, they could be combined into an amendment to the GPS.

There are also a range of other important non-statutory related actions that are recommended to be pursued. All recommendations are shown in the following table.

**Table E.S. 1 Recommendations**

| <b>Number</b>                          | <b>Recommendation</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Planning policy recommendations</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>1</b>                               | Commencing a process to update the Structure Plan's for Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook as a priority (Structure Plans for Leitchville, Murrabit and Quambatook could be reviewed in the medium term).                                                                                                            |
| <b>2</b>                               | Reviewing the Development Plan Overlays (DPO1 and DPO2) to ensure that they will facilitate coordinated development across multiple sites and ownerships.                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>3</b>                               | Investigate several smaller sites recommended for rezoning (identified in Section 7 – Managing Future Growth).                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>4</b>                               | Review the Planning Policy Framework and update (including updated Council adopted strategic plans, population and dwelling forecasts)                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Non-statutory recommendations</b>   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>5</b>                               | Assisting private sector led proposals that are consistent with the Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy 2023, where the Development Plan approach has been identified.                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>6</b>                               | Assisting private sector led investigations into further lakeside living options at Lake Charm and Kangaroo Lake. This includes both (lower density) residential development, and the potential for holiday / worker accommodation.                                                                            |
| <b>7</b>                               | Investigating opportunities for the Tate Drive Industrial Precinct to be extended to the east.                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>8</b>                               | Facilitating discussions between large employers (needing worker accommodation), accommodation providers / developers and larger landowners in Kerang with a view to getting additional short-term / seasonal worker accommodation delivered to support large scale investments and seasonal worker shortages. |
| <b>9</b>                               | Engaging with VicTrack on options for underutilised land at the Kerang Train Station site (this may require a masterplan to be prepared for the site first, to ensure future transport needs can be accommodated).                                                                                             |

## 1 Introduction

*“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.” (Source: 2021-2025 Council Plan, Gannawarra Shire Council)*

Figure 1-1 King George Street, Cohuna



The Gannawarra Shire Council (GSC) has a clear vision and ambition and is pro-active in setting Gannawarra up for success. A key part of this is planning for population, housing, and employment growth. Growth that is expected to be driven by the increasing appeal of its riverside towns as places to live, work and visit. This appeal is underpinned by the region’s rapidly evolving agriculture sector, its natural environment, and significant investments in mineral sands mining and processing, electricity transmission and renewable energy generation.

Understanding the drivers of growth, in all its forms, and developing strategic responses that will facilitate and leverage further investment and growth is fundamental to the Shire delivering on its bold ambition and community vision. To assist, the Shire has engaged REMPLAN to work with them to develop an evidence-based assessment of population and residential growth and to identify a set of strategic planning directions that will inform an update of the Gannawarra Planning Scheme (GPS). In essence, this project will deliver a high-level Urban Growth Strategy designed to manage future population, housing, and jobs growth. It will enable the Shire to get ahead of the game and set the scene to enable the private sector to play their part in this constantly evolving and unique part of regional Victoria.

This pro-active approach sits within the context of the official Victoria in Future 2019 (VIF 2019) population projections. When prepared, the VIF 2019 projections estimated a population decline of 560 people, reducing from an estimated 10,490 in 2021 down to 9,930 in 2036. Recent data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) indicates that the population is not declining as previously expected, and the official population estimate for Gannawarra in 2021 is 10,612. While the difference between the VIF 2019 estimate and the actual population in 2021 is not vast (the actual is 122 higher than the estimate), it is a positive sign that has now been incorporated into the new population forecasts prepared as part of this project. Considering these recent trends, REMPLAN’s population forecasts now estimate that the Shire will continue to grow, albeit at a very manageable level, from 10,612 in 2021, to between 10,851 and 11,360 in 2036 (923 – 1,432 more people than the VIF 2019 estimate), and between 10,929 and 11,394 in 2046. The lower end of the forecast range is a ‘Base case’ scenario, while the higher figure is a ‘Growth’ scenario where planned investment facilitates faster population and residential growth.

While population forecasts are a critical part of planning for the future, this Urban Growth Strategy departs slightly from a traditional land use planning strategy, in that it also seeks to integrate economic investment and employment data into its recommendations. As such, the Strategy considers the underlying factors influencing population change for the region, including the interplay between economic opportunities, lifestyle drivers, and demographic shifts – all of which influence aspects of urban growth. This Strategy incorporates knowledge provided by Gannawarra's Planning and Economic Development teams, who have worked closely with the business sector to identify future business expansion and job opportunities. To achieve these job numbers, it will need people to move to Gannawarra. Therefore, it becomes vitally important for planning to be slightly ahead of the game and ready to cater to and assist in driving future demand. A snapshot of the latest population and economic statistics for Gannawarra include:

#### Summary

|                                                        |             |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| ABS 2021 Census Place of Usual Residence               | 10,683      |
| Average Age                                            | 51 years    |
| Number of Jobs                                         | 3,999       |
| Number of Dwellings                                    | 5,326       |
| Average Household Size (number of people per dwelling) | 2.2         |
| Land Area (ha)                                         | 373,760     |
| Total Output (\$M)                                     | \$1,215.317 |
| Gross Regional Product(\$M)                            | \$588.650   |
| Per Capita Gross Regional Product (\$K)                | \$55.102    |
| Per Worker Gross Regional Product (\$K)                | \$147.199   |

The major contributors to employment are:

| Industry Sector                 | Jobs  | %     |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing | 1,061 | 26.5% |
| Health Care & Social Assistance | 524   | 13.1% |
| Retail Trade                    | 360   | 9.0%  |
| Construction                    | 323   | 8.1%  |
| Public Administration & Safety  | 287   | 7.2%  |
| Manufacturing                   | 273   | 6.8%  |
| All others combined             | 1,171 | 29.3% |

The major contributors to output are:

| Industry Sector                      | \$M       | %     |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing      | \$322.739 | 26.6% |
| Manufacturing                        | \$182.863 | 15.0% |
| Construction                         | \$147.542 | 12.1% |
| Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Service | \$103.216 | 8.5%  |
| Public Administration & Safety       | \$69.857  | 5.7%  |
| All others combined                  | \$389.100 | 32.1% |

While Gannawarra is an important part of Loddon Mallee’s economy, it is also home to some significant environmental assets that are vitally important to the local community, to their sense of place, and their ability to grow and leverage ‘nature-based’ lifestyle, tourism and business opportunities. These issues don’t always get picked-up in the statistics, but they are clearly stated in the Shire’s strategic planning and have been considered when developing the Strategy’s recommendations.

### 1.1 Purpose and Scope

The primary purpose of this project is to undertake an evidence-based assessment of urban land supply and demand, to prepare population forecasts, and reconcile them within a set of implementable strategic planning directions that are consistent with State, regional and local policies.

The project scope is limited to the preparation of a high-level Urban Growth Strategy for Gannawarra. It will provide the basis and guidance for further detailed work that will bring residential and employment land to the market. Much of this detailed work will be advanced by the private sector in partnership with the Shire.

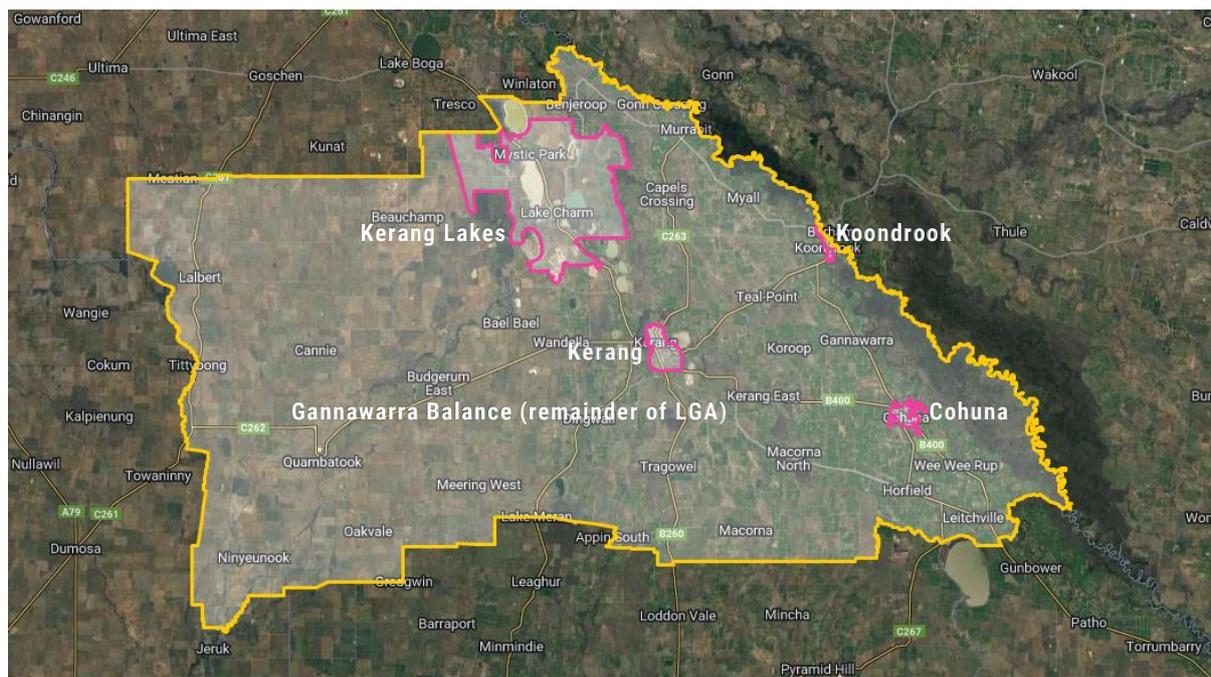
### 1.2 Region of Analysis

While the project relates to the Shire of Gannawarra, and in some cases to the broader region, the primary focus is on the four key areas of Kerang, Cohuna, Koondrook, and Kerang Lakes.

These four areas have been identified as being in specific need of review to enable them to plan and manage future growth in the coming decades. Each area has unique attributes and reasons for being investigated. Several of the townships have seen strong growth and development interest, while others are strategically located and are well positioned to leverage off the significant investments being made in the region. This should not be inferred that other parts of the Shire are not important, as they are, but rather, that a targeted approach is needed that will result in shire-wide benefits.

The Shire of Gannawarra and the four planning areas are shown in the following maps.

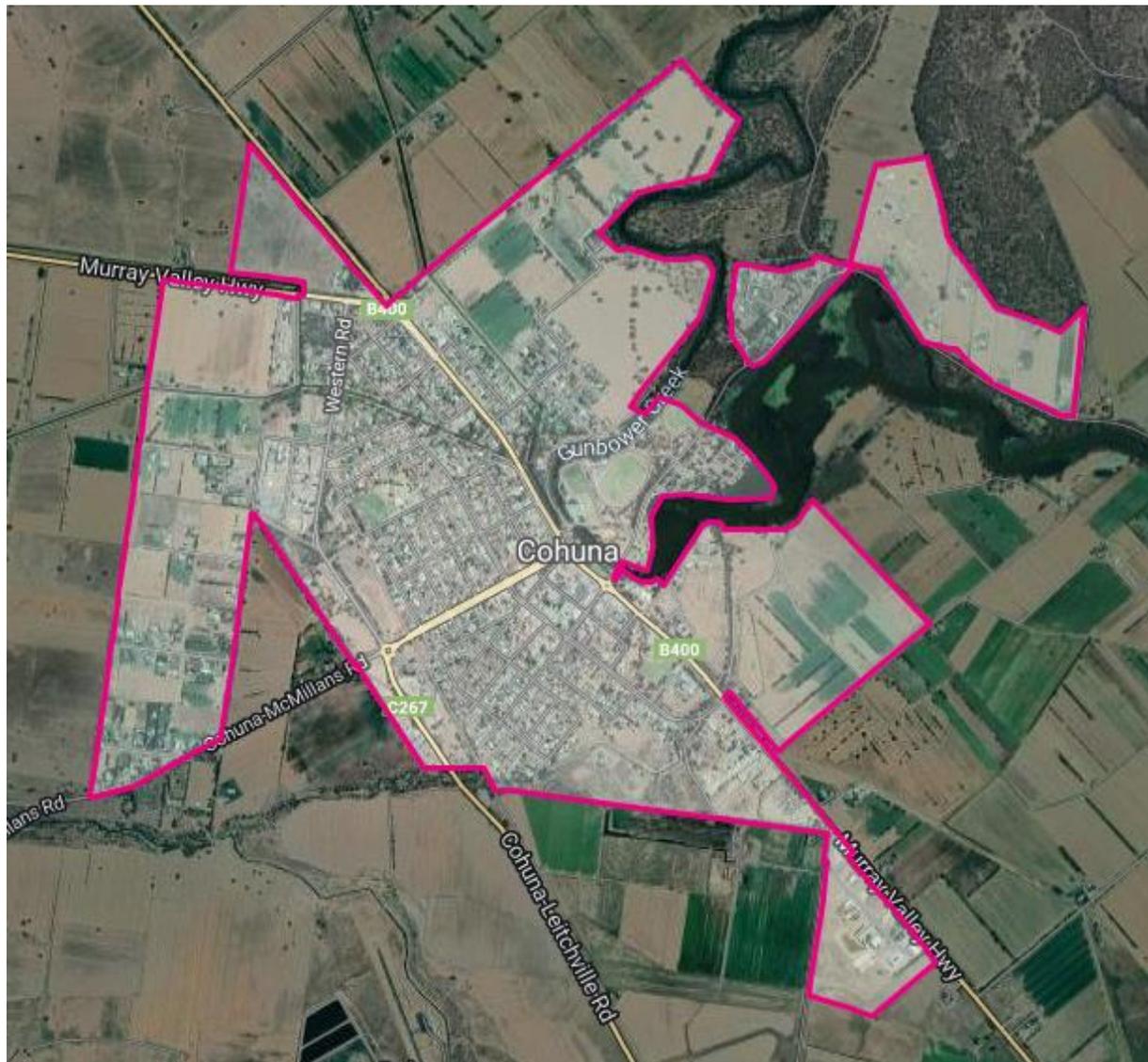
**Figure 1-2: Shire of Gannawarra and the planning areas**



**Figure 1-3: Planning Area 1 – Kerang**

The Kerang planning area is home to 3,781 people (Census 2021), or around 35% of the Shire's total population. It is the main service centre for the Shire with good transport links. The area is dotted with lagoons, wetlands and lakes, many of which are protected under the Ramsar Convention.

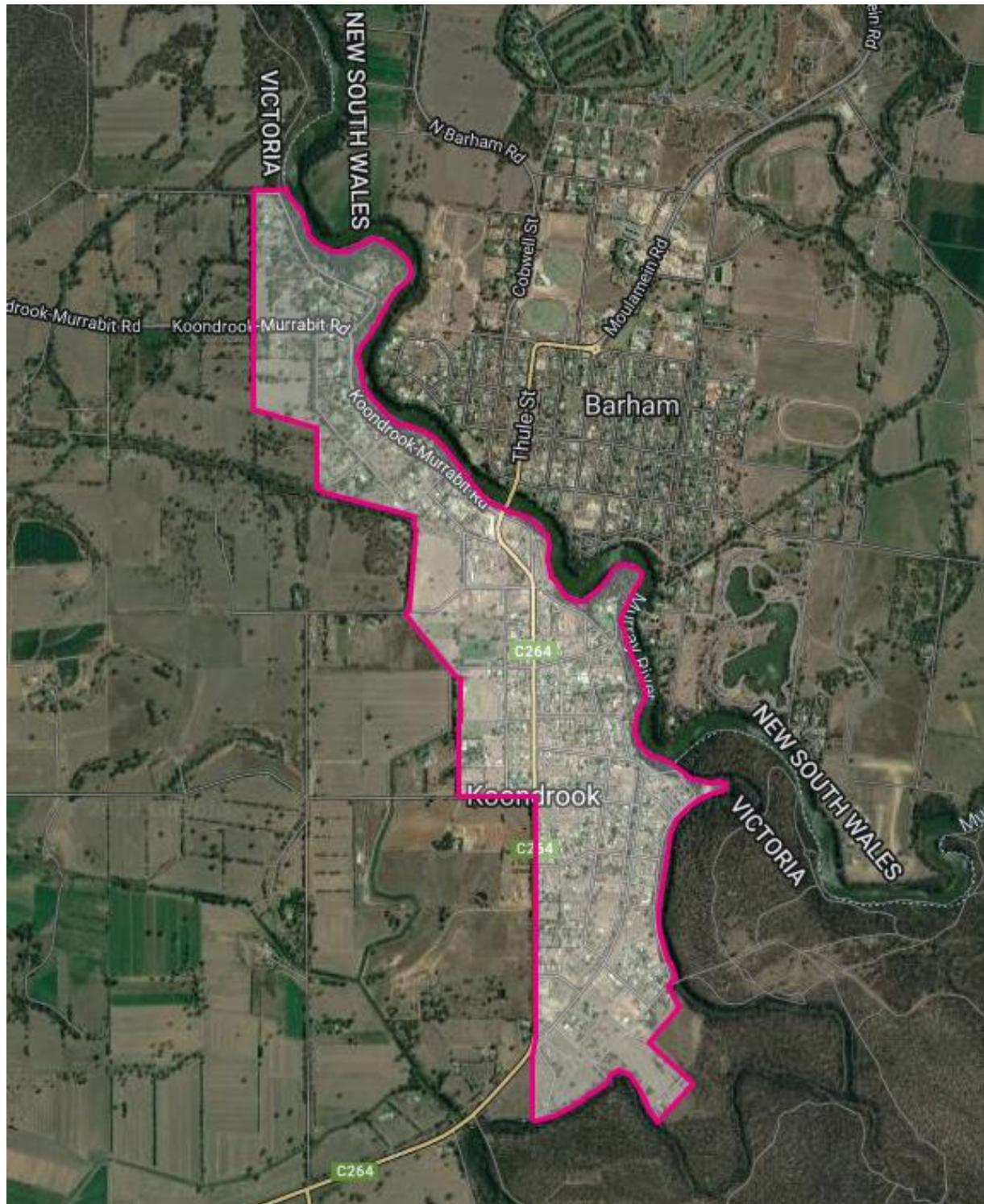
With the completion of the Victorian NSW Interconnector West (VNI West or KerangLink) later this decade, the region will become a hub for renewable energy projects, which will be able to connect to the electricity grid at Kerang.

**Figure 1-4: Planning Area 2 – Cohuna**

The Cohuna planning area is home to 2,151 people (Census 2021), or around 20% of the Shire's total population. Cohuna is located on the Gunbower Creek, an anabranch of the Murray River, and is the second largest town in Gannawarra.

The town has a strong and attractive commercial centre and is a popular spot for river-based outdoor activities. Many of the town's sporting facilities are clustered centrally, along Cohuna Island Road. The area is also known for its dairy production and is becoming increasingly popular as a place to live.

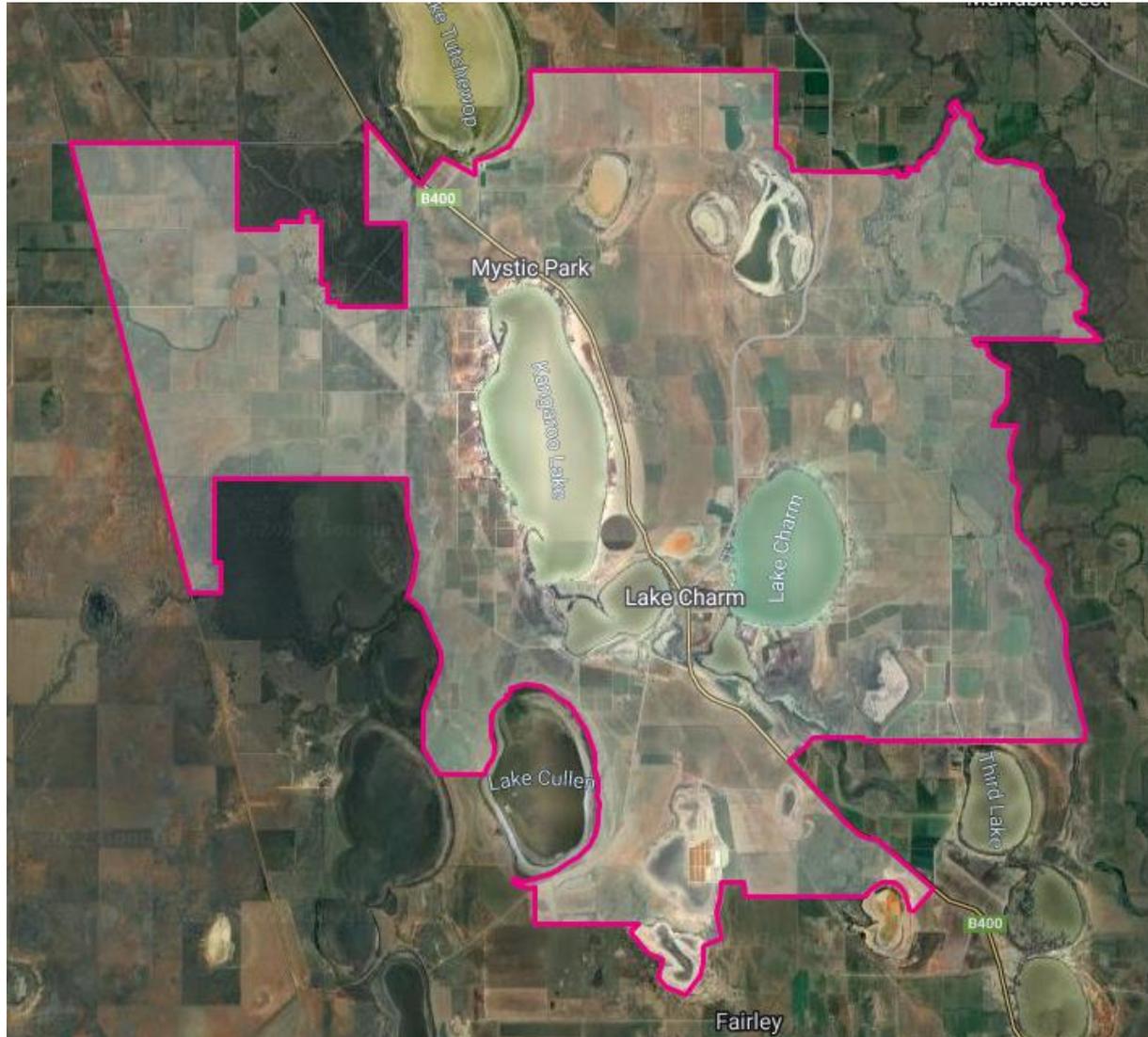
Figure 1-5: Planning Area 3 – Koondrook



The Koondrook planning area is home to 931 people (Census 2021), or just under 9% of the Shire's total population. It is located on the Victorian side of Murray River, opposite its NSW twin-town of Barham.

The area is well known for its redgum timber, which features throughout the town centre in numerous urban design elements. The town is evolving towards nature-based activities that are focused on Gunbower Island and along its rivers and creeks.

Figure 1-6: Planning Area 4 – Kerang Lakes (Lake Charm and Kangaroo Lake)



Among the four planning areas, the Kerang Lakes planning area stands out as the most expansive in terms of geography. As of 2021, the population was recorded at 361, representing slightly over 3% of Gannawarra's total populace.

The area is 19 kilometres to the north-west of Kerang and is a popular destination for water skiing, boating and fishing. It is also the closest of the planning areas to the mineral sands exploration, mining and processing projects proposed to its west. The Lakes area has been identified as having the potential to provide a unique residential offer, subject to addressing the environmental issues arising from its lakes and wetland location.

### 1.3 The Study Process

At the commencement of the project, a Project Team was formed that was led by senior staff at Gannawarra Shire Council. This included the Director Infrastructure & Development, Manager Economic Development and Manager Statutory Planning. REMPLAN team members included the Principal Planner and a Senior Consultant.

Several visits and meetings have been held, including two days of site visits and assessments of township structure, navigation, wayfinding and place-making initiatives across Kerang, Cohuna, Koondrook and the Kerang Lakes area. This has allowed for an in-depth understanding of how these towns and areas operate and what opportunities might be present. This 'ground truthing' has also contributed to the rigour of land supply assessment, which traditionally is a combination of desktop analysis combined with local knowledge from town planners.

Consultation has been deliberately targeted during the drafting of this strategy, primarily as it is seeking to implement existing adopted plans and strategies, and that it is based on technical assessments and good planning practice. Discussions have taken place with several key stakeholders and large landowners, which will be supplemented by further consultation on the draft strategy and its recommendations. More formal community consultation will take place during the process of actioning the strategy's actions, such as when structure plans are being reviewed or planning scheme amendments are being proposed.

Strategic plans constantly evolve throughout their preparation, and community and stakeholder engagement and involvement ultimately assist in a smoother implementation process. However, care needs to be taken to ensure that the right questions are asked at the right time, that we avoid consultation fatigue (by asking the same questions time after time), and that we seek to integrate and implement what has already been heard and agreed to (in adopted plans and strategies).

## 2 Background

### 2.1 Policy Context

At a regional level, the **Loddon Mallee North Regional Growth Plan 2014** provides a high-level analysis of the region and includes the following future land use strategies and actions for Gannawarra:

- Recognise and reinforce Kerang's role as the main service centre for the Gannawarra community of interest
- Support the growth of Kerang through planned development, incremental expansion and infrastructure investment
- Recognise and support Cohuna to continue its role as a town that services its local community and surrounding rural settlements
- Recognise and support the future role of Quambatook to provide services to surrounding rural areas
- Support walking and cycling in urban areas to enhance accessibility
- Support public transport connections between towns within the Gannawarra community of interest, Kerang and Bendigo
- Support the Gannawarra Urban and Rural Strategy (2007).

Implementation of the Regional Growth Plan's key planning considerations is primarily undertaken through their inclusion in the Gannawarra Planning Scheme, which ensures that they receive due consideration in the preparation of strategic studies and in the assessment of planning applications.

At a local government level, there are many Council adopted strategies and plans that are relevant to this project, with the four most important being:

- Gannawarra Shire Council 2021-2025 Council Plan (incorporating the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan)
- Gannawarra Shire Council Economic Development Strategy 2019-2024
- Urban and Rural Strategy Plan, Parsons Brinckerhoff, November 2007
- Lake Charm, Kangaroo Lake and Gunbower Creek Environs Strategy, Parsons Brinckerhoff, 2013.

The **Council Plan 2021-2025** is a high level integrated strategic document that is designed to help guide the Shire and its community to reach its potential. It identifies the following three goals:

1. Enhance the wellbeing and liveability of the Gannawarra through creative infrastructure and access to services
2. Grow the Gannawarra by developing a diverse and broad economy
3. Supporting long-term financial and environmental sustainability.

Each goal includes numerous strategic priorities; the most relevant being Goal 2. Goal 2 actions relate to facilitating infrastructure, programs and policies that support economic development and productivity, whilst considering our natural environment; facilitating the implementation of new energy infrastructure and energy projects; supporting the creation of destinations to attract visitors to the region; and to support growth through land rezoning.

The **Economic Development Strategy 2019-2024** has been prepared to respond to the current economic conditions and align with Council's vision and present a clear and achievable strategy and action plan. It includes the following four strategic directions, each with its own set of actions:

1. Facilitate the development of a diverse agricultural sector
2. Drive population growth through lifestyle and employment attraction
3. Facilitate the development of the Gannawarra as an environmental leader
4. Develop the tourism sector through improvements in product and infrastructure.

The **Urban and Rural Strategy Plan (2007)** has laid the foundations for planning and managing growth in Gannawarra for the past 15 years. It is included in the Gannawarra Planning Scheme as a Background document at Clause 72.08. While much of the document is still relevant, and has informed this project, there are elements that are no longer appropriate and would be unlikely to proceed due to new and revised planning rules, regulations and requirements. For example, following the bushfires and floods that have occurred in Victoria since 2009, there are now much stricter requirements around building in bushfire prone areas and areas that are subject to inundation. There is also a stronger focus on protecting the 'right to farm' in rural areas, and a greater emphasis placed on consolidating residential development into areas where they can be easily serviced and contribute to the creation of diverse (with a range of dwelling types) and accessible (walkable) places.

Implementing elements of the **Lake Charm, Kangaroo Lake and Gunbower Creek Environs Strategy (2013)** are still of relevance, however once again they must be considered within the current planning framework, particularly addressing issues such as potential impacts on agricultural activities and the protection of the environment and internationally recognised wetlands. Some investigations into these issues have already commenced.

Overall, Gannawarra's policy setting is very clear and direct. There is an ambition for growth and development that is complementary to, and leverages off, its unique natural environment and environmental setting. It promotes growth that will benefit both existing and future residents of the Gannawarra. The existing policy setting provides a great basis on which to consider a new Urban Growth Strategy; a strategy that will set out how future growth and development will be facilitated and managed over the coming decades.

## 2.2 Gannawarra Planning Scheme

The current Planning Policy Framework is contained within the Gannawarra Planning Scheme (GPS). While many parts of the GPS will be relevant at different stages of the planning process, the key clauses that relate to planning for future residential and employment growth are:

- **Clause 11.01-1R Settlement – Loddon Mallee North.** This clause identifies Kerang as a town where growth will be supported and shows both Cohuna and Koondrook as towns. The Loddon Mallee North plan highlights that land to the north, east and south of Kerang is within an irrigation district (and therefore highly productive agricultural land), and that much of Gannawarra contains high value terrestrial habitat. Urban flood and urban bushfire considerations are important in Kerang.
- **Clauses 11.01-1L-01, 11.01-1L-02 and 11.01-1L-03** contain one-page structure plans for Cohuna, Kerang and Koondrook respectively. All plans were prepared around 2006 and are due to be reviewed, however all plans contain elements that remain relevant to this project.
- **Clause 11.01-1L-07 Settlement in Gannawarra,** includes strategies that seek to support development that helps generate employment and economic activity, particularly in Kerang and Cohuna, and strategies that support residential development where it can be easily serviced and limits impact on the environment.
- **Clause 11.02-1S Supply of urban land,** seeks to ensure a sufficient supply of land is available for residential, commercial, retail, industrial, recreational, institutional and other community uses. Notably, the clause includes a strategy to plan to accommodate projected population

growth over at least a 15-year period and provide clear directions on locations where growth should occur. The clause states that residential land supply will be considered on a municipal basis, rather than a town-by town basis. *Note: This project argues that the differences and distances between the four planning areas demonstrates the need to consider land supply at a more localised level.*

- **Clause 11.03-6S Regional and local places**, seeks to facilitate integrated place-based planning by integrating relevant planning considerations to provide specific direction for the planning of sites, places, neighbourhoods and towns, and to consider the distinctive characteristics and needs of regional and local places in planning for future land use and development.

For each of the planning areas, there will also be a unique mix of planning zone and overlay controls that have influenced the directions of the project. However, a common issue across the Shire that is worthy of extra attention is that of flooding and inundation. Following the 2011 floods, significant levee infrastructure (both upgrades and new) was constructed and has been tested during the recent 2022 floods. This infrastructure successfully protected many properties that may have been inundated without it. Kerang was surrounded by flood waters during the height of the recent flood, but the levees were successful in protecting the urban area. Gannawarra Shire has worked closely with the North Central Catchment Management Authority (NCCMA) to ensure that its flood mapping is accurate and planning controls have been updated. During the township structure planning process, the application of agreed flood levels will be investigated in greater detail.

The key planning controls are listed adjacent to the planning area maps in the Managing Future Growth section of this report (Section 7).

## 2.3 Other Strategic Planning Matters

This project is supported by the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA), who are responsible for providing strategic planning advice and guidance to regional councils. Recognising the need for a simplified version of the Precinct Structure Plan guidelines that are used in Victoria's growth areas, the VPA have prepared **PSP 2.0 Guidance Note: Applying the PSP Guidelines in regional areas (PSP 2.0)**. PSP 2.0 provides a replicable approach and a framework to prepare place-based plans that are tailored to reflect the scale and complexity of the planning task at hand.

A review of PSP 2.0 indicates that the type and scale of future growth in Gannawarra is classified as '**incremental growth areas**' or '**urban expansion areas**'. These are undeveloped areas either within existing township boundaries, or on the fringes of towns that may be able to utilise existing township infrastructure. Once the broader strategic planning directions have been identified and endorsed, it is expected that incremental growth and urban expansion growth areas can be planned by taking a Development Plan Overlay and Section 173 Agreement (for any infrastructure provision or required upgrades) approach.

Suitable locations are shown on maps in Section 7 - Managing Future Growth, as 'Incremental Growth Area' or 'Urban Expansion Area'. The planning pathway is still through the preparation of a Planning Scheme Amendment. This includes the preparation of background technical documentation, a Development Plan Overlay Schedule and ultimately the preparation of concept plans for the site. Council, landowners, or the VPA could lead the planning scheme amendment process, however it is expected that in most cases it will be led by the private sector and the process will be managed by the council.

### 3 Population and Housing trends in Gannawarra

The following section details some of the most important elements of Gannawarra's existing population and housing trends. The size and structure of the population is an important factor when considering future housing needs. For example, young families will generally have different housing needs and preferences to those of retirees, which again will differ from young single adults. While households (the people living in a dwelling) are very adaptable and will often live in a dwelling that is smaller or larger than what is needed, a well-performing housing market will try to cater for this by having a supply of diverse housing and tenure options available. Households will have the *opportunity* to match their dwelling with their housing needs and preferences.

In a well-performing housing market, supply and demand work together to drive the construction of new housing that caters to market demand, but it also tries to 'get ahead of the game' and plan for demographic change, unmet demand and changing preferences. However, in practice there are a range of human and policy factors that don't necessarily align with the theory. For example, older people often prefer to stay in their family home, even when it is much larger than what they need. Staying allows residents to remain connected to their local community, close to the services they need, and to have additional space should friends or family come to visit. Another reason might simply be that it is their 'family home' and they have a strong sentimental connection to it. In some cases, it could be that there are no alternative (smaller or affordable) homes in their neighbourhood. All are important factors, and all make it difficult to predict how an individual will respond, but overall demographic trends do assist in understanding housing demand.

Policy factors such as planning controls and building regulations can also, inadvertently, or deliberately, favour the delivery of one form of housing over another. Current policy settings tend to facilitate the construction of single detached dwellings on relatively large lots on the edge of existing settlements (greenfield development), compared to the construction of smaller or medium-density dwellings in established areas (infill development). This is not to say that medium-density housing cannot be delivered at the same time, but rather it may need other settings to change, such as a more supportive planning policy framework, or improved property economics, before the property and construction sector will adequately respond to the latent demand that is likely to be there.

Policy changes can often have long lag periods before they have any effect. However, this is not always the case. During the recent pandemic many communities experienced first-hand how quickly some things can change. The 'working from home' directives and the greater flexibility that resulted for many office-based employees and employers is believed to have impacted on some peoples' home purchasing and rental decisions. Distance to the office became less critical, while having a dedicated working from home space became more important. It will be interesting to see how it plays out in coming years, but in general it appears to have had a positive impact on regional areas, particularly places with high levels of amenity where people want to live, and in areas where there was housing stock available. In areas where there wasn't housing stock available, prices tended to increase significantly, which has created its own set of issues.

The rate of growth is also an important consideration. In locations with low, slow, or even negative population growth, new homes are often still needed due to a declining household size (more houses are needed just to accommodate the same number of people). Slow growth can also make it difficult for new subdivisions to be progressed. Successful land development is complicated and requires expertise to do well. There are large upfront costs, holding costs, risks relating to creating an over-supply, and challenges in ensuring that there is an ongoing pipeline of work for sub-contractors. Land banking can be an issue, but in most cases it is more about balancing supply with demand at a price point that makes the development viable (if it isn't profitable, it doesn't happen, as lenders will not

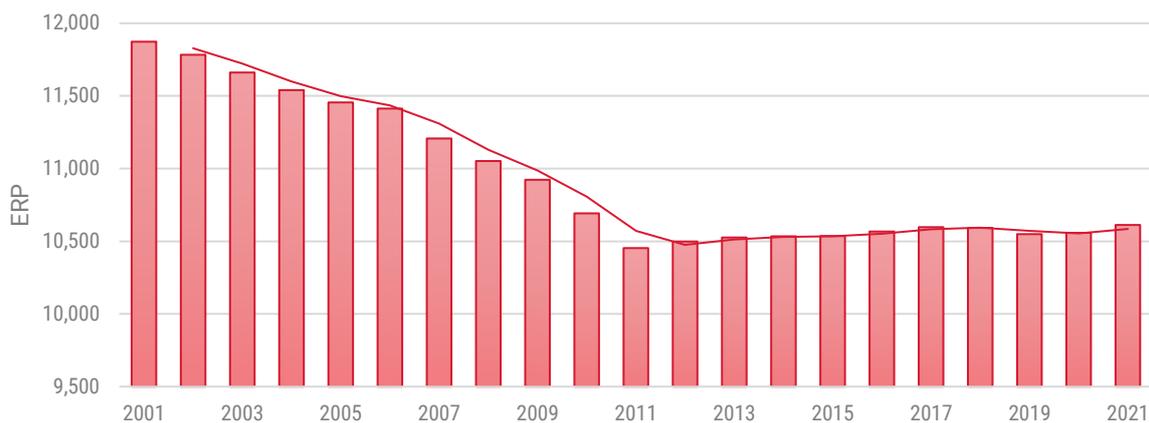
finance it). Developers and builders are at the pointy end of the strategic planning process and it is therefore important to get the policy and planning right so that they are clear on what they are expected to deliver when it comes to building the places that the community is expecting, and more importantly, want to live in.

The following sections include some of the key demographics that influence population and dwelling forecasts.

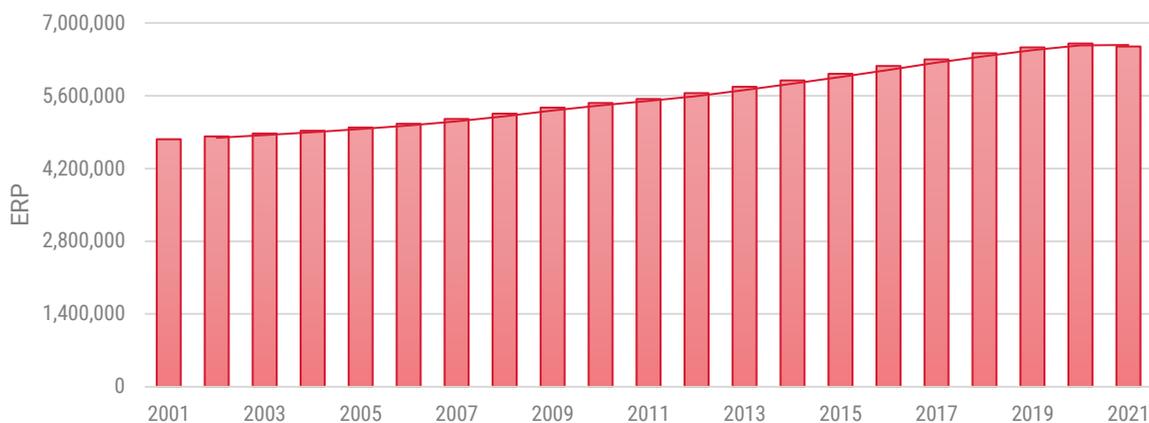
### 3.1 Population and Age Structure

The ABS **Estimated Resident Population (ERP)** for Gannawarra Shire on 30 June 2021 was 10,612. During the period 2016 to 2021 Gannawarra’s population increased by 45 people. This represents a growth rate of 0.1% per year. While small, this positive rate of growth is a sign that the longer-term trend of population decline is likely to have reversed. Figure 3-1 below shows that much of the population decline coincided with the Millennium Drought. The severity of the drought had major implications on much of rural and regional south-east Australia and its townships. The end of the drought, the evolution of the agricultural sector, improvements to irrigation networks, the interest in water-based and nature-based activities, and recent investments in renewable energy production are expected to be contributing to this shift.

**Figure 3-1: Gannawarra ERP 2001 – 2021**



**Figure 3-2: Victoria ERP 2001 - 2021**



When looking specifically at the four key planning areas, three of them have grown. Koondrook has been a standout, increasing its population by over 21% over the 10-year period and accounting for around half of Gannawarra’s total growth. Koondrook’s rate of growth has also increased slightly during the last five years compared to the first five-year period.

**Table 3-1: Gannawarra Planning Areas Population Change 2011 - 2021**

|                | 2011   | 2016   | 2021   | 2011-21<br>Change (no) | 2011-21<br>Change (%) |
|----------------|--------|--------|--------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Gannawarra     | 10,366 | 10,548 | 10,683 | +317                   | +3.0%                 |
| - Kerang       | 3,638  | 3,712  | 3,781  | +143                   | +3.9%                 |
| - Cohuna       | 2,027  | 2,149  | 2,151  | +124                   | +6.1%                 |
| - Koondrook    | 769    | 828    | 935    | +166                   | +21.6%                |
| - Kerang Lakes | 375    | 354    | 361    | -14                    | -3.7%                 |
| - GSC Balance  | 3,543  | 3,531  | 3,472  | -71                    | -2.0%                 |

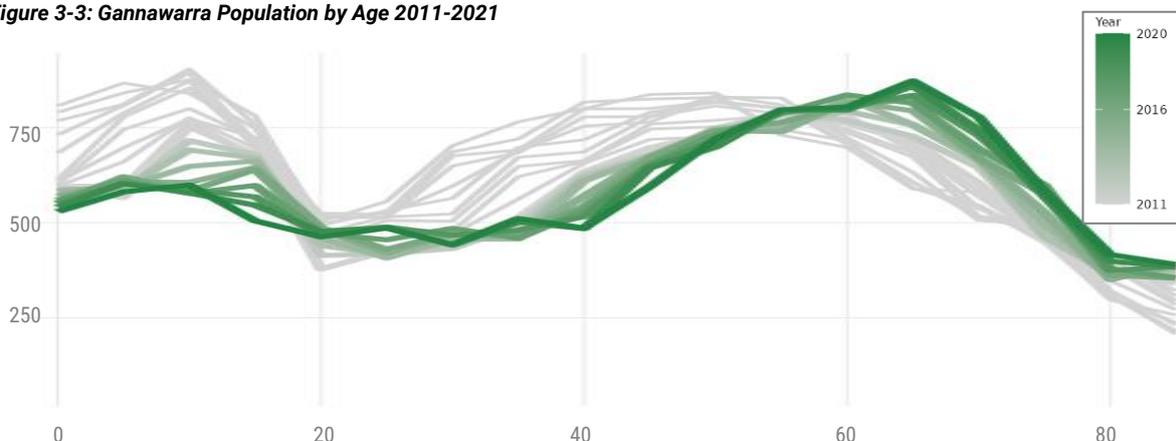
Cohuna has also been a strong performer over the 10-year period, however most of its growth occurred in the first five-year period between 2011 and 2016. This may be a result of the drought and people moving from nearby rural areas into Cohuna at that time.

The data suggests that Kerang has experienced slow and steady growth, just above the average for the Shire, while the Kerang Lakes area has seen a slight decrease in its population. Given the numbers are quite low in the Kerang Lakes area, they could be expected to fluctuate a little more than larger areas.

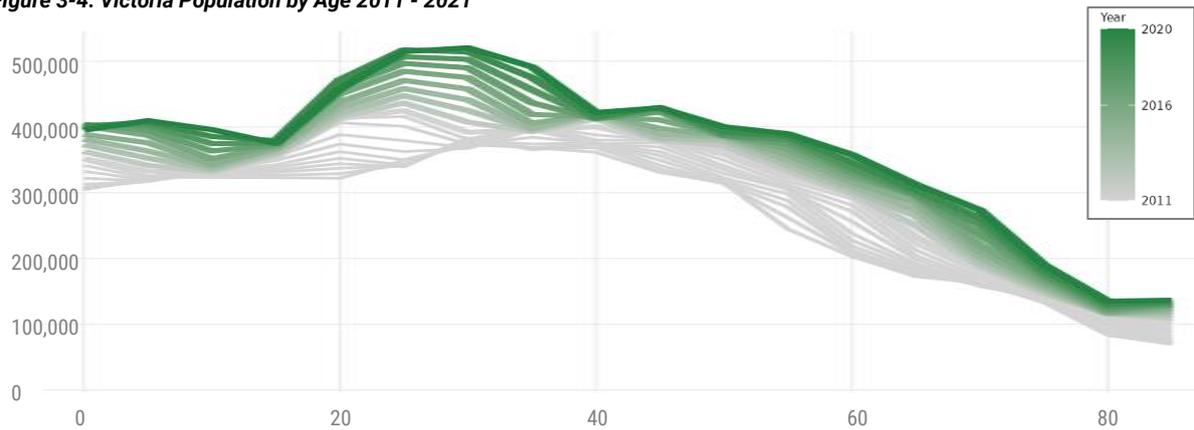
Outside of the main population areas of Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook, much of the Shire (referred to as the ‘GSC Balance area’) has been declining in population. While some people will have left the municipality, it is expected that many will have moved to Gannawarra’s bigger towns and have contributed to their growth.

While the **total population** paints one part of the picture, the **population by age** adds a little more detail on how a population has changed over time. Twenty-year data is presented at a Shire wide scale (Figure 3-3) and is compared to Victoria’s total population (Figure 3-4).

**Figure 3-3: Gannawarra Population by Age 2011-2021**



**Figure 3-4: Victoria Population by Age 2011 - 2021**



As can be seen in the graphs above, Gannawarra’s population profile is noticeably different to that of Victoria’s. Gannawarra’s population is older and is aging (the median age is 51 years compared to 38 years for Victoria).

Figure 3-3 also shows that Gannawarra has been losing younger people and gaining older people (indicated by the vertical difference in the light grey and dark green lines). The aging of the population can also be seen as the light grey lines move horizontally left to right and become darker green lines. Much of this is due to the Baby Boomer generation moving through the age profile and ‘aging in place’. This trend is not uncommon in regional areas as young people tend to move to larger cities to pursue educational and employment opportunities while older people settle into retirement.

Another way to view population structure is to flip the axis and compare the **age profile** by 5-year age cohorts. Figure 3-5 and 11 confirm that Gannawarra has a smaller percentage of its population in the Young Workers (25-34) and Workers (35-49) age cohorts, and a higher percentage of its population in the 60 to 79 (Retirement) and 80+ (Elderly) age brackets when compared to Victoria. Figure 3-5 also shows that there has been a small increase in the number of people in the 20-24 and the 25-29 age cohorts over the past 10 years.

Figure 3-5: Gannawarra age profile 2011 – 2021

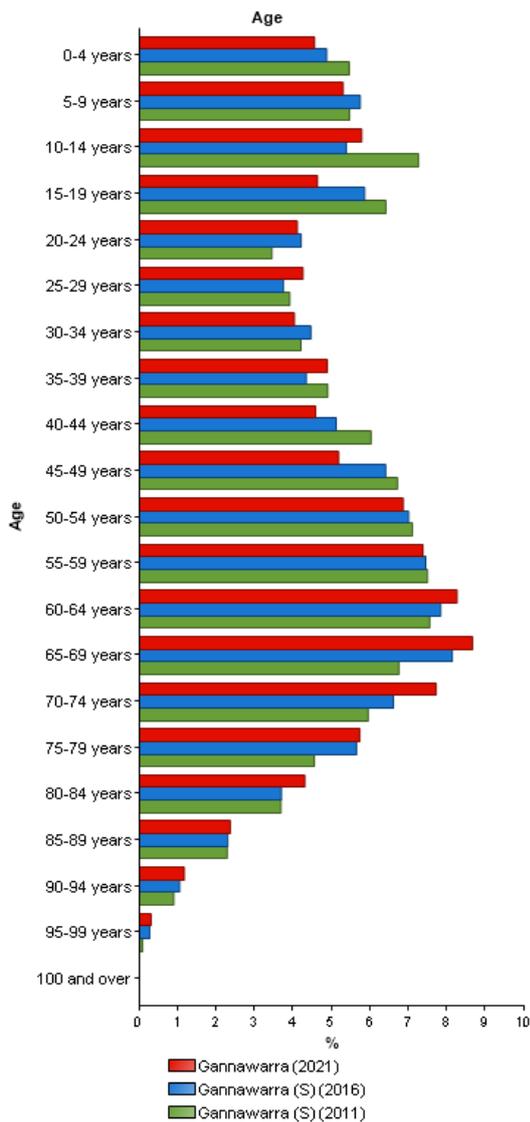
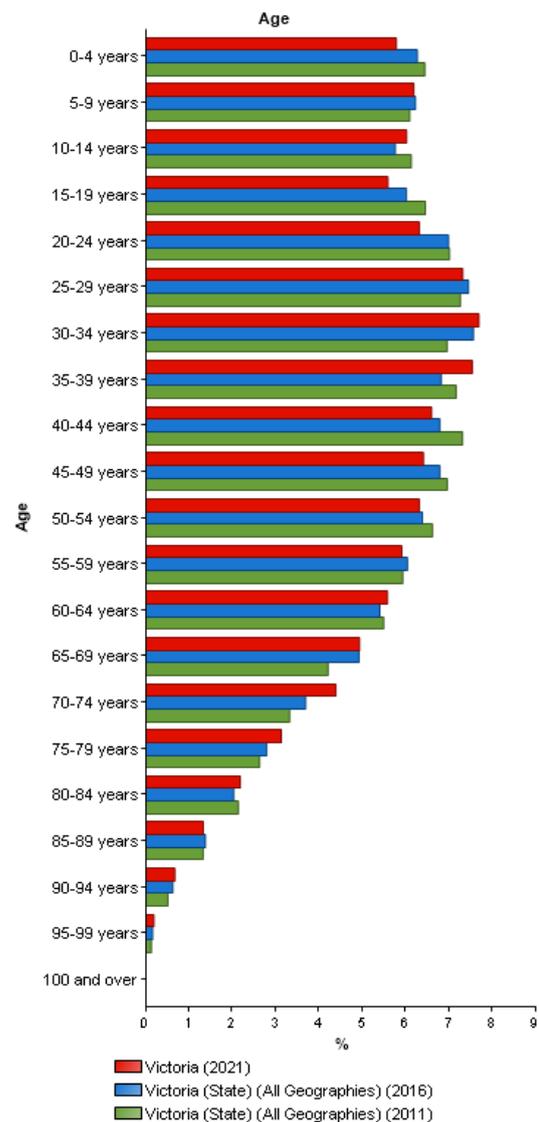


Figure 3-6: Victoria age profile 2011 - 2021



Drilling down a little deeper into the data and looking at the current age profile for the four planning areas, we can see some subtle differences starting to emerge.

As might be expected, due to its larger size and regional service centre role, the age profile for Kerang is the most balanced, with a higher proportion of people in younger age cohorts than other townships. Cohuna and Koondrook tend to have an older population profile, which may be explained in part by their appeal as retirement locations with excellent access to popular retirement activities such as fishing, golf and bowls. Both places are also only a short drive away from healthcare facilities (in Kerang and Barham). Kerang Lakes has an interesting age profile, with a noticeable bump in the 50 to 64 age group, but still with a good percentage of people under the age of 18. These could be families that have prioritised living lakeside with easy access to active water sports over living in a larger town. It is likely to also include a few early retirees that have moved to the area and people who are able to work from home.

Figure 3-7: Kerang age profile 2021

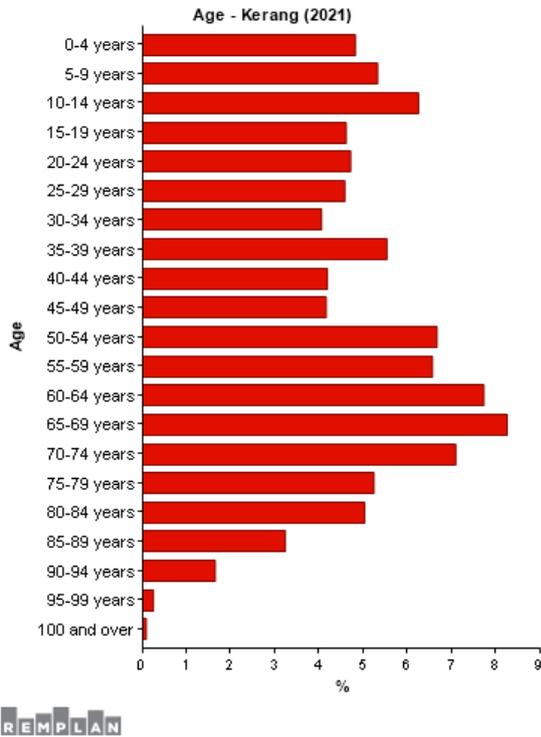


Figure 3-8: Cohuna age profile 2021

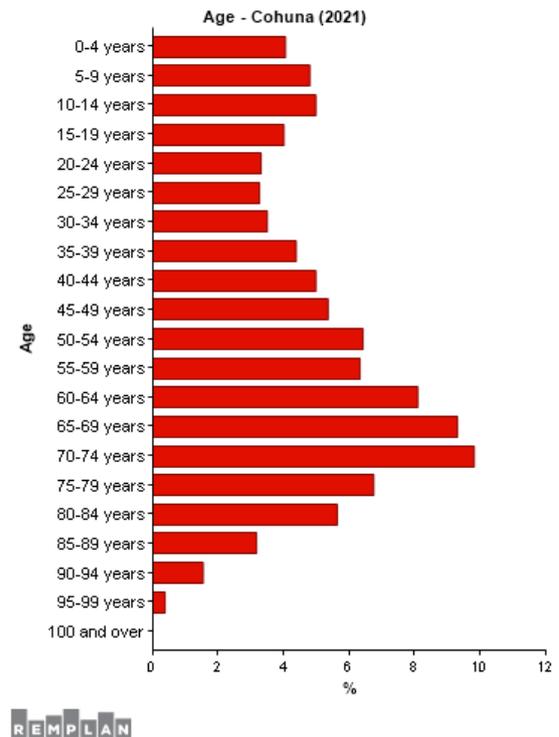


Figure 3-9: Koondrook age profile 2021

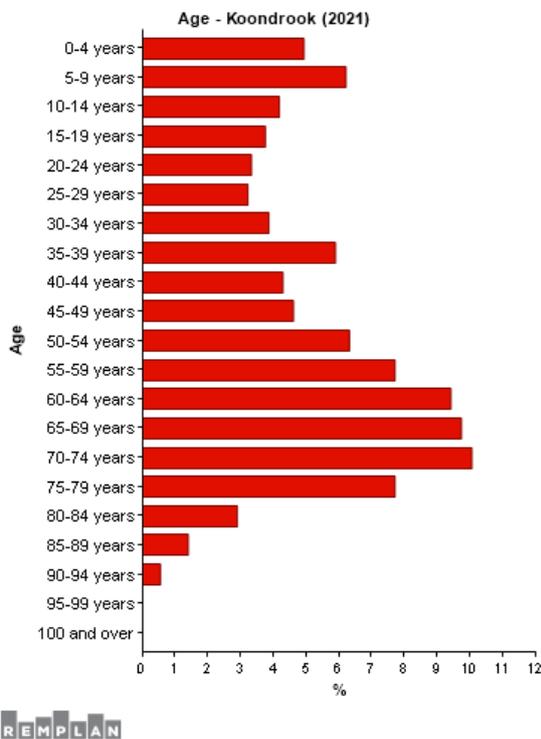
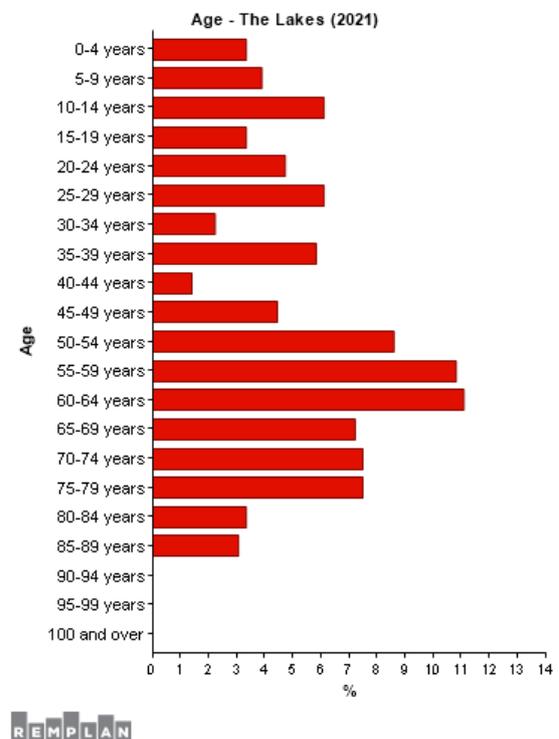


Figure 3-10: Kerang Lakes age profile 2021



### 3.2 Household Mobility

When it comes to household mobility, over 61% of Gannawarra's residents did not move during the previous 5-year period. This is higher than the Victorian average (54.3%), but in all areas there has been a general trend towards moving more frequently. In places such as Koondrook, where there has been strong growth, household mobility is likely connected to new people moving to town, but in the Kerang Lakes area, it may be a little more complicated and relate to a generational change that is linked to the era of when the area was developed, or it could simply be related to people moving into what were once holiday homes (during the pandemic).

**Table 3-2: Same Address as Last Census**

|                | 2021  | 2016  | 2011  |
|----------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Gannawarra     | 61.2% | 64.2% | 66.9% |
| - Kerang       | 58.7% | 60.9% | 62.0% |
| - Cohuna       | 62.7% | 61.8% | 66.8% |
| - Koondrook    | 58.8% | 64.7% | 68.7% |
| - Kerang Lakes | 61.0% | 73.1% | 74.7% |
| Victoria       | 54.3% | 54.1% | 57.6% |

### 3.3 Household Composition

Gannawarra's population of 10,683 can also be viewed as 4,700 different households. A household is the person, or group of people, living in a dwelling. Households are often referred to as a 'family', but this is not always the case as some households are single people, while others are made up of a group of unrelated people ('group households'). Regardless of the **household composition**, it is particularly useful when it comes to understanding the services and housing needs that different towns might have.

**Table 3-3: Gannawarra Household Composition 2021**

|                                | GSC No. | GSC %  | Victoria % |
|--------------------------------|---------|--------|------------|
| Couples with children          | 938     | 20.0%  | 30.9%      |
| Couples without children       | 1,459   | 31.0%  | 24.6%      |
| One parent families            | 364     | 7.7%   | 10.2%      |
| Other families                 | 46      | 1.0%   | 1.2%       |
| Group household                | 100     | 2.1%   | 3.8%       |
| Lone person                    | 1,453   | 30.9%  | 24.7%      |
| Other not classified household | 246     | 5.2%   | 3.7%       |
| Visitor only households        | 94      | 2.0%   | 1.0%       |
| Total households               | 4,700   | 100.0% | 100.0%     |

When comparing Gannawarra's household composition to that of Victoria's, there are several notable differences – 'Couples with children' (20.0% compared to 30.9%), 'Couples without children' (31.0% compared to 24.6%) and 'Lone person' (30.9% compared to 24.7%). While these are not unexpected, due to the older age profile and regional location of Gannawarra, more importantly for this project it starts to raise questions on how well matched the housing stock is to the population. For example, with 61.9% of households having only one or two people living in them it might be assumed that there

will be a strong demand for smaller dwellings. Section 3.6 includes further detail on dwelling size and housing suitability.

### 3.4 Household Size

Household size relates to the average number of people living in each dwelling. Across Australia, household size has been declining for several decades. This trend has also occurred in Gannawarra, where household size has declined from 2.48 persons per dwelling in 2001 down to 2.21 in 2021. While the rate of decline has slowed, once again it is something that is expected given the older age profile and the high levels of 'Lone person' and 'Couple without children' household types mentioned above. For comparison, Victoria's average household size has dropped over the same 20-year period from 2.61 to 2.52.

The outcome of declining household sizes is that more houses are required to accommodate the same number of people. While this is an obvious conclusion, it is an important one. Even areas with no population growth will require new dwellings. For areas with growing populations with accompanying decline in average household size, the issue is compounded.

### 3.5 Dwelling Type

Across the Shire there are 5,326 dwellings. Over 88% of these are 'occupied private dwellings' and around 11.5% are 'unoccupied private dwellings'. The remaining 0.32% are classified as 'non-private dwellings'. These percentages align closely with the Victorian averages.

While in all planning areas the amount of unoccupied private dwellings decreased between 2016 and 2021, the Kerang Lakes area has seen a significant shift declining from 27.3% in 2016 down to 14.6% in 2021. This is likely to be related to the pandemic, where dwellings were often taken off the holiday market as people moved permanently into their holiday home or the dwelling was placed on the long-term rental market (where better returns were possible). Regardless of the reason, it is a noticeable change, and one replicated (but perhaps not to this extent) in other holiday home locations.

**Table 3-4: Dwelling composition 2021**

|                 | Dwellings        | % of GSC dwelling stock | Occupied private dwellings | Separate house | Owned outright / mortgage | Rented       |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| Gannawarra      | 5,326            | 100%                    | 88.2%                      | 92.3%          | 71.5%                     | 17.2%        |
| - Kerang        | 1,892            | 35.5%                   | 89.8%                      | 87.0%          | 67.9%                     | 22.2%        |
| - Cohuna        | 1,093            | 20.5%                   | 89.3%                      | 91.8%          | 73.6%                     | 17.4%        |
| - Koondrook     | 472              | 8.8%                    | 87.7%                      | 95.9%          | 81.2%                     | 11.5%        |
| - Kerang Lakes  | 171              | 3.2%                    | 85.3%                      | 92.4%          | 72.9%                     | 9.4%         |
| - GSC Balance   | 1,715            | 32.2%                   | 85.4%                      | 97.8%          | 72.5%                     | 13.5%        |
| <i>Victoria</i> | <i>6,472,911</i> | <i>-</i>                | <i>89.2%</i>               | <i>71.5%</i>   | <i>65.4%</i>              | <i>27.5%</i> |

Just over 92% of Gannawarra's dwellings are 'separate houses' (i.e., a fully detached dwelling), with 5% listed as 'medium density'<sup>1</sup> and another 1.9% being 'caravans, cabin or houseboat'. The percentages of separate houses and medium density are noticeably different to that of Victoria, where 71.5% are recorded as separate houses and 27.9% are either medium or high density. This is not unexpected, as most of Victoria's medium density housing can be found in metropolitan Melbourne and in Victoria's larger regional cities. Not surprisingly, given Gannawarra's extensive river

<sup>1</sup> A medium density dwelling is a combination of ABS categories being any single or double storey semi-detached, row or terrace house, a flat or apartment in a 1 or 2 storey block, and any flat or unit attached to a house.

and lake frontages, it has a greater percentage of caravans, cabins and houseboats when compared to Victoria as a whole (1.9% compared to 0.3%).

Over the 2011 to 2021 period, there has been an increase of 116 dwellings, 88 of them being in Kerang. Percentage wise, Koondrook has seen the biggest growth, increasing its number of dwellings by 6.0% over this period, while there has been a decrease in the Kerang Lakes area. This is believed to relate to the classification of cabins in caravan parks for permanent residents. There will have been slightly more dwellings built than the increase indicates, with some having been replacement dwellings following the demolition of an existing one.

**Table 3-5: Dwelling Change 2011 - 2021**

|                 | 2011  | 2016  | 2021  | 2011-21<br>Change (no) | 2011-21<br>Change (%) |
|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Gannawarra      | 5,210 | 5,290 | 5,326 | +116                   | +2.2%                 |
| - Kerang        | 1,804 | 1,878 | 1,892 | +88                    | +4.9%                 |
| - Cohuna        | 1,065 | 1,076 | 1,093 | +28                    | +2.6%                 |
| - Koondrook     | 445   | 449   | 472   | +27                    | +6.0%                 |
| - Kerang Lakes* | 205   | 205   | 171   | -34                    | -16.6%                |
| - GSC Balance   | 1,693 | 1,705 | 1,715 | +22                    | +1.3%                 |

\* The drop in number in the Kerang Lakes is understood to relate to changes to classifications in caravan parks

### 3.6 Dwelling Size / Number of Bedrooms

Almost half (just under 49%) of all dwellings in Gannawarra are 3-bedroom homes. This is higher than the Victorian average, where 3-bedroom dwellings account for around 40%. Once again, this is to be expected due to the low percentage of medium density homes in Gannawarra (medium density homes tend to have fewer bedrooms). It is also not surprising given most homes would have been built at a time when Gannawarra's age profile was much younger, with more families with children, and being built on larger lots that would not have constrained building size.

**Table 3-6: Number of Bedrooms in Private Dwellings 2021 (% of total)**

|                | 1    | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5+   | Not stated |
|----------------|------|-------|-------|-------|------|------------|
| Gannawarra     | 2.7% | 13.1% | 48.9% | 24.1% | 3.2% | 8.2%       |
| - Kerang       | 1.7% | 15.4% | 48.7% | 20.8% | 4.0% | 9.4%       |
| - Cohuna       | 3.2% | 13.9% | 55.0% | 19.6% | 1.1% | 7.1%       |
| - Koondrook    | 2.9% | 12.1% | 60.0% | 17.4% | 1.9% | 5.6%       |
| - Kerang Lakes | 2.7% | 9.6%  | 43.8% | 28.8% | 2.7% | 12.3%      |
| - GSC Balance  | 2.1% | 10.6% | 42.4% | 32.2% | 4.2% | 8.1%       |
| Victoria       | 5.0% | 18.4% | 39.9% | 26.0% | 5.3% | 5.1%       |

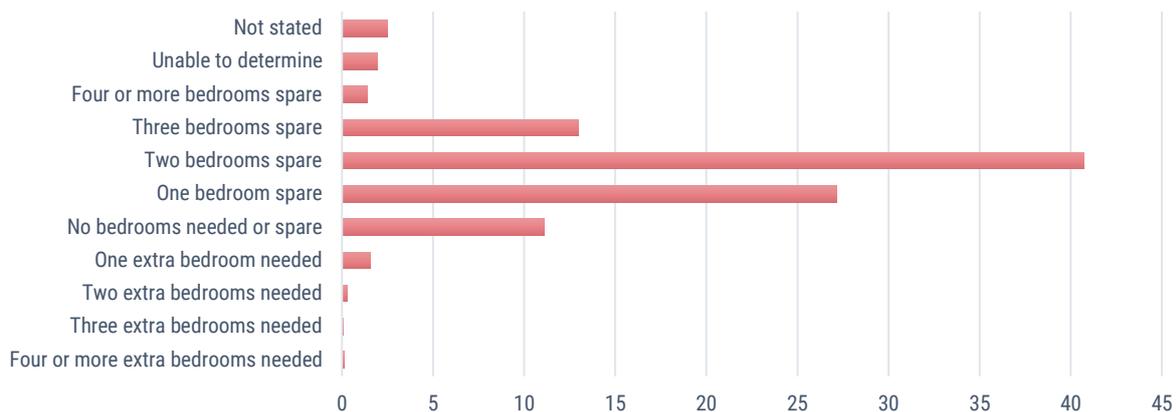
Gannawarra currently has 3.92% fewer 4 and 5+ bedroom dwellings compared to Victoria. The proliferation of large homes (4+ bedrooms) as the preferred size is a relatively recent phenomenon. They are often constructed in new growth areas by young and expanding families, where the cost to add an extra bedroom is minimal compared to the overall cost of land and building. Despite Gannawarra's population profile suggesting that there may be a low demand for large homes, the construction of 84 new 4-bedroom dwellings between 2016 and 2021 (46% of all new dwellings built)

suggests the opposite. It will be interesting to see if this is a blip in the data, or if it is an ongoing trend. It may also be a result of the financial opportunity cost that large homes can provide (the higher re-sale value generally exceeds the construction cost, so it is seen as a good investment to build larger). Alternatively, it could reflect the typical new home builder (being younger families).

Another measure that can be used to analyse how well-matched housing is to its population is to assess the number of bedrooms that are 'needed' or are 'spare', as recorded by each household. Overcrowding can occur when a household needs more space but is unable to expand or move to a larger home. The impacts of overcrowding are beyond the scope of this project, but it is positive to note that the percentage of households in Gannawarra that need more space is relatively low (1.56%). This is not to diminish the impact that it may be having on those households, however.

Figure 3-11: Gannawarra Housing Suitability (% of families indicating the number of bedrooms spare or needed in 2021) indicates that there is significant spare bedroom capacity. Once again, this is to be expected given the average household size and number of bedrooms per dwelling mentioned earlier. This is also a 'point in time' assessment and does not account for the flexibility that additional space provides, for example, space for a new child or elderly family member to move into, or a space to work from home.

**Figure 3-11: Gannawarra Housing Suitability (% of families indicating the number of bedrooms spare or needed in 2021)**



### 3.7 Housing Approvals

Housing approvals are typically considered a lead indicator for supply of new dwellings but can also indicate levels of demand within a region. While not all dwelling approvals translate into completed dwellings, approvals are often used as an indicator of the strength of consumer and investor confidence.

Figure 3-12 and Table illustrate the number of new dwelling approvals within Gannawarra over the past decade. As indicated in the chart, there was a substantial increase in the number of approvals during the Federal Government’s *HomeBuilder* grant period which ran from June 2020 to March 2021. It is expected that approvals will return to trend once updated data becomes available. Regardless, housing approvals have been growing over the past decade. Extrapolating this trend using a 3-year moving average suggests that by 2030/31 the average housing approvals will be around 63 per annum. If we exclude the 2020/21 spike, this reduces to around 54 per annum in 2030/31, which is still a large increase on current approvals.

At a local scale you can once again clearly see the HomeBuilder Grant program spike in the 2020-21 in Kerang and Cohuna. In 2022 approvals dropped slightly, but it will be another year or two before we

see the full impact of recent interest rates rises, labour supply challenges and if the cost of materials settles down.

Figure 3-12: Gannawarra New Dwelling Approvals 2011/12 -2021/22

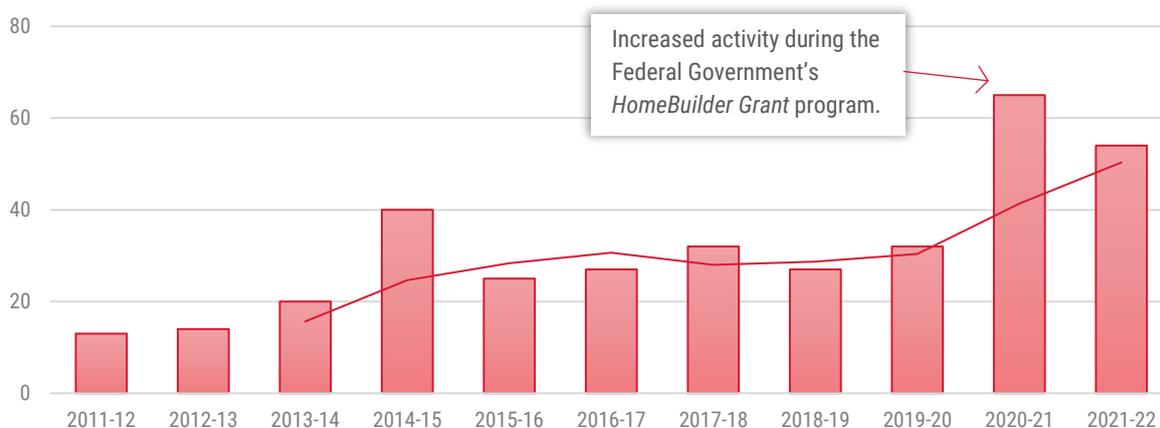
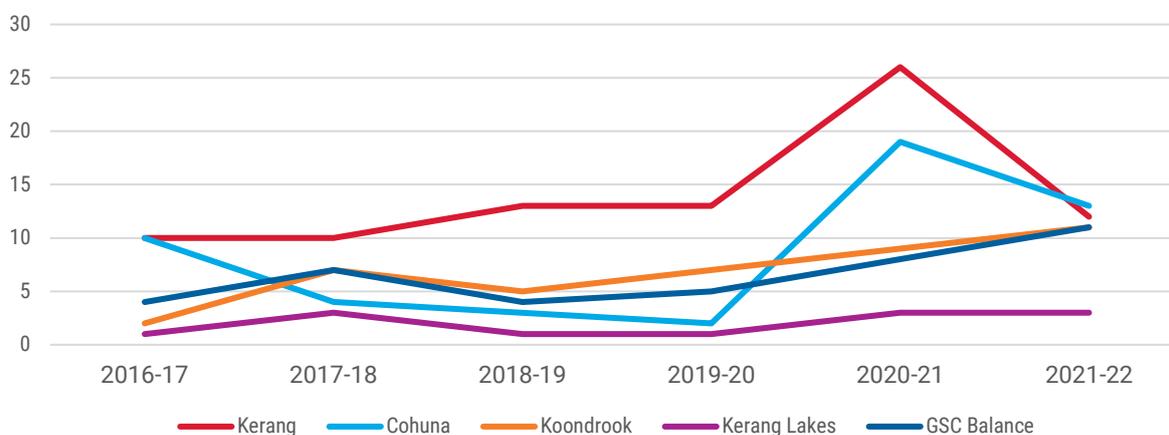


Table 3-7: Gannawarra New Dwelling Approvals 2011/12 -2021/22

|                       | 11/12 | 12/13 | 13/14 | 14/15 | 15/16 | 16/17 | 17/18 | 18/19 | 19/20 | 20/21 | 21/22 |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| New Houses            | 13    | 14    | 20    | 40    | 25    | 25    | 32    | 27    | 32    | 62    | 52    |
| New Other Residential | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 2     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 3     | 2     |
| TOTAL                 | 13    | 14    | 20    | 40    | 25    | 27    | 32    | 27    | 32    | 65    | 54    |

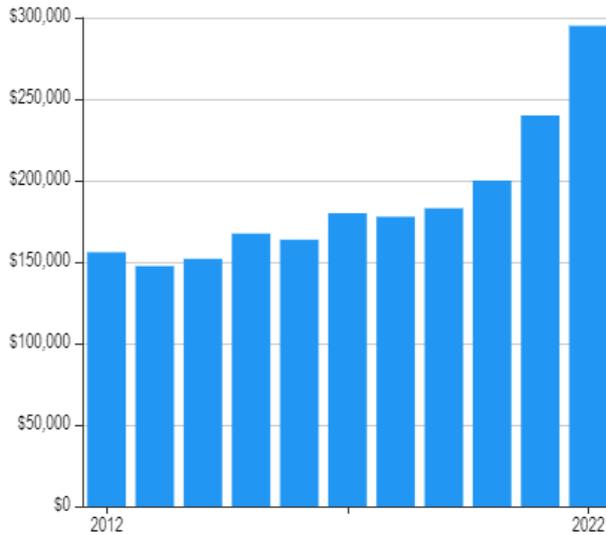
Figure 3-13: New Dwelling Approvals in Planning Areas 2016-2022



### 3.8 Housing Market – Sales and Rentals

**Median sale price** is an important metric and indicator of the housing market and its affordability. The median sale price, being the middle value of all recorded sale prices in ascending order, helps to explain trends in property markets through trends in prices. It should be noted that in some circumstances the data is based on very low number of sales and is more of a reflection of the houses that were on the market during that year and may not represent the average house for that area. As with dwelling approvals above, the impact of interest rate rises will no doubt have an impact on sales prices, sales volume and issues such as rental affordability and availability.

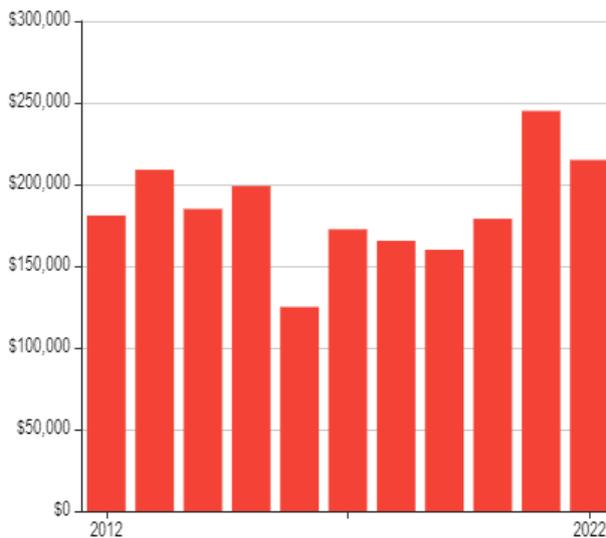
**Figure 3-14: Gannawarra Median Price of Houses sold 2012-2022**



In 2022, Gannawarra’s median **house** price was \$297,500. This represents an increase of 60% (using a 3-year moving average) over a 10-year period.

In 2022 there were 194 house sales recorded.

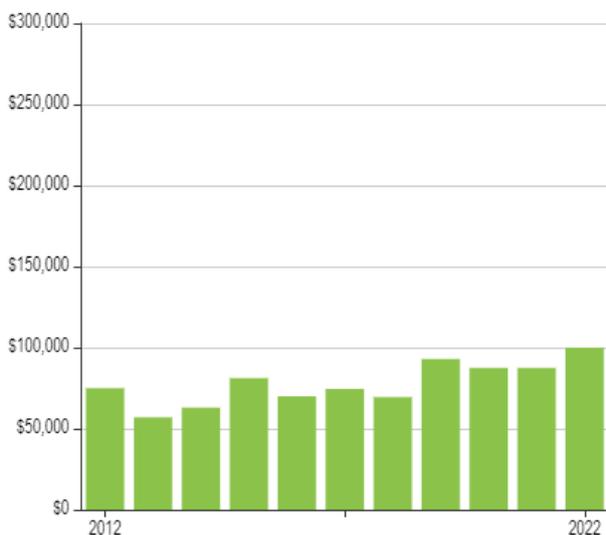
**Figure 3-15: Gannawarra Median Price of Units sold 2012-2022**



During the same 10-year period, the 3-year moving average of the median **unit** price increased by 11%. In 2022, Gannawarra’s median unit price was \$215,000.

In 2021 there were 21 unit sales recorded.

**Figure 3-16: Gannawarra Median Price of Land sold 2012-2022**



The median **land** price (3-yr average) has increased by 41% across the 10-year period. The median land price in 2022 was \$100,000.

In 2022 there were 33 land sales recorded.

Figure 3-17: Kerang median price trend 2012 - 2022

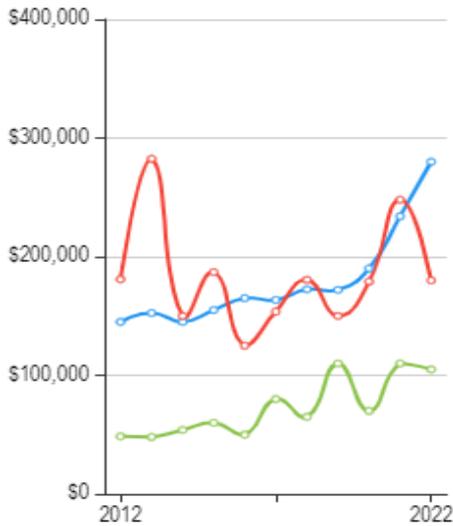


Figure 3-18: Cohuna median price trend 2012 -2022

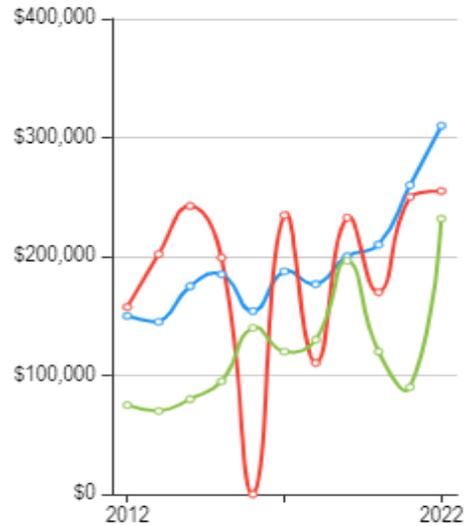


Figure 3-19: Koondrook median price trend 2012 – 22

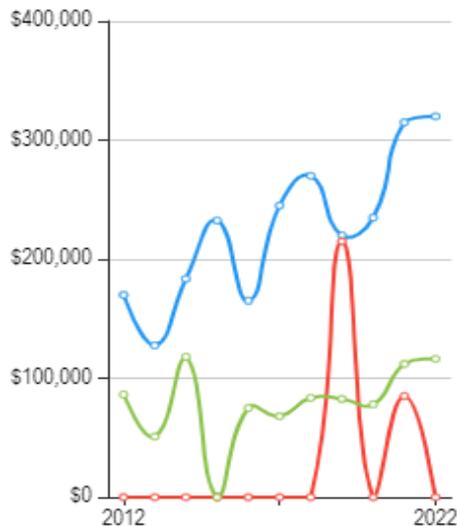
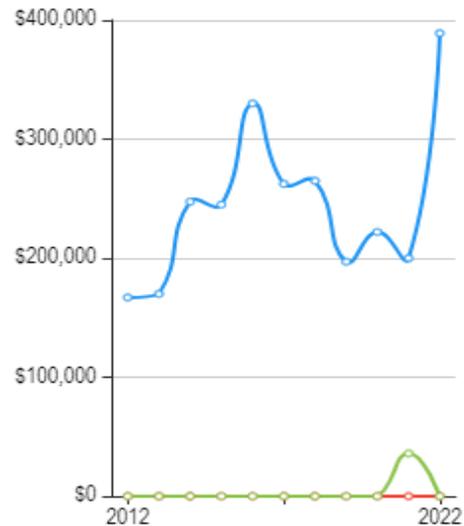


Figure 3-20: Kerang Lakes median price trend 2012-22



House

Unit

Land

As mentioned above, the median house price across the Shire in 2022 was \$297,500. Kerang’s median house price was slightly lower at \$284,000, while Cohuna’s median house price was slightly higher at \$310,000. Koondrook’s median house price was \$320,000, while the Kerang Lakes area almost doubled between 2021 and 2022 and had a median house price of \$389,000. Given it is based on only six sales, it is not likely to be a true indication of the average house in the area.

Using a 3-year moving average, we can see that the highest increase in median house price across the 10-year period was Koondrook which increased by 88%. Cohuna was next with an increase of 66%, Kerang’s 3-year average median price increased by 59% and Kerang Lakes by 38%.

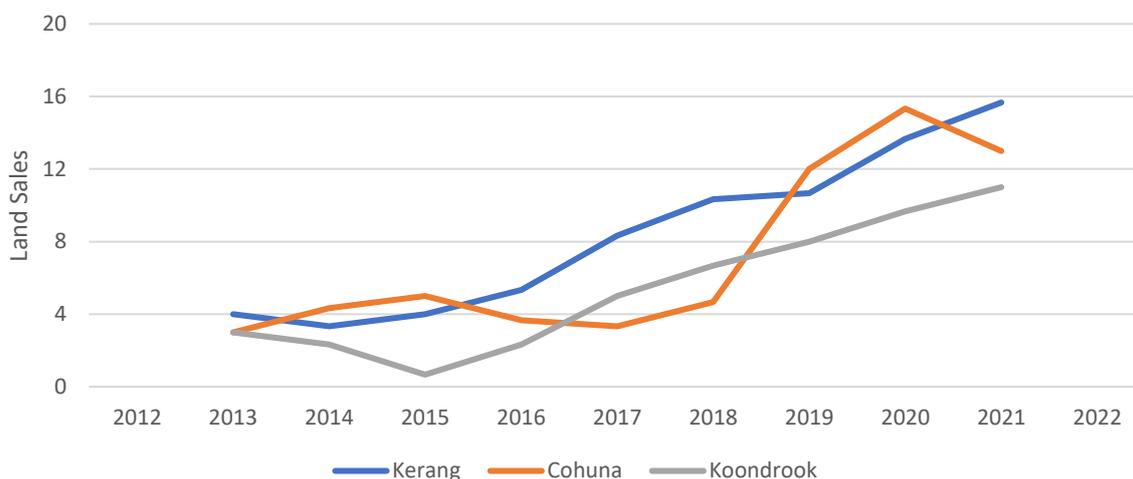
Looking at median prices for land, once again using a 3-year average, we can see that Cohuna has increased by 93% (from \$75k to \$145k), Kerang has increased by 66% (from \$52k to \$87k) and Koondrook by 20% (\$85k to \$102k). Other parts of the Shire remained relatively steady (but based on low numbers of sales) (note, some sales data has been excluded based on sale type).

While not as important as property prices, the number of property sales can provide some useful insights into what is happening in different locations. Across Gannawarra there has been a steady rise in sales in recent years, particularly for houses and for land. Given the low number of units in the Shire, it is not surprising that there haven't been many unit sales. A similar issue is present in the Kerang Lakes area, where there is a low number of properties and very few new parcels of land being created. In this instance, the sales data is interesting, but of limited use.

Of all sales data, the information relating to **land sales** is of most importance to this project as people cannot move to a place if there isn't housing to move into, and if all the houses are occupied, then land is needed to build upon. Land sales also tend to be a good indicator of future dwelling construction.

Figure 3-21 below shows that Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook have all seen strong growth in land sales. All three towns have had new lots created in recent years, with both Kerang and Cohuna having a number of zoned and serviced sites that are likely to be subdivided in the near future. Koondrook relies a little more on the sale of existing vacant lots, but it too has had a number of smaller scale subdivisions developed in recent years.

**Figure 3-21: Number of land sales in key planning areas (3-year moving average)**



Rising sales prices are important indicators of market demand and general economic conditions. While rising housing prices can make it harder for some people to buy a house in a certain area, the issue of rising cost of **rentals** can have more immediate issues on households, particularly those on lower incomes. This is not only a social issue but can have flow-on impacts for businesses and service delivery if key workers cannot find affordable housing close to their employment, particularly in areas where public transport is not a viable option for commuting to work.

**Figure 3-22: Gannawarra Rental Prices of houses and units (3-year moving average)**

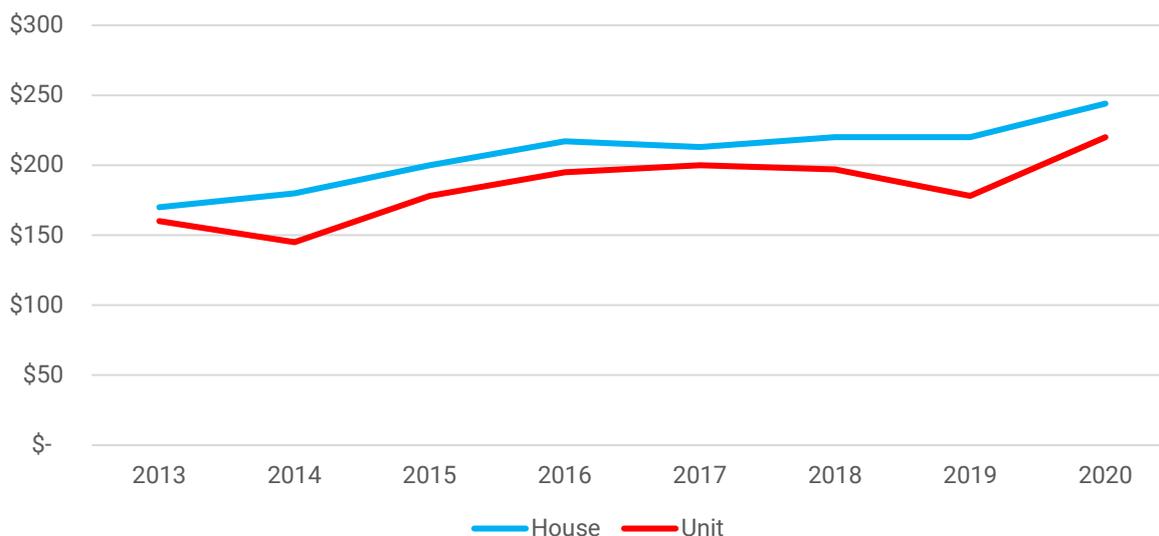


Figure 3-22 shows the median rental price of listings for both houses and units across Gannawarra using a 3-year moving average. The graph indicates an increase in the cost of rentals in recent years, with a further jump in rental prices between 2019 and 2020, where house rental prices increased by 11% and unit rental prices increased by 24%. Once again, the data is based on a small number of listings, and it is based only on the listings that were advertised and therefore does not include all rental properties. It can only provide a general indication of the rental market. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there is a significant shortage of rental properties, almost to the point of there being no supply available. This is a trend being witnessed in many regional areas, where access to rental housing is causing issues across all sectors – from seasonal farm workers to more permanent health and education workers. This is a potential challenge for the impending construction work needed for both the mineral sands mine and the electricity interconnector (although that is likely to be a short-term peak). Given the challenges facing the domestic housing construction sector (staff, approvals and supplies), it is likely that an alternative form of short-term worker accommodation is going to be needed.

### 3.9 Population and Housing Trends Summary

Recent years has seen Gannawarra’s population exceed the Victoria in Future population projections and has been growing at a slow and steady rate. While the population also continues to age, there is a positive sign with growth in the number of younger ‘working age’ people. This is coming from a low base, but it is an important demographic to have as these are the age cohorts that will start forming families in the coming years and will drive the demand for other community assets such as early learning centres and schools.

The past decade has also seen the number of people living in each dwelling decline, but that trend too is slowing. Regardless, there is a high percentage of dwellings with only one or two people living in them. This might point to a demand for more smaller dwellings to be built in the future, particularly close to town centres where residents are able to easily access services and a slight increase in dwelling density can make better use of existing infrastructure. Given the size of existing residential

lots, this can be done sensitively and if delivered can reduce the amount of additional residential land that needs to be 'created' on the fringes of towns.

Regardless of the expected demand for more smaller houses, the data is very clear that there is a current demand for larger houses. The steady increase in dwelling approvals and the high percentage of them being for 4-bedroom homes supports this. While some may be in established areas, many have been built in the newly created subdivisions, which is a particularly attractive product for those looking to bring a family to a new town. Larger homes also have the potential to cater for some of the expected demand for worker accommodation associated with the construction phase of major projects, which can then revert to more traditional family homes once the peak construction period has passed.

Following a brief analysis of employment and economic trends, this report moves into the population and dwelling forecasts and land supply. Those sections build on the current profile of the community and identify how future growth can be planned and managed.

## 4 Economy and Employment Profile

This section provides a summary of the key economic and employment characteristics of the Shire. In short, it is heavily reliant on the agricultural sector, has a strengthening construction sector, and has a lot of small family owned and operated businesses with people working longer than average hours. This section highlights that there may be some challenges in meeting the workforce needs of planned major projects and investments.

### 4.1 Economic Output

With 137,000 hectares of irrigated land and extensive areas of dry land farming, Gannawarra's economy is strongly linked to the agricultural sector. As can be seen in Table , *Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing* accounts for over 26.5% of employment (1,061 jobs) and 26.6% of economic output (\$322M); much of it related to dairy and grain production. However, there is considerable opportunity for value added processing and economic diversification, some of which has already started through investments in cotton, organic grain and tomatoes, medicinal cannabis, poultry and new plantings of wine grapes. Renewable energy production and storage opportunities are also expected to increase once investments in electricity transmission are complete. Gannawarra's rural areas have demonstrated their resilience and ability to evolve to enable them to leverage their locational and natural assets and advantages.

**Table 4-1: Gannawarra Economic Output 2021**

|                                               | \$M                | %             |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing               | \$322.739          | 26.6%         |
| Manufacturing                                 | \$182.863          | 15.0%         |
| Construction                                  | \$147.542          | 12.1%         |
| Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services         | \$103.216          | 8.5%          |
| Public Administration & Safety                | \$69.857           | 5.7%          |
| Health Care & Social Assistance               | \$64.468           | 5.3%          |
| Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services      | \$55.398           | 4.6%          |
| Retail Trade                                  | \$40.027           | 3.3%          |
| Wholesale Trade                               | \$35.654           | 2.9%          |
| Professional, Scientific & Technical Services | \$30.466           | 2.5%          |
| Transport, Postal & Warehousing               | \$30.150           | 2.5%          |
| Education & Training                          | \$29.625           | 2.4%          |
| Financial & Insurance Services                | \$26.632           | 2.2%          |
| Mining                                        | \$24.543           | 2.0%          |
| Other Services                                | \$22.769           | 1.9%          |
| Accommodation & Food Services                 | \$16.378           | 1.3%          |
| Administrative & Support Services             | \$10.260           | 0.8%          |
| Information Media & Telecommunications        | \$1.858            | 0.2%          |
| Arts & Recreation Services                    | \$0.874            | 0.1%          |
| <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>\$1,215.317</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

In addition to *Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing*, the *Manufacturing* (\$183M) and *Construction* (\$148M) sectors round out the top three industry sectors for economic output. Combined, these three sectors account for 53.7%, or \$653M, of output.

## 4.2 Employment Profile

In 2021 there were 3,999 jobs in Gannawarra. The largest employment sector was *Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing*, which employed 1,061 people, or 26.5% of the workforce. The next largest industry sector is *Health Care & Social Assistance* which employed 524 people (13.1%). *Retail Trade* rounded out the top three employment sectors with 360 people, or 9.0% of the workforce.

Given the future jobs focus on mining and the electricity sector, it will be important to track this over time. In 2021 there were 50 people listed as employed in *Mining* and none (0) employed in *Electricity Generation and Electricity Distribution* (all 81 listed in the table below in *Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services* are employed in the sub sector classification of *Gas, Water & Waste Services*). Employment growth in these sectors will be coming off a low base, but they have the potential to contribute positively to the broader economy. Several case studies are provided later in this report to demonstrate the likely beneficial flow-on effects that could be realised by the planned projects and investments.

**Table 4-2: Gannawarra Employment Profile 2021**

|                                               | Jobs         | %             |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing               | 1,061        | 26.5%         |
| Health Care & Social Assistance               | 524          | 13.1%         |
| Retail Trade                                  | 360          | 9.0%          |
| Construction                                  | 323          | 8.1%          |
| Public Administration & Safety                | 287          | 7.2%          |
| Manufacturing                                 | 273          | 6.8%          |
| Education & Training                          | 247          | 6.2%          |
| Other Services                                | 155          | 3.9%          |
| Accommodation & Food Services                 | 139          | 3.5%          |
| Professional, Scientific & Technical Services | 121          | 3.0%          |
| Transport, Postal & Warehousing               | 119          | 3.0%          |
| Wholesale Trade                               | 109          | 2.7%          |
| Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services      | 81           | 2.0%          |
| Administrative & Support Services             | 71           | 1.8%          |
| Mining                                        | 50           | 1.3%          |
| Financial & Insurance Services                | 43           | 1.1%          |
| Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services         | 27           | 0.7%          |
| Arts & Recreation Services                    | 6            | 0.2%          |
| Information Media & Telecommunications        | 3            | 0.1%          |
| <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>3,999</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

### 4.3 Labour Force Characteristics

The employment status of residents within a region helps provide an understanding of the local job market and, in turn, broader economic conditions. The analysis below provides data on the three key metrics of Labour Force Participation, Employment Status and Unemployment.

Broadly speaking, when considering the first and third metrics, a high participation rate combined with low unemployment is representative of a strong job market. It is important to note that labour force data refers to the people living in the region with no regard to where they work.

#### Labour Force Participation

The participation rate is expressed as the labour force (people in work or looking for work) as a percentage of the working-age population (those aged 15 years and over). As the participation rate includes both employed and unemployed persons, it is an important indicator of the actual pool of labour.

In 2021 Gannawarra's Labour Force Participation Rate was 50.5%. This has decreased slightly over the past 10-years, down from 52.0% in 2016 and 53.7% in 2011.

When compared to Victoria's relatively steady participation rates of 62.4% (2021), 60.5% (2016) and 61.4% (2011), you can see that Gannawarra's participation rate is lower than Victoria's, and the gap has increased. This may reflect Gannawarra's older age profile, but it could also reflect the greater housing affordability of the region and ability of households to live on a single income. The current cost of living pressures may impact on this comparative advantage as regional areas have not been buffered from higher energy and food costs, like they might have been previously with housing costs.

#### Employment Status (full-time and part-time employment)

Workers are defined as part-time if they usually work less than 35 hours per week. Full-time workers are any worker who is not classified as part-time and is not actively looking for work. While many part-time workers are likely to be working part-time hours voluntarily, there is likely to be a pool of part-time workers who want to, and can, work additional hours.

In 2021, the percentage of employed full-time workers in Gannawarra was 57.0% and employed part-time workers was 33.0%. Over the past 10-years this has changed very little, with the employed full-time rate decreasing from by 1.3% (from 58.3%) and the employed part-time rate increasing by 1.7% (from 31.3%).

While overall, the proportion of full-time and part-time workers is very similar to the Victorian averages (Victoria was 56.2% and 32.3% respectively in 2021), it is interesting to note that the trend away from full-time employment to part-time appears to be happening faster at a Victorian level compared to Gannawarra. Over the past 10-years Victoria's employed full-time rate has decreased by 3% and the employed part-time rate has increased by 2.7%.

Delving a little deeper into the hours worked data, over 18% of people in Gannawarra work 49 hours or more each week. This is significantly higher than the state average, where just over 11% of people indicated that they work similar hours. This may relate to the high percentage of small / family businesses and sole traders, particularly in the agriculture sector who work the hours that are needed, rather than being employed to work a set number of hours.

Unemployment Rate

Gannawarra’s unemployment rate has been consistently lower than the Victorian average, although the gap has narrowed as we reach what is essentially full employment. The September 2022 quarter unemployment rate for Gannawarra was 3.2%, which is 0.2% lower than Victoria’s (3.4%). For comparison, in 2016 the rate was 4.7% compared to 6.6% for Victoria, and in 2011 it was 3.9% compared to 5.4% for Victoria.

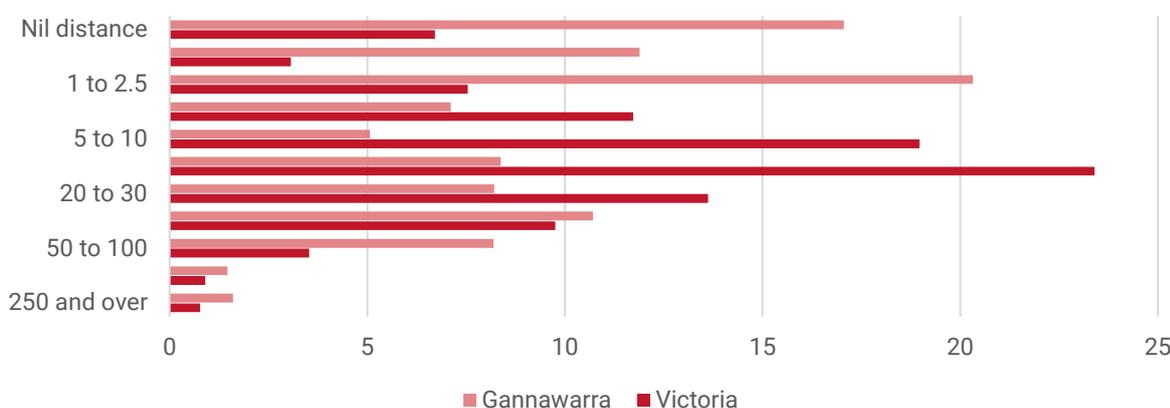
As mentioned earlier, a high participation rate and low unemployment is representative of a strong job market. In Gannawarra’s case, the participation rate is lower than the State average, as is the unemployment rate. This may mean that there is capacity within the existing population to absorb some of the new jobs that are expected, or it may mean that the population is content with their working situation and that future employment opportunities will need to be taken up by new people coming to live in the region. If it is the latter, then the demand and supply of housing becomes even more important, as people cannot move to an area if there is nowhere for them to live.

**4.4 Live-Work Relationships**

The relationship between where people live and where people work is an important factor in the efficient functioning of a region. While settlement patterns evolve to provide options for where people can choose to live, a major consideration is the existing and future location of employment and other population serving functions. As a town gets bigger, it usually starts to provide a greater range of employment options and services. We can see this in Kerang as it has grown, but it is not always the case. In some locations it makes sense for nearby towns to support one another rather than duplicate services. Koondrook and its twin town of Barham is a good example of this where cross-border collaboration ensures efficient delivery of services.

While the live-work relationship has been disrupted to varying degrees due to the pandemic, it is not completely broken. The ability to work remotely (away from the office) is restricted to a select number of occupations and industries. It is therefore unlikely that pre-COVID live-work patterns will fundamentally change for most of the working population. Already people have been returning to pre-COVID commuting patterns and those that are able to are hybridising work so that employees only need to commute a few days a week. As such, access to employment will continue to be a key determinant in where people live. Regardless, it is often assumed that those living in regional communities accept longer commutes when compared to those living in large cities. Figure 4-1 demonstrates that this may not actually be the case in Gannawarra. Note: Relevant 2021 Census data has not yet been released. As such, the following figure and paragraphs are based on 2016 data.

**Figure 4-1: Gannawarra Distance to Work 2016 (%)**



In 2016, over half of Gannawarra's workers travelled less than 2.5km from home to work. Across Victoria, only 17% of workers travelled a similar distance. The most common distance for Victorians to travel to get from home to work was in the 10-to-20-kilometre range (23%). It is only when you get beyond the 50-kilometre travel distance to work that you start to see Gannawarra workers proportions being noticeably higher than the Victorian average, however these are relatively low percentages overall.

With over 17% of people not needing to travel to get to work at all, and the high amount of hours worked, it further reinforces the notion that many jobs in Gannawarra are 'working from home' jobs, but perhaps not in the same way that we have become familiar with during the pandemic (likely to be more traditional working from home jobs in agriculture rather than desk based jobs).

#### 4.5 Economy and Employment Summary

The Gannawarra economy has a strong focus on *Agriculture, Manufacturing and Construction*. However, the *Public Administration & Safety*, and *Health Care & Social Assistance* sectors are starting to play a bigger role in the local economy. As a regional LGA that is remote from large cities, there are strong inter-dependencies that naturally occur, meaning that other parts of the local economy benefit to a larger degree when compared to metropolitan areas. The large investments proposed in electricity transmission, generation and storage, and mineral sands mining, are likely to flow on to other parts of the local economy and lay the foundations for even more growth. Given the demographic and employment profile of the Shire, there will be a need to focus on retaining more of the younger generation in the Shire and reskilling those that want to re-enter the workforce to enable them to, while also attracting new people to the region to take-up these job opportunities.

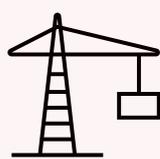
#### 4.6 Future Employment Case Studies

To help understand the potential scale of future job numbers, the following case studies have been prepared based on information provided by the proponents. While future job numbers cannot be guaranteed, there is a high level of confidence that many will be realised. Given Gannawarra's high percentage of sole traders and small businesses, and a low unemployment rate, it may be that there is limited capacity for the existing population to take up these new roles and a significant number will have to be filled by people moving to the area. In some cases, this will be temporary during construction (which are likely to require a specialised workforce for a short period), but for others it will result in permanent ongoing jobs. From a housing perspective this will create both challenges and opportunities, as if there isn't anywhere for someone to live or stay, then roles may remain unfilled, and the local economy misses out on the benefits. This is part of the reason why an updated Urban Growth Strategy is needed, as the Shire seeks to 'get ahead of the game' to leverage the best outcomes for its community. Further detail on the case studies can be found in Appendix B.

## Case Study 1 – VHM Mineral Sands

VHM Limited (VHM) is an Australian based mineral sands and rare earths mining company that seeks to develop and operate the Goschen Project, located near Lalbert northwest of Kerang. Economic impacts, as modelled by Deloitte, are expected throughout the wider Loddon-Mallee region and Victoria.

Gannawarra is expected to benefit from the development and operation of the mine directly and indirectly via local employment opportunities. Construction of the mine site is expected to occur over two years, requiring an estimated 200 direct jobs annually. Operating the mine is expected to require 270 direct jobs at full capacity. An estimated 30% of jobs for both construction and operation are assumed to be filled by local workers.



Construction over two years.

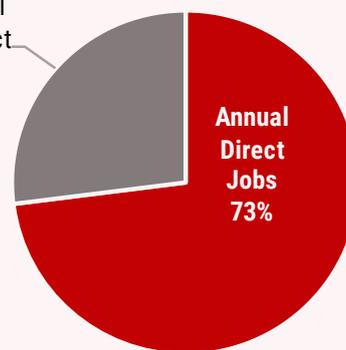
- 200 annual jobs.
- Heavy civil, buildings, and plant and equipment investment



Operation ongoing

- 270 annual jobs
- 81 being local.
- Trades and operators

Annual Indirect Jobs 27%



Total employment impacts of both construction and operation of the mine.

Construction: 200 direct construction jobs supporting and additional 174 jobs indirectly throughout the local economy.

Operation: 270 direct mining jobs supporting an additional 123 jobs indirectly throughout the local economy.



Development of the mine primarily supports construction jobs with 200 direct and 80 indirect during construction.

Other jobs supported throughout the supply chain and via local wages and salaries spent include retail trade (27) professional, scientific & technical services (16) and manufacturing (16).

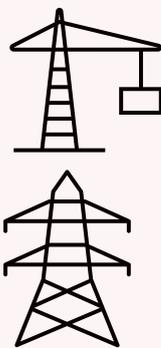
Operating the mine is likely to require 270 direct mining jobs annually. Other indirectly supporting sectors include jobs in retail (32), construction (26), and repair & maintenance services (16).

Construction of the mine will impact the local economy in the short term. Ongoing jobs during operation will continue to grow the capacity of the local economy and workforce skills.

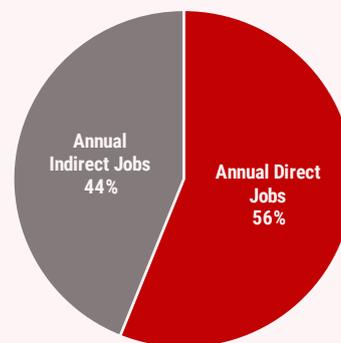
## Case Study 2 - KerangLink

The Victoria to NSW Interconnector West (VNI West, or more commonly known as KerangLink) is a large-scale electricity grid investment that will connect Victoria and New South Wales. Kerang will be one of the few locations where connections to the electricity grid will be possible, which is expected to result in significant future investment in renewable energy generation and storage sector.

Gannawarra’s local economy will benefit from the construction phase directly and indirectly via local employment opportunities. Construction of the infrastructure is expected to occur over three years, requiring an estimated 800 jobs (it is assumed 267 direct jobs annually will be in Gannawarra). While no local operation jobs are expected, and all construction workers are assumed to be filled by non-local workers, the real benefits of this project will be realised following its completion.

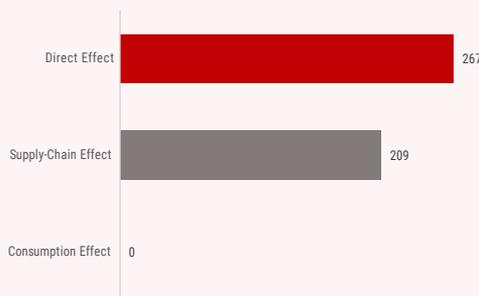


- Construction over two years.
- 267 annual jobs.
- Specialist energy infrastructure is an enabling investment.
- Enabling infrastructure for new renewable energy projects.



Total annual employment supported during the construction phase include 267 direct construction jobs and 209 jobs indirectly supported throughout the local supply chains.

This development will enable large-scale renewable energy projects to be constructed within the municipality and across north-western Victoria and supports subsequent renewable energy projects.



Development of the KerandLink will primarily support the local construction industry with 267 direct and 104 indirect (supply chain) jobs in the sector.

Other industries supported throughout the supply chain include professional, scientific & technical services (19) and manufacturing (17).

No consumption effect is measured as all construction jobs are expected to be filled by non-local workers.

Construction of the KerangLink will impact the local economy in the short term. Subsequent investment and business development that utilise the infrastructure will continue to grow the capacity of the local economy and workforce skills.

367 direct construction jobs are expected for both the VHM mine and KerangLink in year 2.

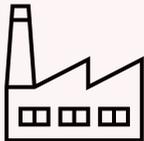
### Case Study 3 – Small Business Expansion

Many local businesses have indicated that are likely to expand in the coming years, and new businesses have indicated their intent to establish in Gannawarra. These range across sectors including Agriculture, forestry & fishing, Manufacturing, Construction, and Accommodation & food services.

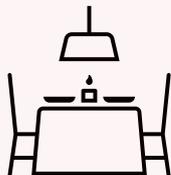
Jobs estimates include: 85 jobs in Agriculture, forestry & fishing, 50 jobs in Manufacturing, 10 jobs in Accommodation & food services, and 50 jobs in Construction. All jobs are considered ongoing and local, requiring full participation from the supply chain and benefit from consumption activity.



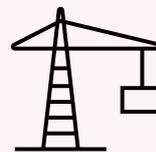
Seven Agriculture, forestry & fishing businesses = 85 annual ongoing direct jobs.



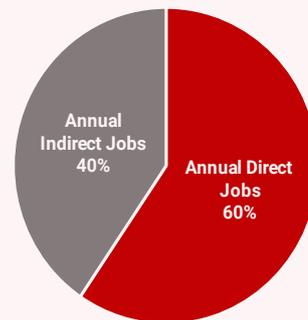
A manufacturing business = 50 annual ongoing direct jobs.



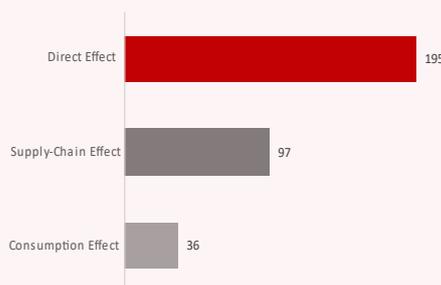
An accommodation & food services business = 10 annual ongoing direct jobs.



Two construction businesses = 50 ongoing annual direct jobs.



Total employment supported by the ongoing operation of the new small businesses include 195 direct and 133 indirect jobs.



85 direct jobs in agriculture will be supported by the new agri-businesses, along with an additional 15 jobs in the sector indirectly.

Jobs supported indirectly in other industries include construction (25), retail trade (18) followed by manufacturing and professional, scientific & technical services.

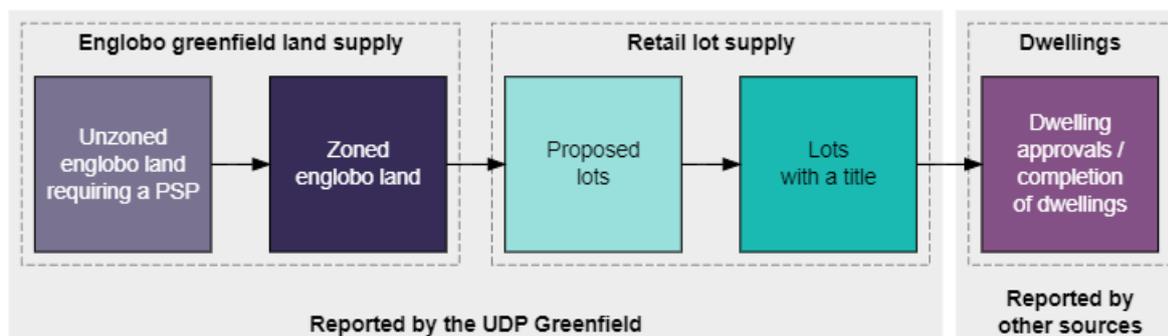
Establishment and ongoing success of new businesses such as those identified will have an ongoing impact to the local economy, deepening the capacity of local supply chains and improving job and export opportunities for the Shire.

## 5 Land Supply – Residential and Industrial

### 5.1 Residential Land Supply

An audit of vacant land in the four planning areas has been undertaken to identify the amount of existing and potential residential lots available. The process used aligns with the Victorian governments Urban Development Pipeline process, where land is identified, lots estimated and dwelling approvals monitored over time.

Figure 5-1: DELWP Urban Development Pipeline



A brief explanation of the key components of the Urban Development Pipeline includes:

**Unzoned englobo land** (englobo means large lots with subdivision potential): This is land that has been identified for future residential development by council through the Planning Policy Framework or through an adopted housing or settlement strategy. It is land that is expected to go through a precinct structure planning process before being rezoned and ultimately, subdivided and developed with housing. In Gannawarra, this is the land that has previously been identified for future residential development in the Shire’s Structure Plans (Clause 11.01 of the Gannawarra Planning Scheme), and it may also include land identified through this project (noting that the status of such land is still subject to the rigours of a detailed planning assessments and amendment processes). As mentioned earlier in this report, it is likely that the comparatively small scale of development and lower level of planning complexity for future residential land in Gannawarra may be more appropriate to use the ‘Development Plan’ process rather than the more complex ‘Precinct Structure Plan’ process.

**Zoned englobo land:** This is land that is zoned for residential use and is available for subdivision into retail lots. In Gannawarra, this land is primarily in the General Residential Zone, with some in the Mixed Use Zone. It includes several larger remnant parcels of vacant land either within or adjacent to existing residential development. It may also include land set aside for future stages of subdivisions. In larger settlements, this is limited to lots that are larger than one hectare. In the Gannawarra context, a vacant lot that is noticeably larger than the surrounding lots and is highly likely to be further subdivided has also been included.

**Retail lots (proposed lots and lots with a title):** Proposed lots are shown in the Vicmap Property dataset, but some changes may occur prior to titles being issued. Lots with a title are simple, in that they are the lots that have been registered and are ready to be sold and built on. While some may have further limited subdivision potential, it is assumed that they won’t be, as it is difficult to know the motivations of every property owner.

This project provides an estimate of lots based on the following assumptions. For unzoned and zoned englobo land, lot yields are based on a simple ‘10 dwellings per hectare’ calculation and for lots with a

title it is based on the number of vacant lots observed. As 'proposed lots' are small in number these have been incorporated into the 'Retail lots' column rather than as a stand-alone figure.

While it is accepted that the 10 dwellings per hectare calculation may result in a slight under-estimate of lots that might be created in the future, it is based on the distinct preference for single detached dwellings on larger lots in regional Victoria and in the planning areas for this project. When road reserves and open space requirements (often interfaces with creek or rivers) are factored into subdivision design, it results in lots being delivered that are around 700-800sqm in size. The lot yield that is ultimately delivered will of course be subject to future council planning approval, and in some circumstances, such as close to town centres, the lot yield should be higher.

Within the four planning areas, it is estimated that there is potential for up to 2,028 residential lots that could *hypothetically* be created. This includes around 1,172 lots on unzoned Future Urban land, 621 lots on zoned Large Infill land, and 235 lots with a title. Table 5-1 below provides further detail on the location across the four planning areas. It should be noted that the unzoned numbers for Cohuna include a large parcel of land that is not in the 2006 Cohuna Structure Plan, but given its attributes is recommended to be investigated as a future urban expansion area.

**Table 5-1: Residential Lot Supply**

|              | <b>Unzoned<br/>Greenfield</b> | <b>Zoned<br/>Infill</b> | <b>Retail Lots<br/>(with Title)</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|--------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Kerang       | 633                           | 318                     | 90                                  | <b>1,041</b> |
| Cohuna       | 539                           | 230                     | 53                                  | <b>822</b>   |
| Koondrook    | -                             | 73                      | 67                                  | <b>140</b>   |
| Kerang Lakes | -                             | -                       | 25                                  | <b>25</b>    |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1,172</b>                  | <b>621</b>              | <b>235</b>                          | <b>2,028</b> |

The high number of potential lots listed above indicates that there should not be any constraints when it comes to residential land supply. However, not all lots will be developed during the life of this strategy. There are a range of reasons why land will not come to market, including landowner intentions / motivations, development costs / access to services, lack of awareness around planning and development requirements. In a regional location where there isn't the presence of large-scale land developers, many landowners underestimate the complexity and cost of subdividing and developing land. Much of the land that could be developed will likely need to change ownership before it will be developed. Land that is in the ownership of developers, or those with development experience (or access to it), has a much higher chance of being successfully developed and delivering a residential product that exceeds basic planning requirements and standards. We have seen this recently in Cohuna with the Murray Sound development. For these reasons, if there is land that is of a scale that it can be designed, staged and developed by professional land developers, then it is assumed that it will have a greater chance of actually being delivered than some other sites that are owned by non-developers.

For the reasons mentioned above, identifying a simple "years supply" figure is not sophisticated enough and would estimate that there is much more land available than is likely to be the case. This Strategy therefore relies more on the actual need, demonstrated through forecasts and sound planning practices to identify the land that is needed and should be the focus of future planning work.

## 5.2 Industrial Land Supply

Ensuring there is an adequate supply of zoned and serviced industrial land is important to ensure that opportunities can be accommodated to expand existing businesses, and for new businesses to establish or to be attracted to the Shire. While it is important to balance demand with supply, in the case of industrial land, a slight oversupply is beneficial as it does allow opportunities to be leveraged when they arise, which often is with little notice. A slight oversupply of vacant land also assists in keeping prices in check, which once again is very important for facilitating industrial / commercial development and encouraging business development and expansion. However, having too much zoned industrial land available may impact on the ability for it to be converted into developed land (as it is not financially viable to develop). The Shire understands this issue well and has been proactive to ensure that quality industrial estates are delivered – Tate Drive in Kerang and Gibbins Drive in Cohuna are excellent examples. It is likely that this approach will need to continue, to a degree, until such time as the private sector is able to make similar projects economically viable.

Across the planning areas most of the industrial land is located in Kerang and Cohuna. Both towns have around 40ha of industrial land currently occupied. Kerang has numerous pockets of industrial land, however, has a strong focus in the south centred on Tate Drive. Cohuna has three main industrial areas located in its south, west and north of the town. Koondrook has a small industrial estate in its south and a larger one in its north. Kerang Lakes does not have any industrial land, however some industrial activities may be legitimately taking place in conjunction with and/or on agricultural land.

The following table provides a snapshot in time of how much zoned industrial land each planning area has, how much of it is occupied, how much is vacant, and how many lots might be created based on a 3,000sqm average lot size. These figures provide a starting point for considering the need for future industrial land. Across the planning areas, the industrial precincts each have their own character and focus, and while a 3,000sqm lot is large enough for many businesses, lot sizes will vary depending on the needs of businesses. For very large businesses looking to relocate or expand, there is the opportunity to co-design future industrial subdivisions to ensure they can secure a site that meets their needs. For recently created industrial estates, such as the latest stage of Tate Drive, there is also the potential to consolidate adjoining parcels.

**Table 5-2: Industrial Land Supply**

| Industrial Land Supply | Total      | Occupied    | Vacant zoned |           | Potential lots |
|------------------------|------------|-------------|--------------|-----------|----------------|
|                        | zoned (ha) | zoned (ha)  | (ha)         | (%)       | (at 0.3ha)*    |
| Kerang                 | 57.8       | 41.6        | 16.2         | 28        | 54**           |
| Cohuna                 | 70.8       | 39.0        | 31.8         | 45        | 106*           |
| Koondrook              | 16.4       | 8.3         | 8.1          | 49        | 27             |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>145</b> | <b>88.9</b> | <b>56.1</b>  | <b>39</b> | <b>187</b>     |

\* This is the maximum number of potential lots

\*\* This includes the latest stage of Tate Drive, which is seeing strong take-up

The demand for industrial land is not as linear as it can be for residential land. There are a range of macroeconomic factors influencing business investment and trading conditions. This can make it difficult to know if recent activity is likely to continue at the same pace, or slower or faster. This is no doubt part of the reason the Shire has taken an active role in the planning and development of several industrial precincts. It knew there was latent demand, but there wasn't enough for the private sector to step in and meet it. Gannawarra's Economic Development team work closely with their business community and have a good understanding of current and likely demand. The industrial estates that

they are facilitating are well designed, flexible and can be easily staged. With the large investments being made in supporting infrastructure in the region, particularly around electricity generation and transmission, the decision to release the next stages of Tate Drive and Gibbins Drive should enable more business expansion and relocation. Once again, it is not overly useful to determine a “years supply” figure for industrial land in a regional context, therefore the figures below refer more to the scale of zoned land and how much of it is occupied and how much is vacant. The figures indicate that there is a need to start planning the next phase of industrial development in Kerang due to the diminishing amount of zoned land available.

**Figure 5-2: Vacant Industrial Land in Koondrook (Briar Street)**



**Figure 5-3: Partly developed industrial estate in Cohuna (Weinberg Street)**



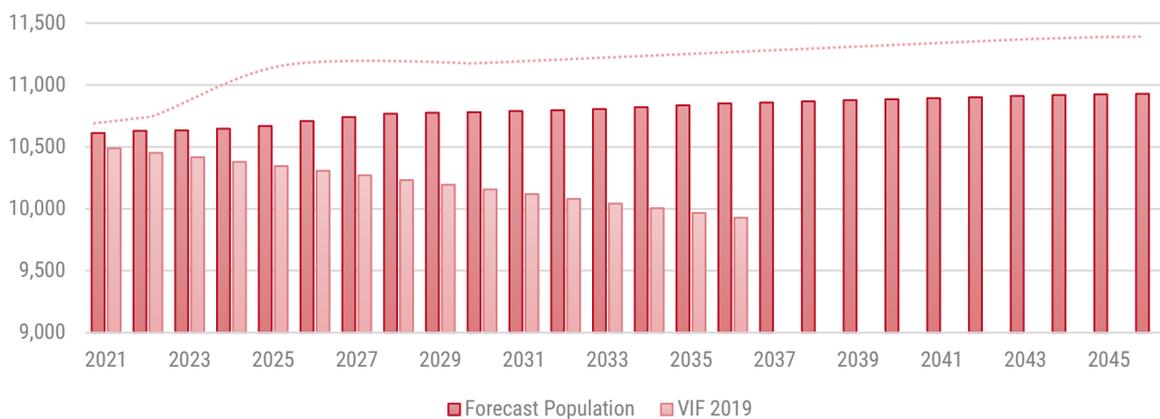
## 6 Population and Dwelling Forecasts

### 6.1 Population Forecasts

Population forecasts completed as part of this project indicate that Gannawarra will continue its recent growth, albeit at a slow and steady pace over the next two decades. The 'Base Case' scenario indicates that Gannawarra's 2021 population of 10,612 is forecast to grow to a total of 10,929 people in 2046 (an increase of 317 people). The 'Growth Scenario' indicates that the population could increase by 782 people to reach 11,394 people by 2046.

Figure 6-1 and Figure 6-2 show the Base Case forecast population and forecast annual growth rates. Figure 6-1 includes the previous VIF 2019 estimates through until 2036. There is quite a divergence between the VIF 2019 estimates and the new forecasts. Given the growth that occurred since the 2016 Census, on which VIF 2019 is based, and the comprehensive bottom-up methodology used for the current forecasts, there is a high degree of confidence that this new set of population estimates can be relied on, particularly in the short to medium term. All forecasts become less reliable the longer the planning horizon.

**Figure 6-1: Gannawarra Population Forecast – Base Case (Growth Scenario shown with dotted line)**



**Figure 6-2: Gannawarra Population Annual Growth Rate (%) – Base Case**



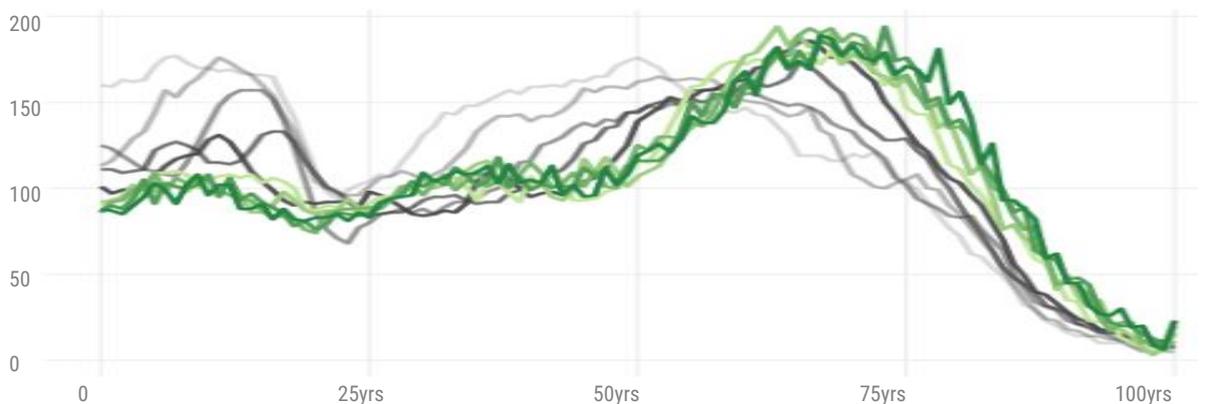
The most notable point to be made is the relatively slow and steady growth trajectory that Gannawarra is now on. The declines of the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have reversed and the population is slowly increasing. Growth rates are expected to be slightly higher during the middle years of the 2020s, which is due to expected demand, particularly in Cohuna and Koondrook.

While these forecasts are mindful of the large-scale investments that are planned for Gannawarra in the coming years, they have taken a conservative approach and assumed that most of the construction workers associated with them will be transient and not result in permanent residents (which has been the case with similar sized projects in other parts of Australia). The forecasts are also aware of the potential new and expanding business ventures that are likely to be established in Gannawarra in the coming years, but once again they have been careful not to overstate the impacts of those on population numbers. It is assumed that some of the jobs will be filled by the existing population, while others will be offset by the loss of existing jobs and people moving from the area.

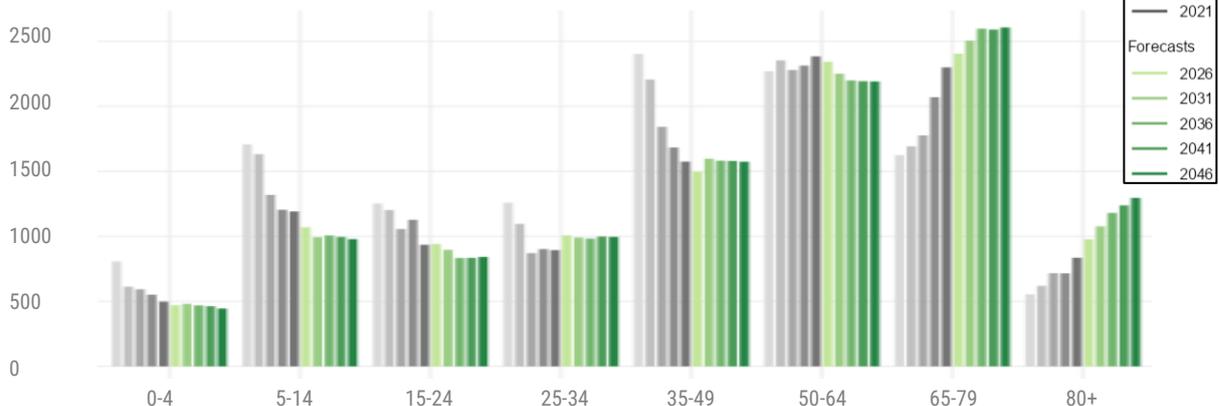
In this respect, the forecasts provided are a robust Base Case scenario. Should all of the proposed investments and expected jobs be realised in the future, then the population growth rate is expected to increase slightly and bring forward the need for additional housing and services. This is the Growth scenario and provides the top of the range forecasts for the LGA and planning areas.

Figure 6-3 and Figure 6-4 below show data from 2001 right through until the forecast horizon of 2046. Looking at Figure 6-3 you can get a sense of how the population is forecast to continue to age, shown by the green 'wave' moving left to right across the graph and ending up above the grey lines in the final right hand third of the graph. There is growth in the 65+ age cohorts and a decline in the 24 and under age groups. However, there are positive signs in that the decline in the under-25s is clearly slowing and there are some small increases in the Young Workers (25-34) and Workers (35-49) age groups. These working age cohorts are important as they are the ones that are starting to form families and have (or already have) children, that will be important to sustain local schools and community activities.

**Figure 6-3: Gannawarra Population by Age – Base Case**



**Figure 6-4: Gannawarra Population by Age Group – Base Case**



While the overall growth trajectory is positive, the growth will not be spread equally across the Shire. Most of the growth is forecast to occur in Cohuna (+271 people), Koondrook (+113 people) and Kerang (+93 people). The Kerang Lakes area is expected to remain relatively steady (-9 people), and the remaining parts of the Shire will decrease by 151 people.

**Table 6-1: Gannawarra Population Change 2021 – 2046**

| Population Change 2021-2046 | 2021   | 2046<br>Base Case | 2046<br>Growth | 2021-46<br>Change (no) | 2021-46<br>Change (%) |
|-----------------------------|--------|-------------------|----------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Gannawarra                  | 10,612 | 10,929            | 11,394         | +317 – 782             | +3.0 – 7.4%           |
| - Kerang                    | 3,757  | 3,850             | 4,009          | +93 – 252              | +2.5 – 6.7%           |
| - Cohuna                    | 2,139  | 2,410             | 2,746          | +271 – 607             | +12.7 – 28.4%         |
| - Koondrook                 | 927    | 1,040             | 1,027          | +100 – 113             | +10.8 – 12.2%         |
| - Kerang Lakes              | 358    | 349               | 354            | -4 – -9                | -1.1 – 2.5%           |
| - GSC Balance               | 3,431  | 3,280             | 3,258          | -151 – -173            | -4.4 – 5.0%           |

Further detail on the forecasts and the forecast methodology can be found in Appendix A.

## 6.2 Dwelling Forecasts

Dwelling numbers are forecast to increase by roughly the same number as the population (315 compared to 317). However, as there are twice as many people as dwellings, the growth rate for dwellings will be much higher than that of the population. Dwelling numbers are forecast to increase from 5,385 in 2021 to 5,700 in 2046 (an increase of 315).

A major contributor to the dwelling growth rate is the forecast drop in household size. This is expected to drop from 2.21 people per dwelling in 2021 to 2.15 people per dwelling in 2046. While the drop itself is quite small, when factored across the entire population, it contributes to the increased dwelling growth rate (compared to the population growth rate). Even in those areas where population growth is forecast to be steady, or even decline, more dwellings will still be needed to meet the demand for housing.

Coinciding with the similar graph for population growth, the following graph indicates that there will be a bump in dwelling numbers during the second half of this decade. As mentioned earlier, this is due to recent land development activity and expected new developments that are likely to come online.

**Figure 6-5: Gannawarra Annual Dwelling Change 2021/22 – 2045/46 – Base Case**

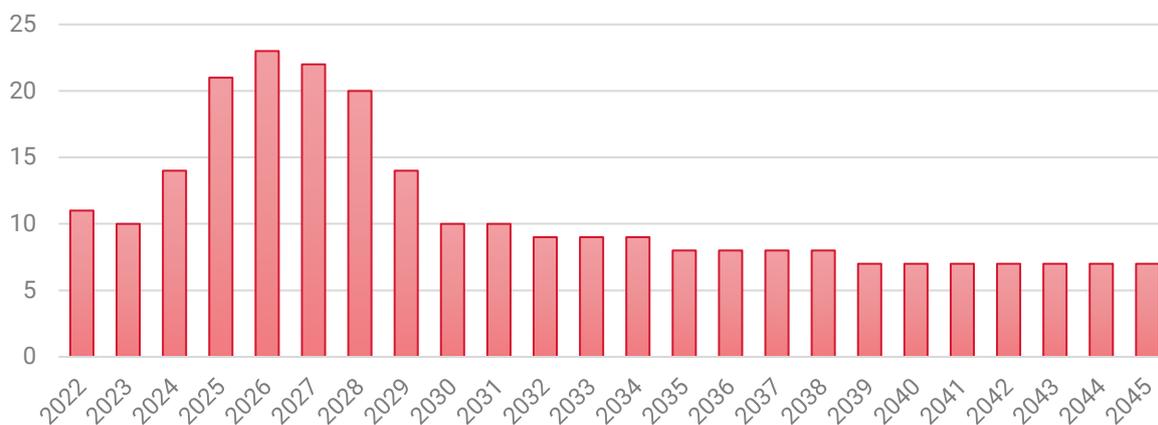


Table details the forecast change in dwelling numbers across Gannawarra's planning areas. As you can see, growth is expected to be strongest in Cohuna, Kerang and Koondrook.

**Table 6-2: Gannawarra Dwelling Change 2021 - 2046**

| <b>Dwelling Change 2021 - 2046</b> | <b>2021</b> | <b>2046 Base</b> | <b>2046 Growth</b> | <b>2021-46 Change (no)</b> | <b>2021-46 Change (%)</b> |
|------------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Gannawarra                         | 5,387       | 5,702            | 5,938              | +315 – 551                 | +5.8 – 10.2%              |
| - Kerang                           | 1,910       | 1,985            | 2,074              | +75 – 164                  | +3.9 – 8.6%               |
| - Cohuna                           | 1,124       | 1,276            | 1,434              | +152 – 310                 | +13.5 – 27.6%             |
| - Koondrook                        | 473         | 539              | 539                | +66                        | +14.0%                    |
| - Kerang Lakes                     | 173         | 183              | 177                | +4 – 11                    | +2.3 – 5.8%               |
| - GSC Balance                      | 1,707       | 1,719            | 1,714              | +7 – 12                    | +0.4 – 0.7%               |

### 6.3 Population and Dwelling Forecast Summary

In summary, Gannawarra is forecast to grow by between 317 and 782 people, and 315 and 551 dwellings between 2021 and 2046. The Base Case scenario provides the lower end of the range and is a solid foundation on which to plan, however there may be a need to bring forward some strategic planning projects (for new residential areas) due to the large number of significant infrastructure investments and major projects are delivered and are translating into a faster growth rate than envisaged (the upper limits of the range, and referred to as the Growth scenario).

Forecast growth is also not likely to be spread evenly across the Shire, with the majority expected to occur in Cohuna, Kerang and Koondrook. Dwelling growth is expected to be faster than population growth, and even in areas where the population is forecast to decline, new dwellings will still be needed to house the population as household size continues to decline.

With an aging population, it may be that some additional planning needs to take place to ensure people can 'age in place' or have access to a range of housing suited to older people.

## Construction and Seasonal Worker Accommodation

While not being counted in forecast population and dwelling numbers, the challenge of finding accommodation for seasonal and temporary workers in the Shire is significant. There is already a shortage of rental accommodation, and with the construction of KerangLink expected to commence in the coming years, combined with the construction workers needed to establish the proposed mineral sands mine, there will come a time when the demand for worker accommodation is expected to be strong enough to support a temporary housing solution such as the one that has recently been completed in the Huon Valley and Devonport in Tasmania (primarily to service backpackers and seasonal workers).

There may be an opportunity to consider locations such as the Kerang Lakes, where this type of accommodation could service the short-term need, and have the added advantage of becoming holiday accommodation in the future, tapping into the recreational activities of the nearby lakes. From a planning perspective there would still be many approvals to obtain, but it is recommended to investigate this style of accommodation, rather than a more conventional residential product which brings with it much more complicated infrastructure and servicing needs. Alternative sites near Kerang could also be considered.

**Image: Example of backpacker and seasonal worker accommodation in Huonville, Tasmania**



(Further information: <https://huonflashpackers.com.au/>)

**Image: Example of seasonal worker accommodation in East Devonport, Tasmania**



## 7 Managing Future Growth

Building on the work of the last couple of decades, the approach to accommodating and facilitating future residential and employment growth will continue to be focused on the existing townships of Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook. The Kerang Lakes area will accommodate some additional growth, but it will be relatively minor compared to the amount of growth expected in Gannawarra's three main towns. How future growth is recommended to be accommodated is provided below, with annotated maps for each of the four planning areas included in sections 7.1 Kerang, 7.2 Cohuna, 7.3 Koondrook and 7.4 Kerang Lakes.

Future **residential growth** will be made up of a combination of infill development and greenfield development (Urban Expansion and Incremental Growth). **Infill development** will focus on getting existing residentially zoned large vacant lots subdivided and new lots onto the market. Coordination between adjacent property owners of large vacant lots will be important to ensure optimal development outcomes are realised. This will not only benefit those undertaking the development, but it will also ensure that new development is well-planned and integrated into the existing urban form. To assist, it is recommended that the relevant Development Plan Overlays in the GPS be reviewed to ensure that they include relevant objectives, conditions and requirements. This way, the planning system can be used to guide future development in a way that informs landowners and developers on the type of development that the Shire and community want to see happen in particular areas.

*Figure 7-1: Settlers Key, Kerang – an example of a larger scale new subdivision*



Infill development will also play an important role in getting some smaller lots and homes onto the market. With an ageing population and a growing number of homes having only one and two people living in them, there is likely to be a market for well-designed smaller, low maintenance homes that are close to town centres and services. While some developments will be strata-titled (with common property and shared space / facilities), there is also the opportunity to make use of corner sites and properties with wide frontages or rear laneways to create additional lots without strata-titles. In town centres there is the opportunity for some shop-top apartments or 'live-work' developments, where a business might occupy the street level / shopfront of a property and a dwelling is located above it or behind it. Some rear-loaded townhouses could also be possible, where car parking is accessed from a rear laneway or accessway. The location of these should be carefully considered so as to not take away viable commercial floorspace, however in most cases the property market will be able to

accurately determine the highest and best use of a site based on its likely financial returns. The key is getting additional population close to town centres and offering a housing typology that is not currently available in the housing market. Having additional people living close to town centres is a proven way to help activate and support existing and future businesses with increased local trade.

**Figure 7-2: Laneways provide opportunities to develop the rear of existing large lots**



**Figure 7-3: Channel Street, Cohuna – a potential infill site with laneway access**



**Figure 7-4: East Street, Kerang – a potential infill site with dual street access**



**Figure 7-5: Forest Street, Koondrook – example of a new build in an existing residential area**



Another option for increasing the number of smaller homes without subdividing or impacting on the character of a street is through construction of secondary dwellings. In Victoria this type of housing is currently classified as a Dependent Person's Unit, and commonly referred to as Granny Flats. Currently, buildings must be moveable and can only be occupied by a person who is dependent on a resident of the existing dwelling. In an acknowledgment of the potential of secondary dwellings, the Victorian government recently piloted a 'Secondary dwelling code' in four municipalities using the simplified VicSmart assessment pathway. Applications had to meet certain criteria to qualify, such as a height of less than 5m, a maximum floor area of 60sqm, meeting the minimum garden area, siting and design requirements. But perhaps more importantly, the requirements for a building to be moveable and occupied by a dependent was not included. A simple and quick approvals process with less restrictions has proven to be the key to success in other locations. While the pilot program is still under review, it could be expected that a version of the Secondary dwelling code will be progressed in Victoria at some stage. For regional towns that are serviced and where existing residential lots are large, adding a secondary dwelling could be an easy way to add small, affordable housing into the

mix. This style of housing could also assist in addressing the seasonal worker housing shortage that many regional towns face. With the advances in prefabrication and modular construction, the design quality and environmental performance of this type of housing has improved significantly. New forms of secondary housing are a far cry from the granny flats that many people might be familiar with, and importantly, they do not impact on established streetscape character (where this is important to retain).

**Greenfield development** (Urban Expansion and Incremental Growth Areas) in Gannawarra will be limited to a handful of locations and will be required to go through rigorous planning assessments and rezoning processes before the final boundaries of new urban expansion areas are determined. At this high-level strategic stage, the locations are based on where the demand for housing is strongest, where it is free from significant environmental and planning constraints, where it can be easily serviced, and where it can best integrate with existing town layouts.

In **Kerang** this will be in the area identified in the 2006 Kerang Structure Plan in the southwest corner of the town, nestled between the Loddon River (east of the levy) and the Murray Valley Highway, and opposite existing residential land north of Airport Road. See Section 7.1 for a map showing Kerang's Urban Expansion Area.

*Figure 7-6: Potential growth area in Kerang's south-west (between Collins Roads and the Loddon River)*



In **Cohuna**, there are two greenfield Urban Expansion Areas proposed. One is to the north and the other is to the south of Gunbower Creek. Both are adjacent to existing residential development. The site to the north was previously identified as a fully serviced residential expansion area in the 2006 Cohuna Structure Plan. The site to the south is a new site that is located east of Barr Creek, adjacent to the Murray Sound development. There are excellent opportunities for this site to be connected to the Cohuna Town Centre with walking and cycling paths along the Gunbower Creek (it is only 700m from the middle of Cohuna). See Section 7.2 for a map of Cohuna's Urban Expansion Areas.

**Figure 7-7: Recommended Urban Expansion Area for Cohuna (north of Gunbower Creek)**



**Figure 7-8: Recommended Urban Expansion Area for Cohuna (south of Gunbower Creek)**



In **Koondrook**, the recommended greenfield option (Incremental Growth Area) is on the southwest corner of Grigg Road and Koondrook West Road, with longer term opportunities present west of the cricket ground . The Grigg / Koondrook West Road site has previously been identified in the 2006 Koondrook Structure Plan as a future residential growth opportunity. The site has potential to be incrementally developed, starting with a 2–3-hectare parcel. In addition, there are opportunities to consider rezoning some parcels of Low Density Residential Zone land, and potentially some Industrial 3 Zone land north and south of the Koondrook Recreation Reserve to the General Residential Zone. These should be tested through the Structure Plan review process. Section 7.3 shows Koondrook’s Incremental Growth area.

It is recommended that Residential development at **Lake Charm** and **Kangaroo Lake** take a staged approach to strategically combat environmental overlays. It is considered important to ensure that the surrounding highly productive agricultural activities are protected and that growth be planned to ensure efficient service delivery. However, there may be the opportunity to expand holiday accommodation and potentially develop worker accommodation. There is likely to be strong demand for worker accommodation over the next decade, and there has long been a challenge in meeting

seasonal worker accommodation needs. One of the main challenges relates to cost. It is therefore worth investigating the potential of modular or prefabricated housing that can be easily built off-site and transported to site. Servicing needs to be done at a development scale, but can be coordinated to service the development in one go, rather than incremental connections as is done for a standard residential development. See Section 7.4 for a map of the Kerang Lakes.

Future **industrial growth** is recommended to be a combination of infill in existing industrial precincts, consolidation / reconfiguration of one industrial precinct and several precinct expansions.

Tate Drive in **Kerang** is a very successful industrial precinct (zoned IN1Z) that is very well located, has good buffers resulting from compatible surrounding land uses (apart from to its north), and has room for expansion to its east, and longer term potentially to its south (for a mix of employment generating and supporting activities, not necessarily industrial). Tate Drive primarily provides lots in the 3,000 to 5,000sqm size range, with opportunities to consolidate adjacent lots if required. These lot sizes cater to the bulk of industrial enterprises, with perhaps the exception of the smallest and largest of industrial businesses. To the north there is a small section of low-density residential development, separated from Tate Drive by a landscaped buffer. This may restrict some uses and activities (with potential adverse impacts) from establishing in the northern section of Tate Drive, however this is not likely to be a major constraint given the types of industrial uses that have already been developed.

Kerang also has several small industrial pockets including Murphy Street (west of the Murray Valley Highway), along the Kerang – Koondrook Road (south of the racecourse), along parts of the rail corridor (Park Road), between Wills and King Streets, and several sites along Ninth Street. Some of these smaller pockets of industrial zoned land are the result of historic land uses and are not strategically located. A detailed review of these smaller sites should be done as part of an updated structure plan process for Kerang, noting the high likelihood of contamination from former uses.

Future industrial land in Kerang is recommended to focus on an expansion of the Tate Drive industrial park, ideally to its east, and longer term to its south (for a mix of employment generating / supporting activities, not necessarily industrial). This land is currently zoned and used for agricultural purposes. Converting viable agricultural land to another land use needs to be carefully considered and done in collaboration with willing landowners. Another option for some light industrial land may be along the northern edge of the Kerang Airport site. Ideally this would be aviation related and could be combined with hangar space to support general aviation activities.

**Figure 7-9: Tate Drive, Kerang – an excellent example of local government facilitated development**



Gibbons Drive in **Cohuna** is another successful investment that the Shire has made to facilitate economic and industrial development in the region. This 20ha industrial estate is not as advanced as Tate Drive, however it has provided a slightly more diverse range of lot sizes, with one close to 2ha. Gibbons Drive is one part of Cohuna's southern industrial precinct, with another 13ha of partially developed industrial land immediately to its north situated between the Murray Valley Highway and Hester Avenue. Barr Creek provides a natural buffer along the northwest edge of the industrial precinct, where land use changes to residential and education. While not considered necessary at present, should a very large industrial site be needed in the future, it may be worth exploring an expansion on land south of Bradys Road and west of Keelys Roads. Once again, this is currently viable agricultural land and care needs to be taken when considering changing land use controls. Collaboration and cooperation with landowners is essential. Other options are always available. As mentioned above, this is not needed at present and discussions may only be required should a very large site be necessary in the future.

Flanking the western edge of Cohuna's urban area is a large strip of industrial zoned land. While it is contiguous, it almost operates as three discrete industrial precincts. The northern most sub-precinct is centred on Weinberg Street, and it contains a variety of smaller lots. It is well established, with only limited growth potential. The central precinct is made up of two very large parcels and is home to the Cohuna Saleyards and an equestrian centre. The southern sub-precinct is along the Cohuna – Leitchville Rd and it has several larger businesses (with an irrigation focus) and several smaller sheds (that are actually still relatively large). There is capacity for further subdivision and new development.

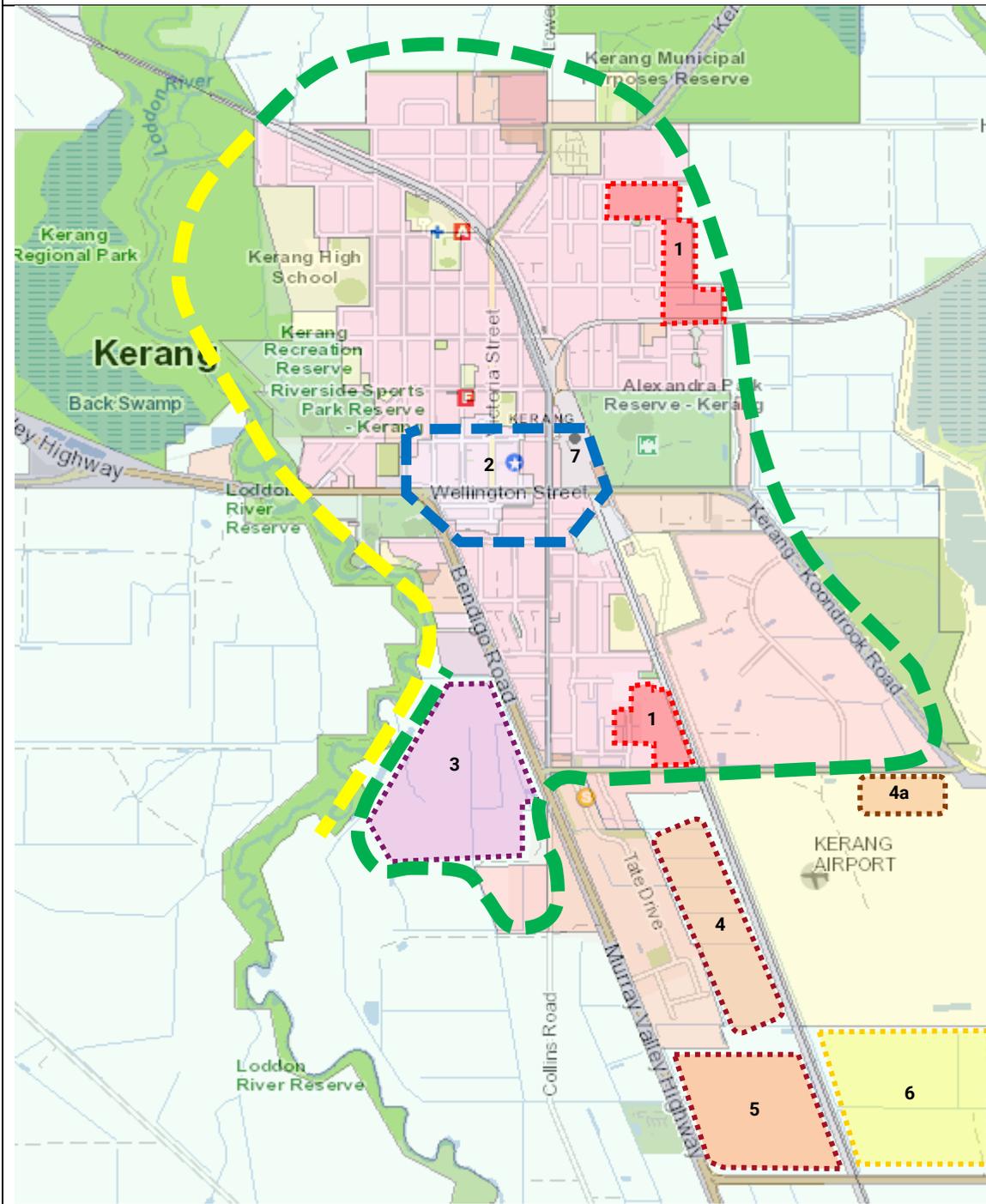
On the northern edge of Cohuna is a recently created industrial / mixed use precinct. Construction of the roads and lots has not yet commenced. This precinct will provide another 15ha of serviced industrial and mixed use land.

**Koondrook** has two industrial precincts. The larger of the two precincts is located in the northern part of the town, just south of the bridge crossing to Barham on the western side of the Koondrook – Murrabit Road. It is an interesting precinct which has evolved over time and includes a pocket of around 10 dwellings in the middle of it. The main businesses include an orange juice processing plant, a livestock feed store and a truck and silo yard. Much of the precinct is undeveloped and requires servicing before new lots could be created. There may be an opportunity to rationalise the size and layout of the precinct as part of the Koondrook Structure Plan review. In particular, it may be worth investigating if the parcels along the western and southern parts of the precinct might be better zoned for residential uses. All the necessary investigations will be required, but given the previous use has been for light industry, the risk of contamination might be lower compared to other industrial areas.

The southern industrial precinct is a triangular shape that is bounded by Main Street, Briar Street and Grigg Road. This precinct is zoned to allow heavy industry, however given its relatively small size and residential interface to the east, it is worth considering an Industrial 3 zoning (light industry). The Structure Plan review should also consider the need for replacement industrial or highway frontage commercial land directly opposite this precinct on land currently zoned PPRZ.

On the following pages, specific sites that are of particular interest have been identified and annotated. These will need further detailed investigations completed to fully justify a change to the current planning controls, which is beyond the scope of this project, however they clearly are of strategic interest to the Shire for their potential to accommodate future residential and industry growth.

### 7.1 Kerang Future Growth Directions



**Strategic Directions:**

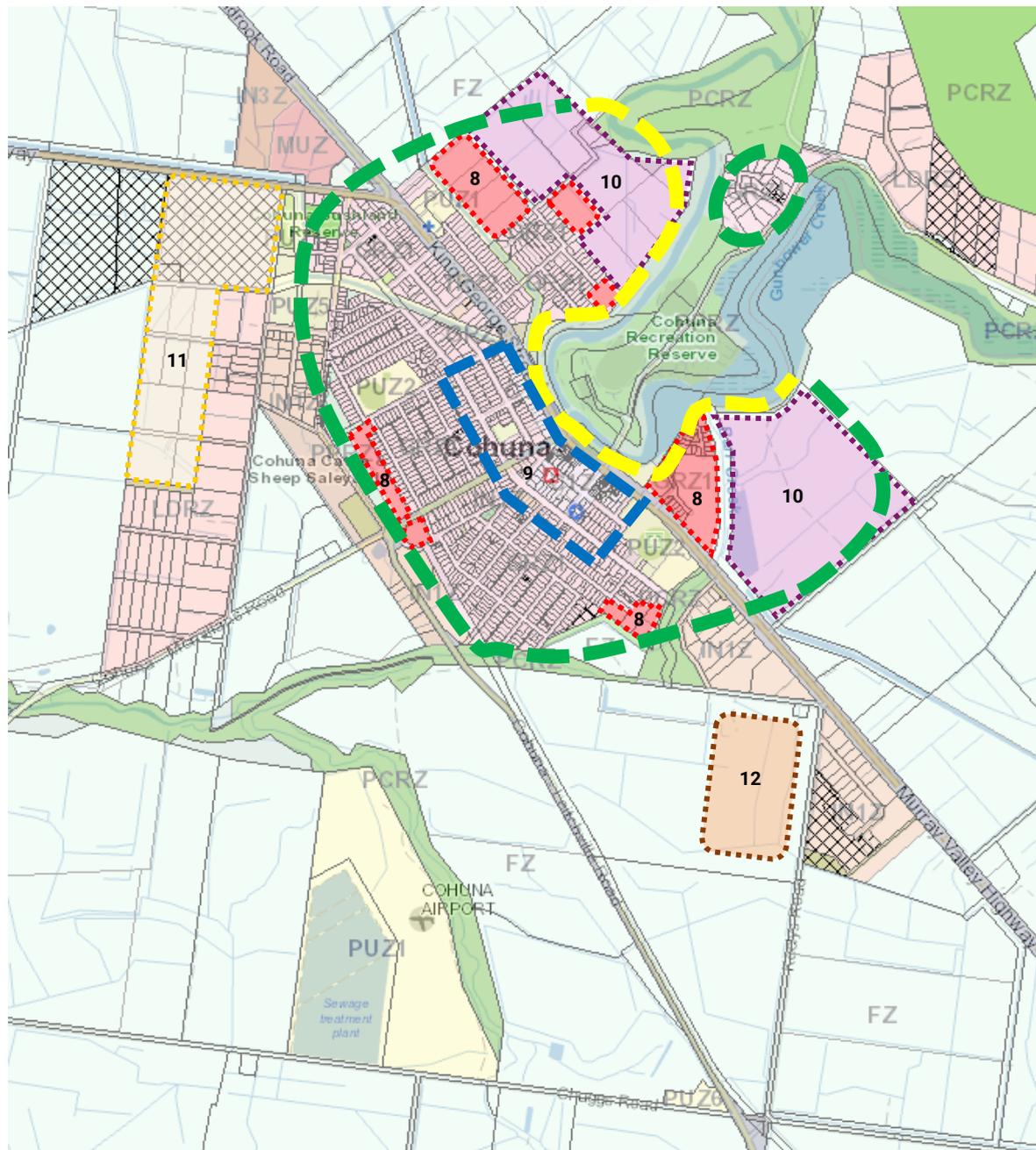
1. Facilitate coordinated subdivision and residential development on infill sites identified with the DPO1 (revise DPO1)
2. Consolidate commercial and 'mixed-use' development in the town centre
3. Commence planning for future Urban Expansion Area (residential), starting with a review of the Structure Plan
4. Commence planning for future industrial precinct expansion
- 4a. Consider aviation related light industry on northern part of airport site
5. Investigate the site for long term employment generating / supporting activities, recognising the sites 'gateway' location
6. Facilitate the airport expansion to the south (currently under consideration)
7. Work with VicTrack on redevelopment options south of the station building (potential aged care / medium density / worker accommodation)

**Key planning issues & overlay controls:**

- Helicopter flight path / Bushfire / Potential inundation / Cultural Heritage Sensitivity
- VPO2, DD01, DD02, DD03, DD04, DPO1, DPO2, DPO3, FO, LSIO, BMO, SC01, SC02

Extent of General / Low Density residential growth      High amenity / sensitive interface

## 7.2 Cohuna Future Growth Directions



**Strategic Directions**

8. Facilitate coordinated subdivision and residential development on infill sites identified with the DPO1 (revise DPO1)
9. Consolidate commercial and 'mixed-use' development in the town centre (using current zone controls)
10. Commence planning for future Urban Expansion Areas (residential) to the north and south of Gunbower Creek, starting with a review of the Structure Plan and/ or based on detailed planning investigations completed by landowners
11. Consider expanding the Low Density Residential precinct in the west
12. Investigate interest in a long term 'very large format' industrial use

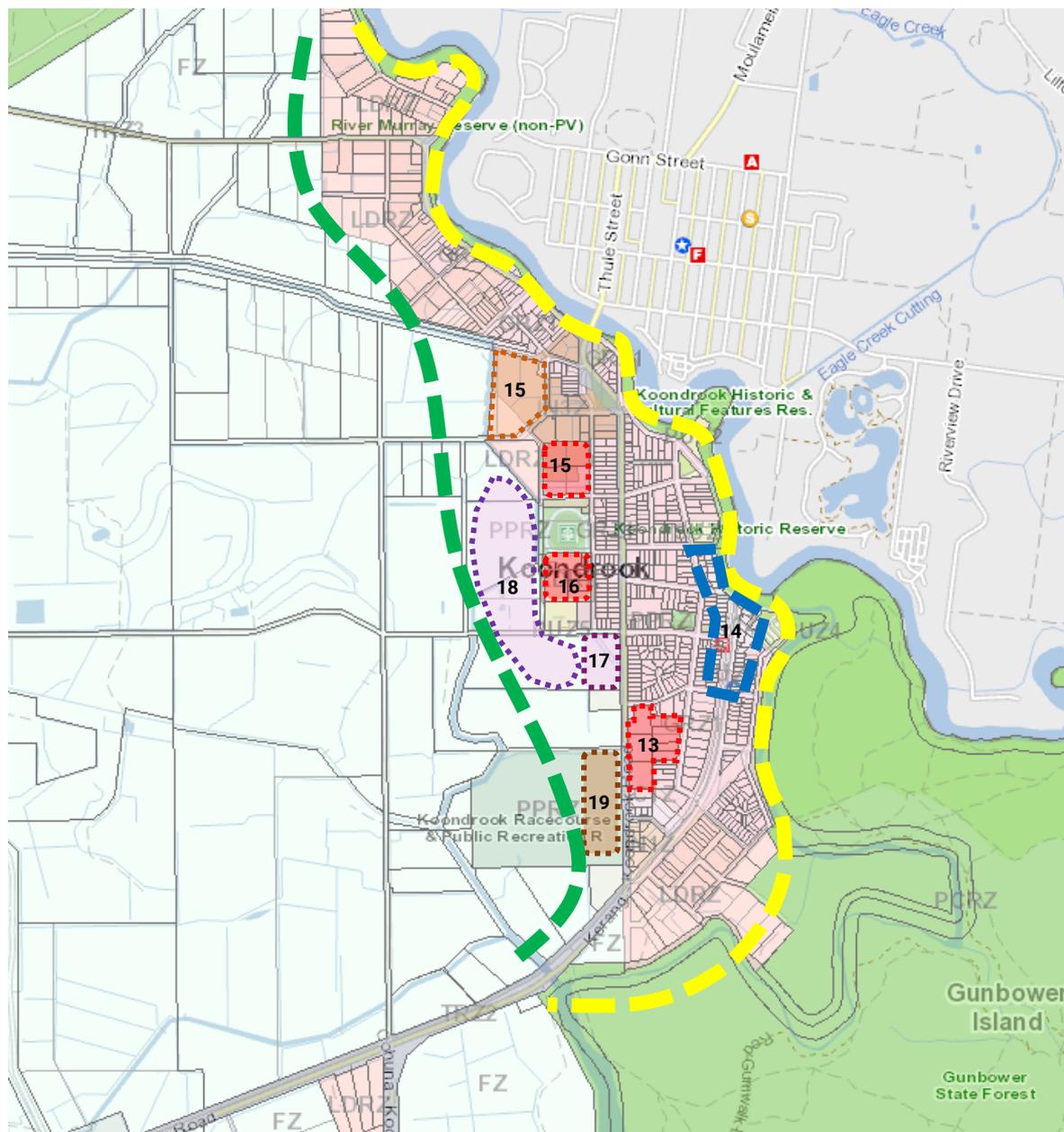
**Key planning issues & overlay controls:**

- Helicopter flight path / Bushfire / Potential inundation / Cultural Heritage Sensitivity
- ES04, DD02, DD03, DD04, DP01, BMO, SC01, SC02

Extent of residential growth (General Residential)

High amenity / sensitive interface

### 7.3 Koondrook Future Growth Directions



**Strategic Directions**

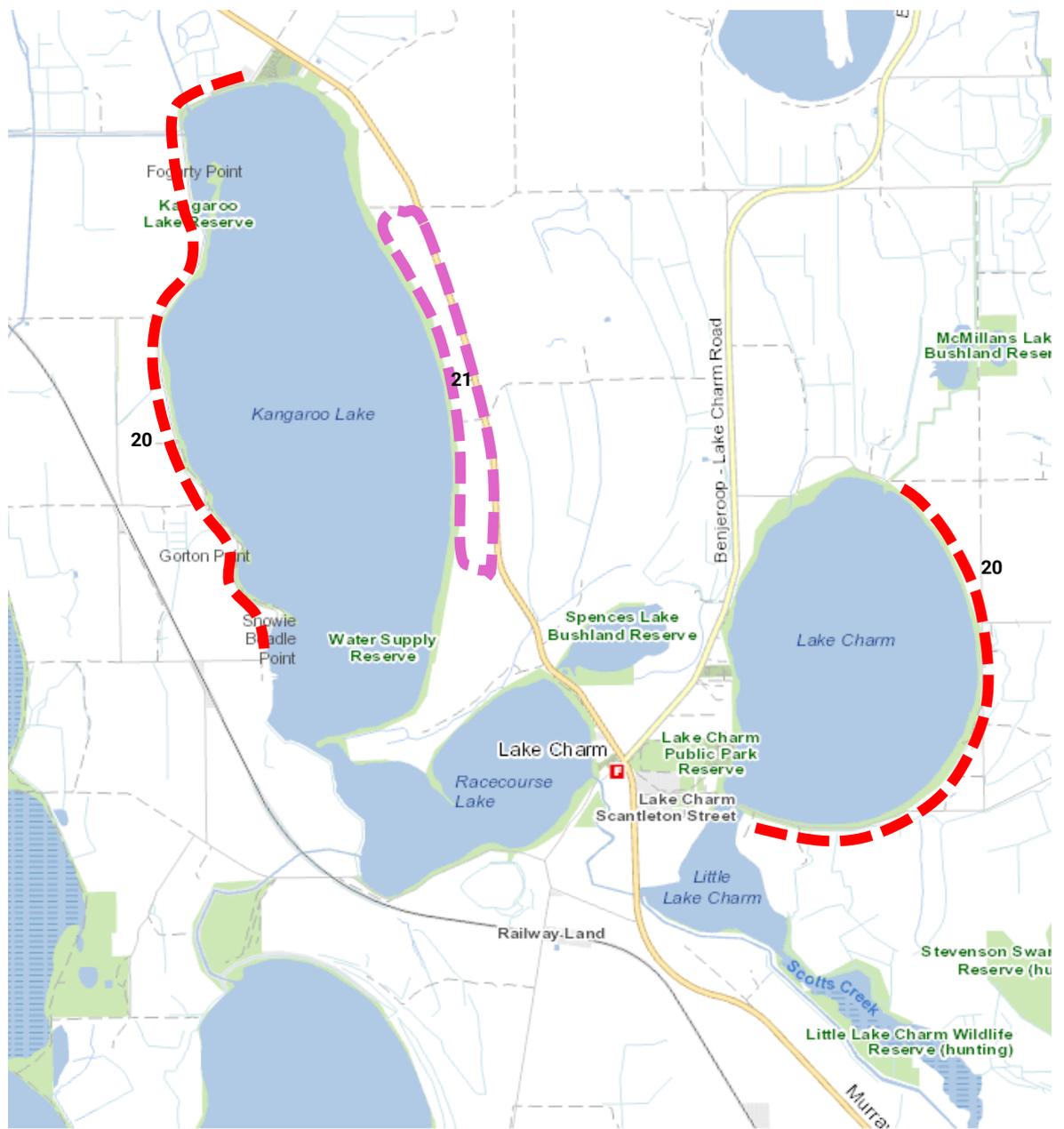
- 13. Facilitate coordinated subdivision and residential development on infill sites identified with the DP01 (revise DP01)
- 14. Consolidate commercial and 'mixed-use' development in the town centre
- 15. Investigate rationalisation of IN3Z by rezoning parcels in southern section to GRZ and a parcel in the north west to LDRZ (apply DP01 & DP02)
- 16. Facilitate additional residential land by investigating rezoning LDRZ parcels to GRZ and applying DP01
- 17. Commence planning for future Incremental Growth Area (residential) on the south west corner of Koondrook West Road and Grigg Rd (around 3ha), starting with a review of the Structure Plan
- 18. Investigate potential for future residential growth to the west of the cricket ground
- 19. Investigate potential for IN3Z / C2Z 'Highway Frontage' development opposite IN1Z precinct in south (opposite Briar St) to offset rationalised IN3Z precinct in the north

**Key planning issues & overlay controls:**

- Bushfire / Potential inundation / Cultural Heritage Sensitivity
- ES04, LSIO, BMO, SC02

Western extent of growth / transition to rural      High amenity / sensitive interface

### 7.4 Kerang Lakes Future Growth Directions



**Strategic Directions**

- 20. Small scale incremental residential lot creation around lake frontage, where impacts on water quality and agricultural practices can be managed
- 21. Support private sector led investigations into the potential of a lakeside residential opportunities, as well as the potential for Tourist / Worker Accommodation Village (classified in the GPS as a Camping & Caravan Park) on the eastern side of Kangaroo Lake

**Key planning issues & overlay controls:**

- Bushfire / Potential inundation / Cultural Heritage Sensitivity / Kerang Wetlands Ramsar site
- ES03, ES04, LSI0, SC02

## 8 Conclusion and Recommendations

This draft Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy 2023 seeks to implement the Shire's clear vision and direction when it comes to supporting the growth and development of its community, its towns and settlements. The Shire's pro-active approach to economic development has laid some solid foundations on which to leverage future investment and jobs growth, and this Strategy is one of the first steps in updating the strategic planning framework to ensure that it too is able to get 'ahead of the game' and plan for future residential and industrial growth, to cater for the demand that revised population and dwelling forecasts have predicted for coming decades.

This draft Strategy has found that overall, the planning for Gannawarra's main towns of Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook is sound, however with changing demographics (the population is getting older, and there are more smaller households), changes in the way people live and work, the experience of several floods and fires, there is now a need to review the 2006 Structure Plans that currently guide development, to ensure that they are up to the task of guiding growth well into the future. This draft Strategy makes recommendations that respond to these issues and provides direction on how the Shire's main towns could grow into the future. These recommendations are based on proven planning principles and support the continued evolution and development of towns. In some regards, they support the approach of 'keep doing what you are doing', but go one step further and develop a planning policy framework that supports and guides the private sector to deliver the type of development that the Shire and community wants. Aligning the visions of the Shire and the development sector is the most efficient way to achieve the outcomes that everyone is after – places that people want to live in.

The following actions are recommended to achieve this:

| Number                                 | Recommendation                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Planning policy recommendations</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 1                                      | Commencing a process to update the Structure Plan's for Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook as a priority (Structure Plans for Leitchville, Murrabit and Quambatook could be reviewed in the medium term).                                     |
| 2                                      | Reviewing the Development Plan Overlays (DPO1 and DPO2) to ensure that they will facilitate coordinated development across multiple sites and ownerships.                                                                               |
| 3                                      | Investigate several smaller sites recommended for rezoning (identified in Section 7 – Managing Future Growth).                                                                                                                          |
| 4                                      | Review the Planning Policy Framework and update (including updated Council adopted strategic plans, population and dwelling forecasts)                                                                                                  |
| <b>Non-statutory recommendations</b>   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 5                                      | Assisting private sector led proposals that are consistent with the Gannawarra Urban Growth Strategy 2023, where the Development Plan approach has been identified.                                                                     |
| 6                                      | Assisting private sector led investigations into further lakeside living options at Lake Charm and Kangaroo Lake. This includes both (lower density) residential development, but also the potential for holiday / worker accommodation |

---

|          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>7</b> | Investigating opportunities for the Tate Drive Industrial Precinct to be extended to the east.                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>8</b> | Facilitating discussions between large employers (needing worker accommodation), accommodation providers / developers and larger landowners in Kerang with a view to getting additional short-term / seasonal worker accommodation delivered to support large scale investments and seasonal worker shortages. |
| <b>9</b> | Engaging with VicTrack on options for underutilised land at the Kerang Train Station site (this may require a masterplan to be prepared for the site first, to ensure future transport needs can be accommodated).                                                                                             |

## Appendix

- A Population Forecasts – Methodology and Base Case projections
- B Economic Impact Assessment of Case Studies, March 2023

## **7.9 DRAFT GANNAWARRA RESOURCE RECOVERY AND WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

**Author:** Leigh Hollingworth, Manager Projects & Design  
**Authoriser:** Wade Williams (Director Infrastructure & Development)

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council:**

- 1. Endorse the draft Gannawarra Resource Recovery and Waste Management Strategy to undertake public exhibition for a period of 28 days from 19 February 2026 to 19 March 2026.**
  - 2. Endorse the waste survey for release.**
- 

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Council has engaged a consultant to undertake a review of Council's current waste management practices, alongside state and federal government policies, to prepare a 10-year Resource Recovery and Waste Management Strategy.

The Draft Strategy is now presented to Councillors for consideration and feedback, following which endorsement will be sought to release the Draft Strategy for community consultation.

### **PURPOSE**

The Gannawarra Shire Council Resource Recovery and Waste Management Strategy 2025-2035 (the strategy) provide direction for minimising and managing waste and driving increases in resource recovery across the next ten years. The strategy builds upon the work and achievements of Council's previous waste and recycling actions and initiatives. The strategy has been developed to align with state resource recovery targets and other policies and regulations including requirements of Recycling Victoria and Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA).

The draft strategy focuses on Council's waste and recycling facilities and services, including how to continually improve the delivery of these services for the Gannawarra community. The strategy is designed to meets the needs of the community, businesses and Gannawarra region.

This draft strategy has been developed for public review and comment. The consultation process includes opportunities for the community to provide feedback for consideration by Council.

Further, to support Council in planning future kerbside services, a waste survey has been prepared to gather resident feedback on waste and recycling habits and service preferences.

### **DISCUSSION**

Gannawarra Shire Council is committed to reducing waste to landfill, increasing the recovery of waste resources and extending the life of resources through smarter more sustainable practices.

The Resource Recovery and Waste Management Strategy is a 10-year plan to guide Council's efforts in improving waste management and driving greater resource recovery across the Gannawarra region. The strategy has been developed to align with state resource recovery targets and other polices and regulations including requirements of Recycling Victoria and Environment

---

Protection Authority Victoria (EPA).

The draft strategy focuses on Council's waste and recycling facilities and services, including how to continually improve the delivery of these services for the Gannawarra community. It is designed to meet the needs of residents, businesses and the broader community, while remaining cost effective and future focused.

The draft has been developed for councillor and public review and comment. The consultation process includes opportunities for the community to provide feedback for consideration by Council.

Moreover, to support informed decision-making on the future delivery of kerbside services under the state-mandated four-stream system, the waste survey seeks feedback from residents on household waste and recycling habits, service preferences, and opportunities for improvement. Insights from the survey will help ensure that the expanded services outlined in the strategy are delivered in ways that best meet the needs of the Gannawarra community.

The Draft Waste Strategy has been developed following a series of actions, including:

- Review of waste generation, diversion, collection services, and waste and resource recovery facilities.
- Alignment with state resource recovery targets, policies, and regulations, including Recycling Victoria and EPA requirements.
- Analysis of community views through the Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey.
- Collaboration on regional circular economy and resilience plans.
- Conducted audits and assessments of kerbside services and landfill operations.
- Staff workshops.

The Draft Waste Strategy consists of the following sections:

- Introduction
- Strategic context
- Where we are now?
- Issues and Opportunities
- Where do we want to get to?
- Action Plan

Section 6, Table 4 of the Draft Waste Strategy outlines the Actions, Priorities, and Implementation for Gannawarra Shire Council. These actions have been prioritised based on environmental, social, and economic impacts, with indicative timescales categorised as short, medium, and long term.

*Highlighted areas of focus include:*

1. Staged Waste Education Plan  
Council will develop and implement a comprehensive education plan to guide residents and businesses through changes in kerbside services. This initiative focuses on reducing contamination, improving recycling outcomes, and helping households minimise waste and save money.
2. Regional Collaboration  
Council will pursue partnerships with neighbouring councils and regional groups to share

resources, attract funding, and address cross-boundary waste challenges. Joint initiatives will target problematic materials like silage wrap and construction waste, strengthening collective sustainability efforts.

3. Internal Practice Improvements

Internally, Council will build staff knowledge of circular economy principles and review procurement policies to support waste avoidance and green purchasing. Practical steps, such as recovering office food waste for staff-owned chickens, demonstrate leadership in sustainable operations.

4. Enhanced Data Collection and Review

The strategy commits to regular audits, improved data collection, and periodic reviews of waste services and infrastructure. These measures enable Council to track progress, identify gaps, and adapt actions to ensure continuous improvement and effective waste management.

### **RELEVANT LAW**

*Local Government Act 2020 (VIC)*

*Environmental Protection Act 2017 (VIC)*

*Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021 (VIC)*

### **RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS**

At the Ordinary Council Meeting on 17 September 2025, Council resolved to adopt Policy 060 – Waste Management, providing an updated framework to guide waste management services and align with current practices.

### **OPTIONS**

1. Authorise Council officers to consult with the public on the draft strategy.
2. Authorise Council officers to consult with the public on the draft strategy and also release the waste survey.
3. Authorise Council officers to release the waste survey.
4. Defer public consultation and request changes prior to the draft being made available to the public.

### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

The strategy itself aims to significantly reduce landfill waste and greenhouse gas emissions by increasing recycling rates and diverting organics from landfill, aligning with ambitious state and national targets

It also promotes a circular economy by encouraging resource recovery, supporting local businesses and agriculture in recycling efforts, and upgrading infrastructure to maximize reuse and minimise environmental risks.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Endorsement is being sought to advertise the draft strategy for public consultation.

**INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

The strategy addresses continuous improvement by committing to regular data collection, periodic audits, and ongoing reviews of waste services and infrastructure. These measures enable the Council to identify gaps, track progress, and adapt actions to emerging challenges, ensuring waste management practices remain effective, efficient, and aligned with sustainability goals.

**COLLABORATION**

The strategy addresses collaboration by partnering with neighbouring councils, regional working groups, and state agencies to share resources, pursue joint initiatives, and tackle cross-boundary waste challenges.

It also supports participation in regional circular economy plans and advocates for collaborative solutions to issues like silage wrap and construction waste, strengthening collective sustainability efforts.

**FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

The strategy supports financial viability by trying to maintain affordable waste charges for residents, optimising service delivery, and regularly reviewing landfill operations to balance costs and compliance.

It also seeks to encourage external funding for infrastructure upgrades and aligns services with state-mandated reforms, ensuring cost-effectiveness while meeting regulatory requirements and minimising the financial burden on ratepayers.

**REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES**

Australia's Circular Economy Framework (2004)  
National Waste Policy Action Plan (2024)  
Loddon Mallee Regional Circular Economy Plan (2022)  
Goulburn Murray Resilience Strategy (2020)

**COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES**

*GOAL 3. SUSTAINABILITY - ACHIEVE LONG-TERM FINANCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY*

*2. Protect our environment and prepare our community for a changing climate.*

**TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS**

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in this matter.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- Gannawarra Resource Recovery & Waste Management Strategy 2025 – 2035 DRAFT
- Residential Kerbside Reform Survey

# Gannawarra Resource Recovery & Waste Management Strategy 2025 – 2035

**DRAFT**

6 October 2025



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|                        |                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Report title           | Gannawarra Resource Recovery & Waste Management Strategy 2025 – 2035                                                                                       |
| Prepared for           | Gannawarra Shire Council                                                                                                                                   |
| Status                 | Draft                                                                                                                                                      |
| Author(s)              | Tom Elford                                                                                                                                                 |
| Reviewer(s)            | Lisa McLeod, Dr Joe Pickin                                                                                                                                 |
| Project number         | P1585                                                                                                                                                      |
| Project name           | Gannawarra Shire Council resource recovery & waste management strategy                                                                                     |
| Report date            | 6 October 2025                                                                                                                                             |
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| Information current to | 1 October 2025                                                                                                                                             |
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**Abbreviations**

|         |                                                                              |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Council | Gannawarra Shire Council                                                     |
| DCCEEW  | Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water |
| EPA     | Environment Protection Authority Victoria                                    |
| e-waste | electronic waste                                                             |
| FOGO    | food organics and garden organics                                            |
| MRF     | material recovery facility                                                   |
| VRIP    | Victorian Recycling Infrastructure Plan                                      |

## Executive summary

Gannawarra Shire Council is committed to reducing waste to landfill, increasing the recovery of waste resources and extending the life of resources through smarter more sustainable practices.

We will lead and educate the Gannawarra community on reducing waste and improving material recovery while delivering fit-for-purpose services and infrastructure for our region. The traditional model of material flows in society can be characterised as 'take-make-dispose'. By moving to a more circular model, we aim to protect our environment and strengthen our local economy.

This draft Resource Recovery and Waste Management Strategy is a 10-year plan to guide Council's efforts in improving waste management and driving greater resource recovery across the Gannawarra region. It is designed to meet the needs of residents, businesses and the broader community, while remaining cost effective and future focused.

Through waste reduction, efficient service delivery, and enhanced recycling and recovery systems, we will protect our environment and keep valuable materials in circulation.

The draft strategy outlines how Gannawarra Shire Council will contribute to meeting the Victorian Government targets and kerbside reform commitments by 2030 including:

- diverting 80% of waste from landfill
- halving the volume of organic material sent to landfill
- reducing total waste generation by 15% per capita
- ensuring every household has access to a food and organics recovery or composting.
- expanded separate glass service by 2027.

Australia's circular economy is still emerging, presenting both challenges and opportunities. As new technologies and practices evolve, Gannawarra Shire Council remains committed to staying informed, responsive, and forward-thinking. Council will maintain a flexible approach to ensure long term and economic sustainability.

## 1 Introduction

The Gannawarra Shire Council Resource Recovery and Waste Management Strategy 2025–2035 (the strategy) provides direction for minimising and managing waste and driving increases in resource recovery across the next ten years. The strategy builds upon the work and achievements of Council’s previous waste and recycling actions and initiatives.

The strategy has been developed to align with state resource recovery targets and other policies and regulations including requirements of Recycling Victoria and Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA).

The draft strategy focuses on Council’s waste and recycling facilities and services, including how to continually improve the delivery of these services for the Gannawarra community.

Our peers and representatives of business and community, have informed the path forward, and the priorities align with Council’s main strategic documents. The strategy is designed to meet the needs of the community, businesses and Gannawarra region.

This draft strategy has been developed for public review and comment. The consultation process includes opportunities for the community to provide feedback for consideration by Council.

## 2 Strategic context

Gannawarra Shire Council operates in the context of national and state-based waste and resource policies and regulations and is within the Loddon Malley region of northern Victoria. The following setting has informed Council's ambition and direction outlined in this strategy.

### 2.1 Gannawarra's vision and local context

Located on the Murray River, about 250 km north-west of Melbourne, Gannawarra is mainly rural and covers 3,736 km<sup>2</sup> with a population around 10,500. The largest employment sector is agriculture, forestry and fishing, followed by health care and social assistance.

Land is used mainly for agriculture, particularly dairy farming, grain and crop farming, grazing, horticulture and viticulture. The region's natural assets are a growing drawcard for tourism and Gannawarra is emerging as a hub for renewable energy, with solar and battery projects already underway.

The Council Plan 2025-29 includes three broad goals, one of which is to achieve long-term financial and environmental sustainability. Council recognises the interrelation between improved energy efficiency, cleaner energy sources and minimising and managing to waste to maintain a sustainable environment. Council's strategy to advance local sustainability and waste initiatives has informed the development of this strategy

The community vision for Gannawarra is:

*Our community is proud, connected and inclusive, and we actively seek opportunities that enhance lifestyle and liveability.*

*Gannawarra is growing and is economically diverse, with unique tourism destinations, cultural and natural assets.*

*We recognise and appreciate the value of the natural environment and how it connects our communities. We are resilient to a changing environment through innovation and collaboration.*

This strategy aims to contribute to the vision and deliver on the Council Plan 2025–29. By delivering accessible, efficient, and environmentally responsible waste and recycling services, Council will empower the community to reduce unnecessary waste, recover valuable resources, and actively participate in the circular economy.

Through education, engagement, and local reuse initiatives, Council aims to strengthen community connections and create opportunities for a thriving and diverse economy.

## 2.2 Regional context

Gannawarra Shire Council is located within the Loddon Mallee Region and actively contributes to regional planning and strategic initiatives through collaboration with various governing bodies and organisations. Key initiatives and strategies that Council has supported include:

- Circular Central Victoria regional circular opportunity scan (2023) – This scan identified pathways for the Loddon Mallee Region to harness the benefits of a circular economy. The report outlines 9 circular opportunities across the organics, construction, consumer goods, and manufacturing sectors, with potential to recover approximately 688,900 tonnes of materials, including surplus fruit and vegetables, crop residues, animal manure, kerbside glass, and plastics.
- Loddon Mallee Regional Circular Economy Plan (2022) – Developed with input by 52 organisations, including local governments, businesses, manufacturers, social enterprises, the waste and resource recovery industry, research and education institutions, and the Victorian Government. The plan aims to improve access to collection services, and enhance the sorting and cleaning of commercial and commingled plastics, polystyrene, household soft plastics and agricultural plastics.
- Goulburn Murray Resilience Strategy (2020) – Council contributed to the Goulburn Regional Partnership that led to the development of this strategy. The circular economy was identified as one of the five key areas influencing regional resilience.

Figure 1: Loddon Mallee region



Loddon shown in dark pink, Mallee shown in light pink.

## 2.3 Victorian Government

The *Local Government Act 2020* is the main legislative instrument for Victorian councils. Other key Victorian legislation includes the *Environmental Protection Act 2017* and the *Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021*.

The Victorian Government's *Recycling Victoria: A new economy* in 2020 is a ten-year policy and action plan aimed at transforming waste and recycling. It includes reform to kerbside recycling, introduction of the container deposit scheme and new investment in industry. The key targets and actions are:

- divert 72% of waste from landfill by 2025 and 80% by 2030
- cut the volume of organic material going to landfill by 20% by 2025 and 50% by 2030
- reduce total waste generation by 15% per capita by 2030
- 100% of households have access to separate food and organics recovery service or composting by 2030.

The strategies to achieve these targets include:

- a container deposit scheme and problematic single use plastic ban, implemented in 2023
- a standardised four stream household waste and recycling system (glass, food and garden organics, mixed recyclables, household rubbish) by 2030
- a staged increase to the landfill levy
- encourage investment in waste to energy
- strengthened waste and recycling industry
- new recycling laws and governance, including establishment of Recycling Victoria and regulating waste as an essential service.

Recycling Victoria released the Victorian Recycling Infrastructure Plan (VRIP) in October 2024. This provides long-term strategic infrastructure planning to guide and inform decision-making on waste, recycling and resource recovery infrastructure over the next 30 years. The VRIP replaced Victoria's seven regional waste and resource recovery implementation plans and the previous Statewide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan.

The *Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021*, among other legislation, requires Council to provide municipal residual waste and recycling services. The Act also establishes a duty for providers of essential waste, recycling or resource recovery services to minimise risk of failure, disruption or hinderance of service.

The *Environment Protection Act 2017* came into effect on 1 July 2021 and focuses on preventing pollution and waste rather than just cleaning up damage after it happens. At the heart of the Act, the general environmental duty requires Council to actively manage risks associated with its operations and to take reasonable and practical steps to prevent harm to human health and the environment. This means identifying potential hazards, implementing safety measures, and ensuring compliance with environmental protection standards.

In addition to the general environmental duty, Council must manage any pollution incidents, contaminated land and industrial waste in accordance with its duties under the *Environment Protection Act 2017*.

## 2.4 National level

Released in December 2024, *Australia's Circular Economy Framework* (the framework) sets out Australia's mission to double the circularity of the economy by 2035, relative to the 2019 baseline 'circularity rate' of 4.6% (DCCEEW, 2024b, p. 8). This is a measurement of how much of Australia's materials come from recycling rather than being taken from nature.

The framework focuses on initiatives to reduce the amount of material used and drive material recovery for productive use, by pursuing the following targets:

- Target 1: Reducing material footprint by 10%.
- Target 2: Lifting materials productivity by 30%.
- Target 3: Safely recovering 80% of our resources.

The framework builds on principles outlined in the *National Waste Policy 2018*. The policy provides an agenda for collective action by businesses, governments and communities and calls for increased access to resource recovery, waste management infrastructure and capacity building. The following overarching targets will guide investment and national efforts to 2030 and beyond:

1. Ban on export of waste plastic, paper, glass and tyres, commencing in the second half of 2020.
2. Reduce total waste generated in Australia by 10% per person by 2030.
3. 80% average resource recovery rate from all waste streams following the waste hierarchy by 2030.
4. Significantly increase the use of recycled content by government and industry.
5. Continued phase out of problematic and unnecessary plastics.
6. Halve the amount of organic waste sent to landfill for disposal by 2030.
7. Make comprehensive, economy-wide and timely data publicly available to support better consumer, investment and policy decisions.

The supporting *National Waste Policy Action Plan 2024* establishes the following areas to prioritise to meet the targets:

- Government legislation, regulation, policies, standards and guidelines.
- Investment in infrastructure, procurement and funding support.
- Market development and support through innovation, reducing barriers and generating demand.

The *Recycling and Waste Reduction Act 2020* (the Act) establishes a framework to regulate the export of waste materials and ban the export of specific wastes. The Act also manages the environmental impacts of products through voluntary, co-regulatory and mandatory product stewardship schemes. As part of the Act, Australia's environment ministers have established priorities to strengthen product stewardship and end markets, regulate packaging, and harmonise approaches to container deposit schemes, single use plastics kerbside collection and soft plastics. These priorities support the targets of the *National Waste Policy Action Plan 2024*.

### 3 Where are we now?

The current status of waste management within Gannawarra Shire was reviewed to determine the baseline for future improvements. This included a review of waste generation and diversion, collection services and waste and resource recovery facilities.

#### 3.1 Materials generated

Gannawarra Shire Council provides a range of waste and recycling services to the community. These include kerbside collection of general waste (or 'rubbish'), mixed recycling and garden organics, as well as public drop off facilities at transfer stations, and public litter and recycling bins.

General waste collected across the Shire is transported for disposal at Patho Landfill in neighbouring Campaspe Shire.

Mixed recyclables from kerbside collections and transfer stations are consolidated and sent to the Echuca materials recovery facility (MRF) for sorting. Kerbside Green waste collected via the kerbside service and transfer stations is processed in-house by Gannawarra Shire Council.

Indicative tonnages collected of each main material stream through council kerbside, public street litter and transfer station services are provided in *Table 1*.

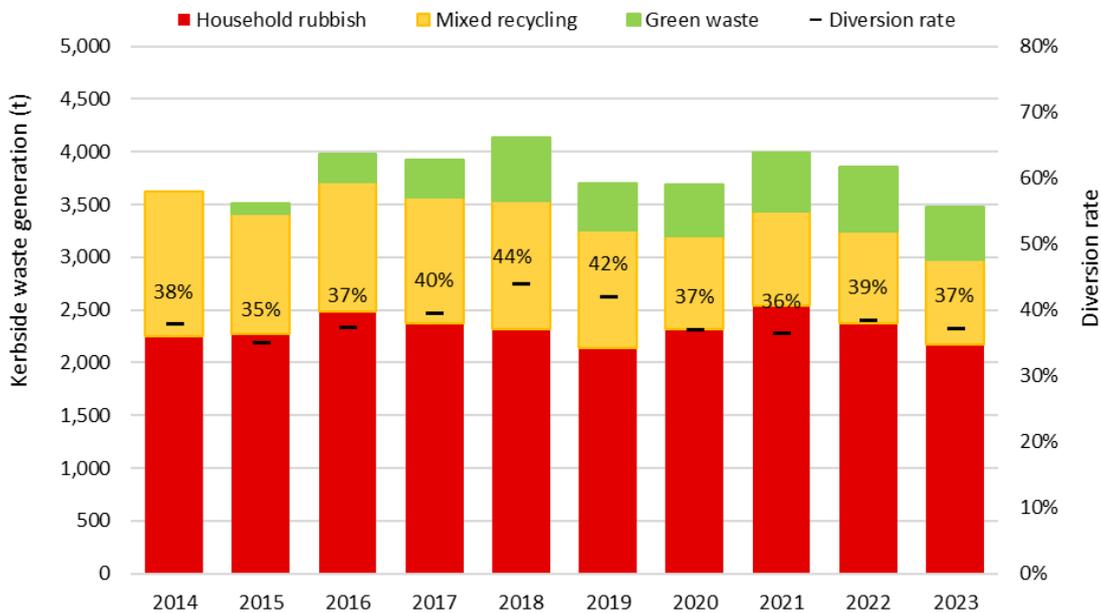
*Table 1: Estimated waste generation, Gannawarra Shire Council, 2022-23*

| Type                                                                   | Tonnes |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Rubbish - kerbside and street litter bins                              | 2,260  |
| Rubbish - transfer stations                                            | 1,170  |
| Recycling - kerbside and transfer stations                             | 760    |
| Green waste - kerbside                                                 | 770    |
| Green waste - transfer stations                                        | 320    |
| Transfer station drop off not including waste and commingled recycling | 130    |

*Data source: Gannawarra Shire Council.*

*Figure 2* shows Council's kerbside waste generation since 2014 by bin type. The kerbside data is mostly from household waste but also includes street litter bins and some business waste. The black dashes indicate the kerbside diversion rate for the year. The historical kerbside waste data shows that waste generation has been decreasing since 2021.

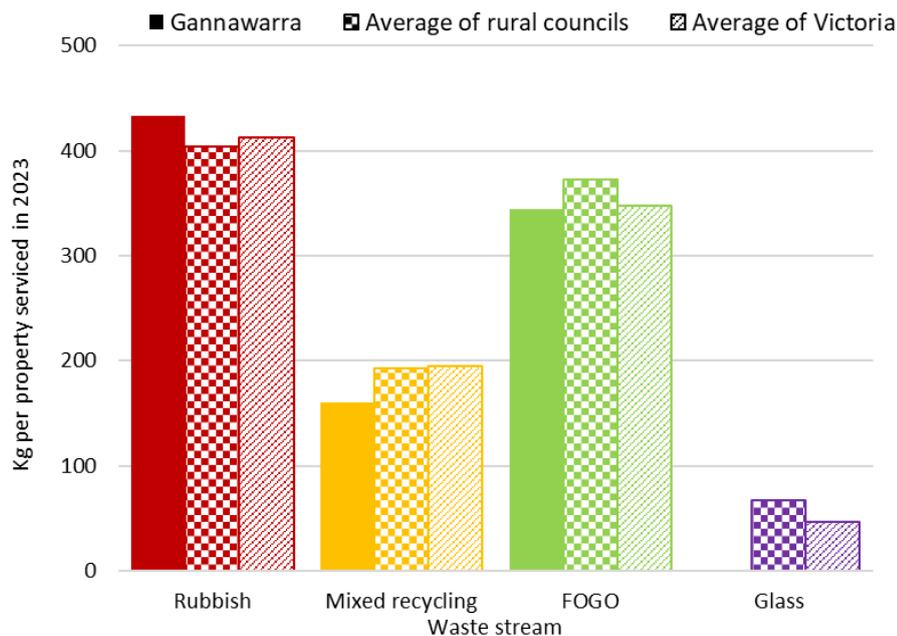
Figure 2: Generation of household rubbish, recycling and green waste, 2014 to 2023



Data source: Recycling Victoria data hub.

Figure 3 shows the kilograms of waste (by bin type) collected per household in Gannawarra Council compared with the average rural household and the average Victorian household in 2023. Households in Gannawarra generated slightly more rubbish than other households and less mixed recycling and organic waste. Gannawarra did not have a comparable glass collection service during 2023.

Figure 3: Generation of household rubbish, recycling and green waste per property, 2022–23 (with state and rural comparison)



Data source: Recycling Victoria data hub.

### 3.2 Council leadership and community engagement

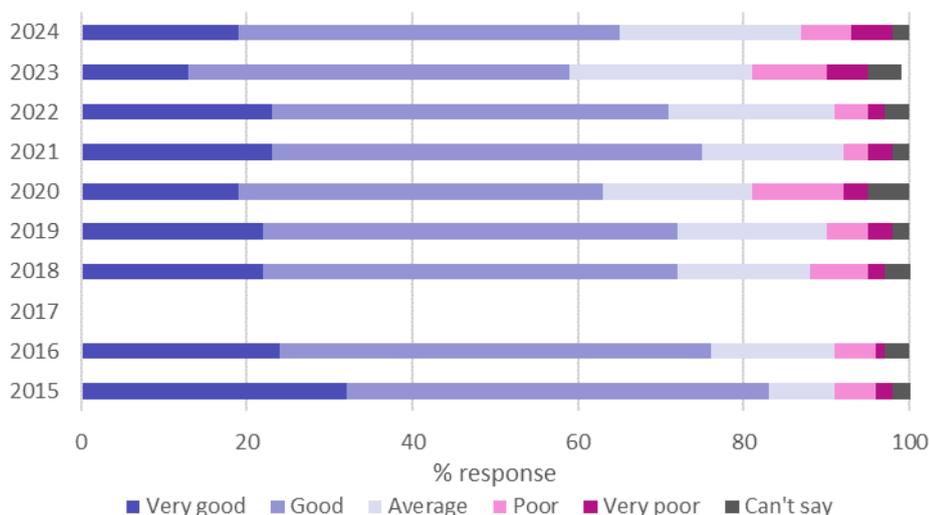
#### Community views

A Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey is coordinated by the Department of Government Services on behalf of Victorian councils each year. The survey asks the opinions of local people about the place they live, work and play and provides feedback to councils on their efforts and abilities. There were approximately 400 survey participants in Gannawarra Shire Council in 2024.

Regarding waste management, Council scored 67, which is in line with the state-wide average and a modest increase from a score of 64 in 2023.

In 2024, 19% of survey participants rated waste management in Gannawarra as very good, 46% as good, 22% as average, 6% as poor and 5% as very poor (*Figure 4*).

*Figure 4: Community satisfaction in waste management, 2015–2024*



#### Education

The Gannawarra Shire Council website provides educational and informational material for our residents to learn more about:

- which items belong in which bin
- household glass bottle and jar recycling
- single use plastics bans, including a list of banned items, reasons the ban has been implemented and support and resources for businesses
- the container deposit scheme, including a link to a refund collection point finder and information on how to become a refund collection point
- the Victorian Government’s Detox Your Home program
- instructions to report illegal dumping.

### 3.3 Waste and recycling services

#### Kerbside services

Council currently provides rubbish and recycling kerbside services to over 5,000 properties including residential, community and commercial properties, as well as an opt-in green waste kerbside service in limited townships.

The collection routes cover the townships of Cohuna, Cohuna Golf Links Estate, Kerang, Koondrook, Lake Charm, Lalbert, Leitchville, Murrabit, Mystic Park and Quambatook. Council also offers an optional commercial rubbish and recycling collection to properties within the designated collection area under Council's Waste Management Services, Bins – Provision and Replacement policy.

Properties outside the collection service area either use the transfer stations or have private collection arrangements. Council's current kerbside collection services are outlined in [Table 2](#).

*Table 2: Kerbside collection services summary, 2022-23*

| Bin type             |  |  |  |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bin size             | 120 L or 240 L                                                                    | 240 L                                                                             | 240 L                                                                               |
| Service type         | Rubbish                                                                           | Recycling                                                                         | Opt-in garden organics<br><i>For Cohuna, Kerang and Koondrook urban residents</i>   |
| Collection frequency | Weekly                                                                            | Fortnightly                                                                       | Fortnightly                                                                         |
| Number of services   | 5,191                                                                             | 5,387                                                                             | 1,555                                                                               |
| Where it goes        | Patho landfill                                                                    | Echuca MRF                                                                        | In-house processing                                                                 |

#### Bin contamination

Incorrect placement of materials in kerbside bins causes contamination, impacts recovery of resources and can increase kerbside costs. Council commissions audits to identify where improvements can be made. The results of an audit from early 2025 are summarised in [Figure 5](#).

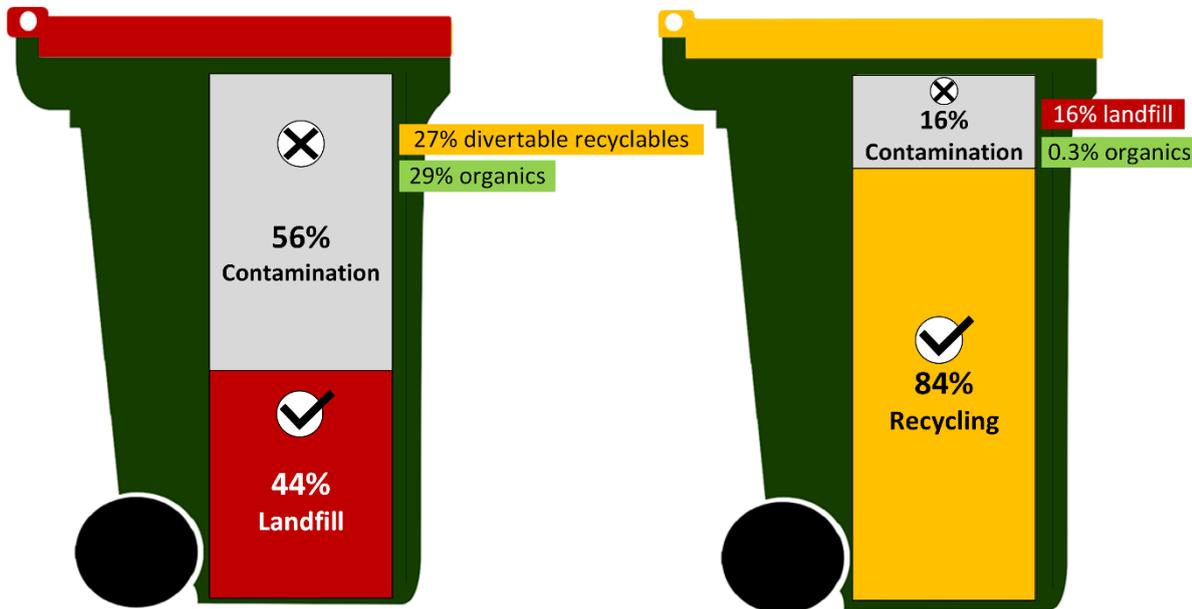
The general waste (red lid bin) consisted of 27% (by weight) divertible mixed recyclables that could have been recycled if placed to the yellow lidded bin. Cardboard was the most significant divertible recyclable material found in the rubbish stream, accounting for nearly 6% of bin contents.

The red lidded bin also contained 29% organics. Council is looking to provide a recovery solution for this material by expanding the green waste service to accept household food waste.

The contamination rate in our recycling (yellow lid bin) was 16%. Textiles were the most prevalent contaminant, accounting for almost 4% of bin contents. Bagged waste, non-recyclable plastic, plastic bags and non-packaging metals were other significant contaminant materials that residents are putting in their recycling bins.

The national average contamination in kerbside recycling bins is about 11% (Brunton, 2024), indicating there are opportunities for Gannawarra to continue to improve.

Figure 5: Composition of kerbside bins based kerbside audit data available in 2025



Separated glass

Council installed designated glass recycling skips at Cohuna, Kerang, Lalbert and Quambatook transfer stations, and adjacent the Koondrook Works Depot, with funding received from the State Government. This initiative provides a free glass drop off service to residents.

To support the new service, Council ran a waste glass education and behaviour change campaign to encourage residents to take household glass bottles to transfer stations in October 2022. This was part of the *A Small Change Makes a Big Impact* campaign support by Sustainability Victoria. Information was distributed to all households about what items could be placed in each household bin and what should be taken to transfer stations.

Kerbside organics

Council offers a green organics (green waste) service to properties in Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook. The green waste is collected by Council’s contractor and mulched at transfer stations.

Container deposit scheme

There are currently 3 container deposit scheme drop off locations in the region for the community to use. These are located in Cohuna, Kerang and Leitchville. Council encourages the use of the container deposit scheme along with use of the current glass drop off services available at Cohuna, Kerang, Lalbert and Quambatook transfer stations and the Koondrook public drop off site. There has been a strong uptake of the CDS by the community since its introduction in 2023.

### 3.4 Waste facilities

Council operates transfer stations and depots across the extent of the council area with Kerang and Cohuna at the centre and east of the shire, and Lalbert and Quambatook sites servicing the west. There is also a 24 hour glass drop off point opposite the Koondrook works depot.

Each transfer station holds a registration from EPA Victoria. This requires Council to carefully manage its operations to minimise risk of harm to the environment, and ensure safe operation for its staff and the public.

The transfer stations at Kerang and Cohuna are open multiple days each week and accept a range of material for recycling and disposal. Smaller facilities at Lalbert and Quambatook operate twice a month. Residents also use the Barham transfer station across the NSW border.

Gannawarra Central Landfill (located on Denyer Road) is located in the centre of the council area. It is licensed by EPA to accept municipal, industrial, and limited reportable priority wastes. Council must comply with stringent conditions to ensure protection of the environment for the life of the landfill.

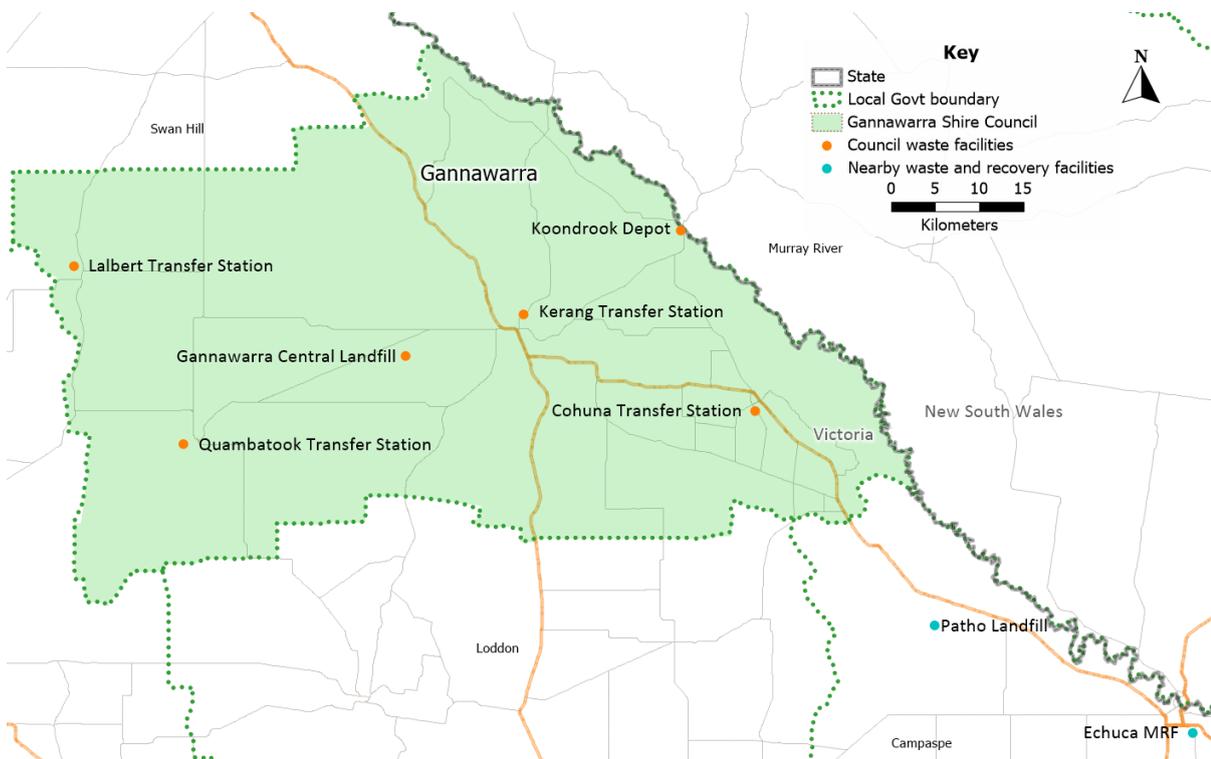
The site area is approximately 11 hectares, with two filled cells (cells 1 and 2), one active cell (cell 3) and four future planned waste cells. Cells 1 and 2 were capped in 2017–18 with landfill gas passively vented to the atmosphere via a shared venting stack, and Cell 3 is almost full. Assessing the future operation of Gannawarra Central Landfill is a high priority for Council.

Council also owns the Quambatook nightsoil depot which is used by private contractors for disposing of septic tank sludge in trenches at the rear of the former landfill.

Council is responsible for closure and rehabilitation of its landfills. This includes auditing of landfill rehabilitation and aftercare. As well as managing the capped cells at the Gannawarra Central Landfill, Council is responsible for land containing closed landfills at Mystic Park, Kerang, Macorna, Leitchville, and Quambatook. The closed Kerang landfill remains under monitoring, although it has been monitored for approximately 26 years and should be close to stabilising. There are also closed landfills for which Council is not the land manager, located at Appin, Cohuna, Lake Charm, Lalbert, Murrabit (Benjeroop), and Tragowel.

Council's key active facilities are shown in [Figure 6](#). Also displayed are nearby facilities where most of Gannawarra's waste and recycling is taken.

Figure 6: Map showing Gannawarra Shire Council waste facilities, Patho Landfill and Echuca MRF



### 3.5 Public waste and recycling

Across the Gannawarra Shire, there are 165 public rubbish and 27 public recycling bins. While collection frequency varies by location, these bins are collectively serviced more than 10,000 times per year. Positioned in high-traffic areas—such as near local shops, parks, sporting clubs, and rest stops—these bins play a vital role in maintaining the cleanliness and appeal of our public spaces.

During peak holiday times, Council provides red rubbish skips at selected locations for campers. Standard public bin setups were found to be insufficient to meet the high demand during the peak holiday times, leading to litter and illegal dumping. Council’s installation of these skips has helped to reduce these problems.

Council has also established a reporting mechanism to track trends in illegal dumping behaviour. Over a five-month period in late 2024, Council registered 267 reports of dumped waste. The clean-up and proper disposal of dumped waste remains a significant cost to Council.

### 3.6 Performance

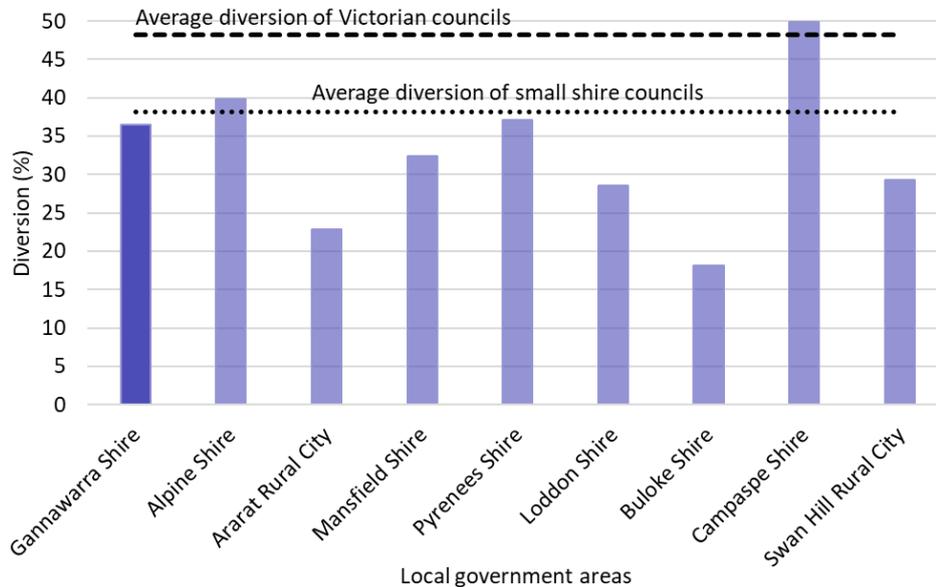
Council has worked hard across the past decade to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill and maximise recycling and resource recovery. Some of Council’s key achievements are highlighted below.

#### Diversion rates

Council’s diversion rate of about 36% in 2022–23 was below the state average (about 48%) but is similar to the average diversion rate for small rural councils.

Figure 7 shows that Council is tracking reasonably well compared to nearby and similar councils, but has opportunity to improve diversion of waste from landfill.

Figure 7: Kerbside diversion rate for selected councils, 2022–23



Data source: Know Your Council website

### Green waste service

To support the Gannawarra community to recover more materials, Council introduced an opt-in green waste service. Across this decade of service, Council has collected approximately 4,740 tonnes of green waste from participating residents. The introduction of the service has contributed to Gannawarra Shire Council recovering more household materials.

### Speciality recycling

Council has introduced material-specific collection services across Gannawarra Shire, with designated drop-off points at local transfer stations. For example, motor oil can be taken to Kerang Transfer station.

Glass recycling skips have been installed at the Cohuna, Kerang, Lalbert, and Quambatook transfer stations, along with a publicly accessible site in Koondrook, funded by the State Government. This initiative offers residents a free and convenient way to dispose of waste glass responsibly.

In addition, Council is actively responding to emerging waste challenges by exploring viable end-of-life recovery solutions for agricultural plastics and solar panels. Council supports the agriculture sector by hosting DrumMuster sites at all transfer stations, and collecting bagMUSTER and solar panels at Kerang and Cohuna transfer stations.

## 4 Issues and opportunities

The challenges facing waste management and resource recovery in Gannawarra Shire are discussed below, as well as opportunities to address and improve outcomes.

### 4.1 Waste management hierarchy and circular economy

The waste management hierarchy is a foundational principle guiding Australia's waste policies. It is embedded in both the *Environment Protection Act 2017* and the *Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021*, where it also aligns with the circular economy. This hierarchy outlines a tiered approach to waste management, prioritising avoidance as the most desirable option and disposal as the least preferred, as illustrated in *Figure 8*.

Figure 8: Waste management hierarchy

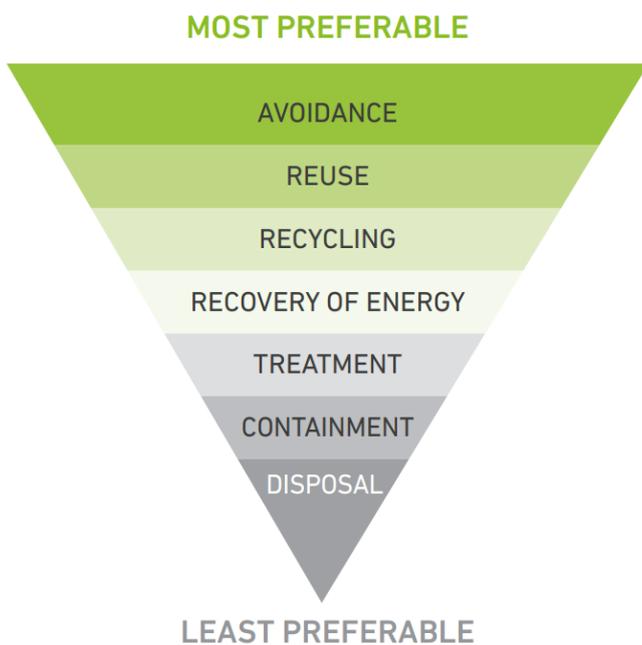
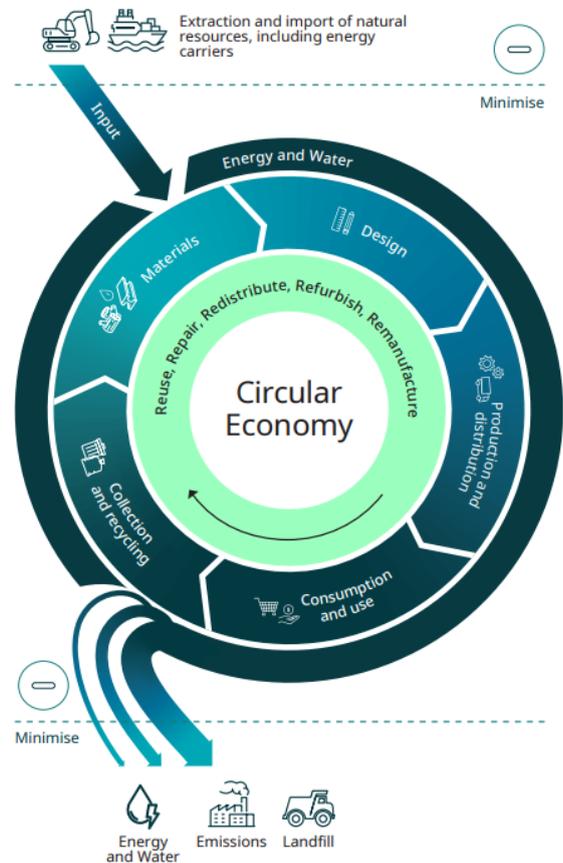


Figure 9: Resource flows in a circular economy



Waste management hierarchy: adapted from Australian environmental policy frameworks.

Resource flows in a circular economy: sourced from Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, National Circular Economy Framework (2024).

The Australian government released the *National Circular Economy Framework* in 2024. The framework defines a circular economy for Australia as ‘an economic model that promotes sustainable and efficient use of resources as a way to support environmental, economic and social outcomes’. There are 3 key principles in a circular economy:

- design out waste and pollution
- keep products and materials in use at their highest value
- conserve natural resources and regenerate nature.

The circular economy model, depicted in *Figure 9* is becoming more embedded in national and state conversations surrounding waste. The model aims to reduce the quantity of valuable resources being lost as waste to landfill and move away from the unsustainable linear take-make-use-waste approach.

Gannawarra Shire Council is committed to promoting a circular economy. Each community member can make a positive impact through changes in habits such as avoiding waste and limiting waste through consumer choices. Examples of this could be not accepting or using single-use plastic packaging or choosing to buy goods that can be repaired.

## 4.2 Increasing cost and requirements

Waste and recycling services account for a significant proportion of Council’s budget each year. Examples of these services include:

- kerbside collected waste and recycling collections
- transport of these materials for further processing and/or disposal
- management of public waste bins
- operating Gannawarra Central Landfill
- managing the 4 resource transfer stations and public waste recycling drop off point
- safely managing closed landfills
- delivering waste and recycling education programs.

Council is required to deliver services and facilities that meet regulatory standards while maintaining financial sustainability, in order to reduce the cost burden on ratepayers.

The Victorian waste levy for depositing rural municipal waste in landfill has increased to \$84.78 per tonne disposed of at landfill. This is a 157% increase from the \$33.03 per tonne levy rate in 2019-20. This is a strong driver for Council to work hard at supporting the Gannawarra community to reduce waste generated and recover and recycle more materials.

Council’s waste services and facilities are funded through the general waste charge that is included in each resident’s annual rates notice. Council needs to maintain an affordable waste collection charge while aligning new waste services with the State-mandated kerbside reforms.

## 4.3 Waste avoidance and behaviour change

The waste management hierarchy places avoidance as the most preferred outcome for managing waste. However, minimising waste generation within the Shire presents challenges, as Council has limited control over many contributing factors, such as excessive packaging on everyday products. Despite this, Council is committed to supporting initiatives that influence community behaviour and deliver cost savings to residents.

According to Sustainability Victoria, the average Victorian household discards approximately \$2,200 worth of food annually. Reducing food waste not only benefits household budgets but also helps mitigate the environmental impacts associated with food production, packaging, transport and waste management.

To support waste reduction efforts, Council will leverage state-developed resources and promote participation in programs like Sustainability Victoria's free ResourceSmart Schools initiative, which offers five sustainability-focused modules for integration into school curricula.

Council will also align with statewide household waste reforms and education campaigns to develop and implement a staged waste education plan. This plan will assist residents and businesses in adapting to new systems and will include targeted education on key issues such as bin contamination and problematic materials, including compostable packaging, soft plastics, compostable bin liners, and batteries.

#### 4.4 Resource recovery

Key initiatives in resource recovery affecting our community include state-led household kerbside reforms, a growing emphasis on business waste, loss of valuable resources, problematic wastes and the emergence of new waste streams such as solar panels.

##### Kerbside collected materials

As of 2025, an estimated 27% of recyclable materials in Gannawarra Shire were still being placed in rubbish bins instead of recycling bins. Additionally, 16% of materials found in recycling bins were contaminants. These figures highlight a significant opportunity for Council to work with the community to improve recycling practices, particularly for paper, cardboard, plastics, and metals.

Council is actively collaborating with the state government to prepare for the upcoming household kerbside reforms. As part of this process, Council is reviewing current waste and recycling services and planning a best-practice four-stream collection model tailored to the needs of the Gannawarra community. Proposed additions include separate collections for food and garden organics, as well as expanded glass collection.

##### Supporting local business and farmers

Council will engage with local businesses and farming communities to enhance the recovery of commercial food waste, agricultural plastics, and other commonly used packaging and industrial materials including hard and soft plastics, paper, cardboard, metals, and glass.

As new initiatives emerge, Council will provide businesses with information and practical options to increase resource recovery and reduce the volume of harmful materials sent to landfill

##### Organics

Diverting organic waste from landfill is essential for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Council is committed to enhancing green waste collection across the Gannawarra community, ensuring that organic materials are processed into high-quality mulch that can be returned for local use.

Minimising contamination is vital to maintaining the integrity of this process. Council will continue to educate and support residents to dispose of organics correctly—whether through kerbside bins or transfer station drop off points. By doing so, we can ensure that materials processed locally or at composting facilities result in clean, safe mulch and compost, free from harmful contaminants.

## Plastics and e-waste

Emerging problematic materials in the Gannawarra community such as solar panels, batteries, e-waste, soft plastics and silage wrap are a growing focus for Council. We are committed to improving collection systems and exploring regional pathways for the management and recycling of these materials.

Each of these waste streams presents unique challenges. Council provides bagMuster collection points, and steps are being made to provide a recycling service for silage wrap and soft plastics, including advances in chemical recycling and trials for collecting and recycling silage wrap. Council will continue to support initiatives where they are credible, stable and offer long-term benefits for the community.

Council provides free drop-off facilities for solar panels at its transfer stations, and will monitor the effectiveness of this service as the number of end of life solar panels increase in coming years.

Batteries and e-waste remain a growing concern across Australia due to their potential toxicity and safety risks if not properly managed. Council provides free drop-off facilities for e-waste at all transfer stations and Ecobatt battery drop-off points at multiple locations across the shire.

Council will continue to support the recovery of these items by promoting educational programs that raise awareness of product stewardship schemes such as B-cycle for batteries and the National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme.

## 4.5 Other

### Public place bins, litter and illegal dumping

Council continues to utilise a range of guidance and resources to support effective public place recycling and waste management, including efforts to address litter and illegal dumping.

Across the Gannawarra Shire, reports of littering and illegal dumping remain low. However, camping bins provided during peak holiday periods have occasionally attracted the illegal disposal of bulky items. This may indicate a lack of awareness around what can be placed in these bins, or a preference for convenience over proper disposal at transfer stations.

Council will work closely with the community to ensure camping bins are used appropriately and that residents and visitors are informed about the correct disposal pathways for various waste types. By improving awareness and access to proper waste services, we can maintain the cleanliness and environmental integrity of public spaces.

### Funding opportunities

Council will continue to monitor and pursue funding from external sources as opportunities arise, particularly in connection with the annual state budget announcements. Victoria has seen significant investment in the waste, recycling and resource recovery sector, creating substantial opportunities for councils to enhance their services and infrastructure.

Gannawarra Shire Council has successfully secured funding through several of these initiatives. This support has enabled upgrades to local transfer stations, allowing for the safe acceptance of materials such as glass and e-waste.

Additional funding was received through Sustainability Victoria's Circular Economy Household Education Fund and Local Government Energy Saver Program. These grants supported the development of localised circular economy education programs and delivered energy-efficiency upgrades across seven council-operated facilities.

## 5 Where do we want to get to?

Australia's circular economy is in a formative stage, with its evolving landscape offering both challenges and opportunities. As new practices and innovations continue to emerge, Gannawarra Shire Council remains committed to staying informed, responsive, and forward-thinking. Ongoing developments will continue to shape Council's approach to sustainable waste and resource management.

### 5.1 Council leadership and waste education

Council will continue to lead and educate the Gannawarra community on reducing waste and improving material recovery. Through targeted initiatives and modelling best practice, Council aims to support residents and businesses in adopting more sustainable behaviours.

A staged waste education plan will be developed to guide the community through upcoming changes to kerbside services. This plan will complement state programs and focus on reducing contamination, improving recycling outcomes, and helping households minimise waste and save money. Key topics will include food waste, soft plastics, compostable items, and batteries.

Internally, Council will strengthen its own practices by building staff knowledge of circular economy principles and reviewing procurement policies to support waste avoidance and green purchasing.

At Council's main office in Kerang, staff have begun recovering office food waste, which is now collected and used to feed staff-owned chickens. This simple approach keeps food waste out of the red bins and reduces the amount sent to landfill.

Council will also pursue regional collaboration to share resources, attract funding, and address cross-boundary waste challenges, such as silage wrap and construction materials, through joint initiatives with neighbouring councils.

### 5.2 Waste and recycling services

Council began upgrading kerbside services in 2015 with the introduction of an opt-in green waste service and dedicated glass bins at transfer stations. These early steps will be built upon to meet the requirements of the state-mandated 4-stream kerbside system under the *Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021*.

Plans include expanding the current green waste service into a full FOGO (food organics and garden organics) collection where the green waste service is currently offered, which must be in place by 2030. In 2025, audits revealed that 29% of Gannawarra kerbside rubbish stream was recoverable organic material, highlighting the potential impact of this service.

Council will also improve and expand service options for glass to continue to recover more glass from households by 2027. The upgrades will align with the draft Household Waste and Recycling Service Standard 2024 requirements and enable greater recovery of food waste and glass, reducing landfill volumes and improving the quality recyclables in yellow-lidded bins.

Council will continue to monitor and evaluate the performance and interaction of their current and new kerbside services to ensure that they are serviced at an appropriate frequency and operate and efficient and cost-effective as possible.

## 5.3 Waste facilities

### Transfer stations

Council is committed to continually improving the operation and presentation of its transfer stations to align with best practice standards. A range of enhancements are being considered to support safer, cleaner, and more efficient facilities. These may include:

- strengthening safety measures for handling and storing potentially hazardous materials
- reducing environmental impacts through better protection of waste and recycling from weather exposure
- managing green waste more effectively to minimise stockpiles
- upgrading signage to improve clarity and safety for users and staff
- increasing staff training and regular site assessments to help identify and address potential risks

Council will look to develop and implement a transfer station plan for each site to meet best practice operations and service, and maximise resource recovery. This will include a review of each site, how materials are collected and stored, ensuring appropriate levels of staffing are resourced and that operating hours meet each community's needs.

### Gannawarra Central Landfill

Operating a landfill in 2025 is a significantly more costly undertaking than it has been in the past. Landfill sites need to attract a certain threshold tonnage of waste each year to achieve financial viability. That tonnage has increased due to rises in the waste levy as well as higher day-to-day ongoing costs of staffing, equipment, maintenance, compliance and monitoring that landfills require.

Council is planning a strategic use and cost analysis of Gannawarra Central Landfill. This analysis will inform Council's decision-making process on the future direction of the site. The general options being considered include:

- continue site operations
- expand landfill operations, attracting more waste tonnages
- place the landfill in abeyance, suspending operations and adopting a wait-and-see approach
- close and rehabilitate the landfill site.

## 5.4 Litter and illegal dumping

Council is working to improve data collection on litter and illegal dumping clean ups around Gannawarra Shire, with the aim of identifying hotspot locations and recurring waste types. More detailed data will enable Council to better understand sources and work with the community to address them proactively, keeping our public spaces clean and to protect the local environment.

One challenge already identified is the overuse of bins supplied for seasonal camping waste. Council will continue to work with campground owners, coordinators and other relevant local businesses and stakeholders to ensure campers know what can and cannot be disposed of in these bins.

To help reduce illegal and hazardous dumping, Council has developed a signage trial for installation at one of the seasonal camping bin sites.

## 5.5 Measurement and review

Council will continually improve its waste data collection to enhance the accuracy of reported quantities and sources. Reliable data is critical for evaluating and measuring the effectiveness of services, including kerbside collections and transfer station operations.

As data quality and consistency improves, Council will be better equipped to identify service gaps and inefficiencies enabling targeted improvements. Enhanced data also enables Council to provide more detailed information to the Gannawarra community, including comparisons with previous years.

High quality data strengthens opportunities for collaboration with other councils and businesses, fostering confidence in the material flow information reported by Gannawarra Shire Council and potential partnerships.

## 5.6 2025–2035 goals

In the coming 10 years, Council staff will focus on three key goals to improve waste management for everyone in our community:

- cutting down the amount of waste we produce and send to landfill
- providing reliable, efficient waste services and infrastructure
- boosting recycling and resource recovery to protect our environment.

The Australian and Victorian Governments have set targets related to the overarching goals set by Gannawarra Shire Council. These are outlined below in Table 3.

*Table 3: Overview of Australian and Victorian Government waste-related targets*

| Target                                 | National<br>(baseline year 2016–17) | State<br>(baseline year 2019–20) |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Reduce waste to landfill per household | 10% by 2030                         | 15% by 2030                      |
| Recovery of waste                      | 80% by 2030                         | 72% by 2025<br>80% by 2030       |
| Divert organics from landfill          | 50% by 2030                         | 20% by 2025<br>50% by 2030       |

Gannawarra Shire Council is guided by these targets and has developed an action plan to achieve them, as outlined in Chapter 6.

Council will report on its progress against this strategy through our annual reporting process.

We will also periodically review this strategy to ensure the priorities and actions remain relevant to the context and are addressing current and emerging issues and opportunities.

## 6 Action plan

Gannawarra Shire Council is committed to reducing waste to landfill, increasing the recovery of waste resources and extending the life of resources. To work towards this, a range of actions will address current and future challenges and opportunities within five key areas:

- council leadership and waste education
- waste and recycling services
- waste facilities
- litter and illegal dumping
- measurement and review.

The actions have been prioritised based on environmental, social and economic impacts, and have an indicative timescale of short (0-2 years), medium (2-5 years), and long term (5-10 years).

A summary of the proposed strategic actions and implementation plan is provided in [Table 4](#).

To ensure continual improvement, this implementation plan will be reviewed annually.

Table 4: Council waste and recycling action plan

| #                                             | Action                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Priority | Implementation |           |           |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |          | 2025–2027      | 2027–2030 | 2030–2035 |
| <b>Council leadership and waste education</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |          |                |           |           |
| 1                                             | Develop and implement a staged waste education plan for residents and businesses to support kerbside bin changes. This should include early consultation.                                                                                                             | H        | ✓              | ✓         | ✓         |
| 2                                             | Build organisation and community knowledge, awareness and action to drive circular economy.                                                                                                                                                                           | H        | ✓              | ✓         | ✓         |
| 3                                             | Review and update council procurement policies and targets to support circular economy outcomes.                                                                                                                                                                      | M        | ✓              | ✓         |           |
| 4                                             | Identify opportunities for Council to avoid and minimise waste in its operations, including increasing green purchasing to promote circular economy, trialling a paperless office system, recycling food waste from office kitchens and reducing single-use plastics. | M        | ✓              | ✓         | ✓         |
| 5                                             | Continue to support and participate in regional and State campaigns as they become available, including ‘Small acts, big impact’.                                                                                                                                     | H        | ✓              | ✓         | ✓         |
| 6                                             | Continue to promote and support environmental events such as Clean-Up Australia day and National Recycling Week.                                                                                                                                                      | H        | ✓              | ✓         | ✓         |
| 7                                             | Encourage and support school participation in the ResourceSmart Schools program.                                                                                                                                                                                      | H        | ✓              | ✓         | ✓         |
| 8                                             | Advocate via Council and regional groups on issues such as product stewardship programs for hard to recycle materials, plastics and additional resourcing.                                                                                                            | M        | ✓              | ✓         | ✓         |
| 9                                             | Support and engage with regional working groups such as the Loddon Mallee Circular Economy Reference Group to pursue regional circular economy solutions.                                                                                                             | H        | ✓              | ✓         | ✓         |
| 10                                            | Partner with nearby councils to implement circular opportunities identified in the Circular Central Victoria plan, for example finding solutions for silage wrap and construction waste.                                                                              | H        |                | ✓         | ✓         |
| 11                                            | Develop and implement education campaigns around problematic materials and bin contamination key issues in advance of kerbside standard, such as compostable packaging, soft plastics, compostable bin liners and batteries.                                          | M        | ✓              | ✓         | ✓         |
| 12                                            | Work with communities to minimise contamination in all recovery streams.                                                                                                                                                                                              | H        | ✓              | ✓         | ✓         |
| 13                                            | Work with local businesses (particularly in the hospitality sector) to explore options for reducing and diverting food waste.                                                                                                                                         | M        |                | ✓         | ✓         |

| #                                   | Action                                                                                                                                                                                            | Priority | Implementation |           |           |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
|                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |          | 2025–2027      | 2027–2030 | 2030–2035 |
| 14                                  | Work with local farming networks to reinforce the risks and EPA messaging about illegal burning of waste.                                                                                         | M        | ✓              | ✓         |           |
| 15                                  | Advocate and support initiatives that promote a circular economy such as repair and sharing services, charities and circular businesses.                                                          | H        |                | ✓         | ✓         |
| 16                                  | Investigate options to support community op shops (or similar) to recover items from transfer stations                                                                                            | L        |                | ✓         | ✓         |
| 17                                  | Use informational signage for public waste bins in line with good practice guidelines published by Sustainability Victoria.                                                                       | M        | ✓              | ✓         |           |
| 18                                  | Promote Council’s and the community’s waste and recycling performance to encourage greater community responsibility to improve waste diversion in homes.                                          | M        |                | ✓         | ✓         |
| <b>Waste and recycling services</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |          |                |           |           |
| 19                                  | Advocate for sufficient resources (both financial and staffing) to support the appropriate waste services provided, infrastructure initiatives and shift to circular economy.                     | L        | ✓              | ✓         | ✓         |
| 20                                  | Continue to host Detox Your Home.                                                                                                                                                                 | L        | ✓              | ✓         | ✓         |
| 21                                  | Review the services included in the waste charge and align with Ministerial good practice guidelines.                                                                                             | H        | ✓              | ✓         |           |
| 22                                  | Revise Council waste management services policy to align with the new Victorian kerbside standards and timing of services for residents and businesses.                                           | H        |                | ✓         | ✓         |
| 23                                  | Investigate opportunity to participate in a collaborative regional or sub-regional collection contract for future kerbside collections.                                                           | M        |                | ✓         | ✓         |
| 24                                  | Implement a FOGO collection service to comply with the kerbside service standards.                                                                                                                | H        | ✓              | ✓         | ✓         |
| 25                                  | Investigate pathways for FOGO processing.                                                                                                                                                         | H        | ✓              | ✓         | ✓         |
| 26                                  | Create a cleaner stream of garden organics for returning mulch (that is processed to a safe standard) to the community to assist with education campaigns around organics diversion and recovery. | M        | ✓              | ✓         |           |
| 27                                  | Advocate for a recycling service for glass that is appropriate for the municipality.                                                                                                              | H        | ✓              | ✓         |           |
| 28                                  | Extend the glass recycling service to comply with the kerbside service requirements.                                                                                                              | H        | ✓              | ✓         | ✓         |

| #                                 | Action                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Priority | Implementation |           |           |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
|                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |          | 2025–2027      | 2027–2030 | 2030–2035 |
| 29                                | Monitor and support regional initiatives to tackle problem plastics including silage wrap and soft plastics.                                                                                                  | M        | ✓              | ✓         | ✓         |
| <b>Waste facilities</b>           |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |          |                |           |           |
| 30                                | Develop and implement a transfer station plan to meet best practice operations and service, and maximise resource recovery.                                                                                   | M        | ✓              | ✓         | ✓         |
| 31                                | Assess future operation of Gannawarra Central Landfill including a detailed cost analysis of the options.                                                                                                     | H        | ✓              | ✓         | ✓         |
| 32                                | Ensure transfer stations and Gannawarra Central Landfill have appropriate measures are in place for disaster waste management and are incorporated into the Municipal Emergency Management Plan.              | M        | ✓              | ✓         |           |
| 33                                | Implement recommended actions from biennial landfill audits                                                                                                                                                   | M        | ✓              | ✓         | ✓         |
| 34                                | Investigate options for landfill gas management at Gannawarra Central Landfill, such as flaring.                                                                                                              | M        |                | ✓         | ✓         |
| 35                                | Continue to ensure Council's closed landfills are assessed and managed to minimise the risk of potential harm to human health and the environment.                                                            | M        | ✓              | ✓         | ✓         |
| <b>Litter and illegal dumping</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |          |                |           |           |
| 36                                | Collect data on litter and clean ups by council to identify issues and measure improvement.                                                                                                                   | L        |                | ✓         | ✓         |
| 37                                | Develop and publish information about seasonal camping waste and disposal, working in consultation with campground owners/coordinators where applicable and other relevant local businesses and stakeholders. | M        | ✓              | ✓         | ✓         |
| 38                                | Explore collaborative arrangements with Parks Victoria to increase visitor preparedness for the 'carry in, carry out' policy at national parks in the Shire                                                   | M        | ✓              | ✓         | ✓         |
| <b>Measurement and review</b>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |          |                |           |           |
| 39                                | Seek to continually improve waste data collection to increase accuracy of the quantities and sources. This may be via contract conditions for reporting.                                                      | H        | ✓              | ✓         | ✓         |
| 40                                | Conduct periodic audits of kerbside services to determine causes of contamination and understand compositions of wastes, potentially in coordination with other councils.                                     | M        | ✓              | ✓         | ✓         |
| 41                                | Perform a review to evaluate viability of universal kerbside services in line with the kerbside standard every three years.                                                                                   | L        |                | ✓         | ✓         |
| 42                                | Undertake periodic strategy review, considering current context and emerging trends.                                                                                                                          | L        |                | ✓         | ✓         |

## 7 References

Brunton V (10 May 2024) [FOGO myth #1: FOGO contamination is too high and prevents good quality compost](#), Inside Waste website, accessed 3 June 2025.

DCCEEW (2024) [Australia's Circular Economy Framework](#), Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Canberra.

Know Your Council (2023) [Know Your Council comparison dashboard](#), Victoria State Government website, accessed 8 August 2024.

Recycling Victoria (2024a) [Victorian local government waste data dashboard](#), Recycling Victoria website, accessed 8 August 2024.

Recycling Victoria (2024b) [Household Waste and Recycling Draft Service Standard](#) published by the State of Victoria Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, accessed 1 November 2024.

Sustainability Victoria (2024) [Avoid food waste at home](#). Sustainability Victoria website, accessed 3 October 2024.

# Residential Kerbside Reform Survey



## Have Your Say on Waste – GSC 2026

Dear Household Member,

The Victorian Government will eventually require all households to have access to four-stream waste services: general waste, recycling, glass, and Food Organics & Garden Organics (FOGO). Council is planning ahead and would like your feedback to help shape services that work best for our community.

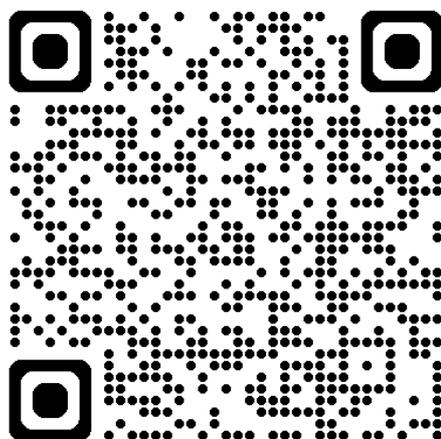
If you'd like to enter the draw for a \$50 voucher, please provide your details at the end of the survey. Winners will be contacted by email and/or phone.

If you are completing this **printed survey**, you can use the reply-paid envelope provided to post it back to Council. The survey is also available online — scan the QR code to complete it digitally — and printed copies are at local libraries and neighbourhood houses.



For more information, visit [www.vic.gov.au/Standardising-household-recycling-across-Victoria](http://www.vic.gov.au/Standardising-household-recycling-across-Victoria).

Thank you for your feedback!



*Prefer to complete the survey online?  
Scan here!*

### 1. Township and communications preferences

#### 1.1 Do you live or own property in the Gannawarra Shire? (Select 1 option)

**Urban areas:** Kerang, Cohuna, Koondrook, Leitchville, Quambatook

**Rural areas:** All other parts of the shire

- Yes - Urban
- Yes - Rural
- No. Please do not complete the survey.

#### 1.2 What area do you live in? (Select 1 option)

- Cohuna
- Koondrook
- Quambatook
- Kerang
- Leitchville
- Lalbert

**Other (Please specify)**

#### 1.3 How would you like to receive information from Council regarding waste services? (Select all that apply) (Select 1 or more options)

- By mail (e.g. Gannawarra Connect or letter)
- Newspaper (Gannawarra News or advertisements)
- Email
- Council's website
- Council's Facebook
- In-person
- Other

**Other (Please specify)**

**2. About your household**

**2.1 Which of the following best describes your home? (Select 1 option)**

- House
- Unit/Apartment
- Other

**Other (Please specify)**

**2.2 Do you own or rent the home you currently live in? (Select 1 option)**

- Homeowner
- Tenant / renter

**2.3 How many occupants do you have in your household?**

### 3. Current Kerbside Waste Collection

This section asks you about the current waste collected from your household. This will help us understand how we can better support you with managing your household waste.



Gannawarra Shire Council Standard Bin Service

- **General waste bin (red lid):** 120L or 240L
- **Mixed recycling bin (yellow lid):** 240L
- **Garden organics (GO) bin (lime green lid):** 240L – opt-in for Kerang, Cohuna, and Koondrook townships

#### 3.1 How confident are you in sorting your household waste into the correct bins? (Select 1 option)

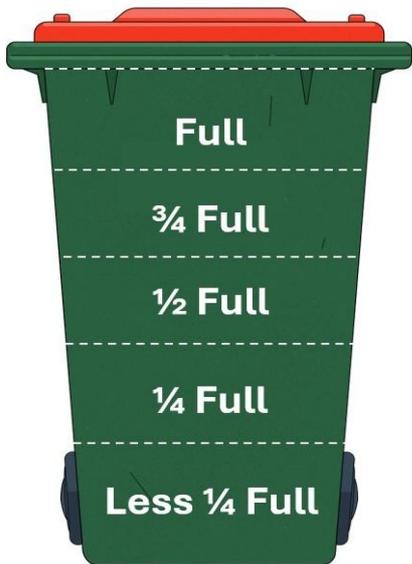
- Very confident – I rarely have trouble sorting my waste
- Somewhat confident – I sometimes make mistakes
- Not very confident – I often find it confusing
- Not confident at all – I need help to sort my waste

#### 3.2 What would help you sort your waste better? (select all that apply)

- Clear bin labels
- Educational materials (brochures, fridge magnets,
- Social media education or online resources
- Workshops or community sessions
- Other

**Other (Please specify)**

**4. About your current bins - Red (general waste) bin**



**4.1 What is the size of your red (general waste) bin? (Select 1 option)**

- 120 L
- 240 L

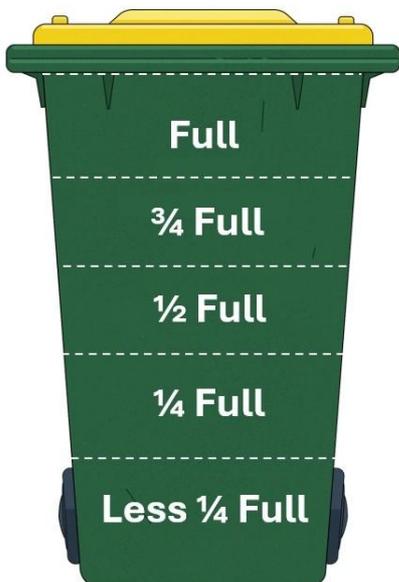
**4.2 How often do you put this bin out? (Select 1 option)**

- Weekly
- Fortnightly
- Monthly
- Never

**4.3 How full is your bin on a typical collection day? (Select 1 option)**

|                                   |                                          |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Overflowing | <input type="radio"/> 1/2 Full           |
| <input type="radio"/> Full        | <input type="radio"/> 1/4 Full           |
| <input type="radio"/> 3/4 Full    | <input type="radio"/> Less than 1/4 Full |

**5. About your current bins - Yellow (mixed recycling) bin**



**5.1 How often do you put this bin out? (Select 1 option)**

- Fortnightly
- Monthly
- Never

**4.3 How full is your bin on a typical collection day? (Select 1 option)**

|                                   |                                          |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Overflowing | <input type="radio"/> 1/2 Full           |
| <input type="radio"/> Full        | <input type="radio"/> 1/4 Full           |
| <input type="radio"/> 3/4 Full    | <input type="radio"/> Less than 1/4 Full |

**6. About your current bins - Green (Garden Organics) bin**



**6.1 Do you have a garden organics (green lid) bin? (Select 1 option)**

- Yes
- No – Go to Question 7

**6.2 How often do you put this bin out? (Select 1 option)**

- Fortnightly
- Monthly
- Never

**6.3 How full is your bin on a typical collection day? (Select 1 option)**

- Full
- 3/4 Full
- 1/2 Full
- 1/4 Full
- Less than 1/4 Full

---

**Kerbside waste reform & future preferences**

The Victorian Government will require all councils to introduce a four-stream waste system, including a separate Food and Garden Organics (FOGO) bin and a glass recycling service.

These questions relate to **potential future services**, not the bins you currently use. At present, approximately 30% of the general waste bin in our Shire is made up of organic material, highlighting the opportunity to reduce waste sent to landfill.

**7. Kerbside reform - FOGO (Food Organics & Garden Organics)**



**7.1 Based on the 'Yes' items in the image, select all that apply. (Select 1 or more options)**

- I dispose it in my general waste (red lid) bin
- My animals consume it
- My neighbour collects it
- I compost at home
- Other

**Other (Please specify)**

**7.2 Contamination in the green (FOGO) bin can affect how it is processed.  
What would encourage you to only put food and garden organics in the bin?  
(Select all that apply)**

- Lower costs
- Seeing the compost used locally
- Knowing the staff who handle contamination
- Paying for contamination
- Losing FOGO collection if contaminated
- I don't contaminate my bins
- Learning more / awareness campaigns
- Other

**Other (Please specify)**

**8. Kerbside reform - Glass recycling**



**8.1 Based on the 'Yes' items in the image, select all that apply (Select 1 or more options)**

- Put them in my mixed recycling bin (yellow lid)
- Put them in my general waste bin (red lid)
- Wash and reuse
- Take to a Container Deposit Scheme (CDS - 10¢ per item)
- Drop off at transfer station
- Other

**Other (Please specify)**

**8.2 If glass recycling were to be a drop off, where would you be prepared to be take your glass to? (select all that apply)**

- Council's transfer station
- Community drop-off bin
- I'd rather pay for a purple bin
- Other

**Other (Please specify)**

**9a. Bin Size Preferences - Green lid (FOGO) bin**



### Food and garden organics

**Food scraps and garden clippings only.**  
**Remove stickers from fruit.**

**✓ Yes**

- ✓ Out of date, inedible food
- ✓ Coffee grounds, loose leaf tea
- ✓ Dairy products including yoghurt
- ✓ Fruit and vegetable scraps
- ✓ Meat, seafood, bones, egg shells
- ✓ Leaves, plants, twigs, grass, weeds

**✗ No**

- ✗ Coffee pods, tea bags
- ✗ Kitty litter, animal droppings
- ✗ Large branches, tree stumps
- ✗ Liquids
- ✗ Nappies, wet wipes
- ✗ Plastic, including biodegradable or non-certified compostable plastics

**9a.1 What size Food Organics & Garden Organics (green lid) bin would you prefer?**

*The image (left) shows examples of items that can go in the FOGO (green-lidded) bin when the service begins.*

Pick the option that best fits your household, based on what can go in the bins

- Small 80L
- Standard 120L
- Large 240L – (same size as your current recycling bin)
- Don't know
- Not needed

**9b. Bin Size Preferences - purple (glass) bin**



**9b.1 What size glass (purple lid) bin would you prefer?**

*The image (right) shows examples of items that can go in the glass (purple-lidded) bin when the service begins.*

Pick the option that best fits your household, based on what can go in the bins

- Standard 120L
- Large 240L – (same size as your current recycling bin)
- Don't know
- Not needed

### Glass recycling

**Put lightly rinsed, empty glass bottles and jars into the bin loose, not in bags.**

**Lids and bottle caps must be firmly attached.**  
**Lids that can't be reattached go into the general rubbish.**

✓ **Yes**

- ✓ Glass bottles including beer, wine and olive oil bottles
- ✓ Glass jars including pasta sauce and condiment jars

- ✓ Glass bottles and jars for medicine or toiletries

⊘ **No**

- ⊘ Loose lids and caps from bottles or jars
- ⊘ Corks, pumps, sprays
- ⊘ Crockery such as plates, dishes, mugs

- ⊘ Drinking glasses, glass cookware
- ⊘ Vases, light bulbs
- ⊘ Plastic bags or plastic packaging

**10. Collection Frequency**

|                            | <br>Red (general waste) | <br>Yellow (mixed recycling) | <br>Food Organics & Garden Organics (FOGO) | <br>Glass | <br>Transfer station drop-off services                                        | <br>Cost Increase ESTIMATES ONLY* |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Current (base case)</b> | Weekly                                                                                                   | Fortnightly                                                                                                   | Fortnightly (garden organics only)                                                                                          | N/A                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· General waste</li> <li>· Recycling</li> <li>· Garden organics</li> <li>· Glass</li> </ul>                               | -                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Scenario 1</b>          | Fortnightly                                                                                              | Fortnightly                                                                                                   | Weekly                                                                                                                      | Monthly                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· General waste</li> <li>· Recycling</li> <li>· Garden organics</li> <li>· <b>FOGO</b></li> <li>· <b>Glass</b></li> </ul> | \$164                                                                                                                |
| <b>Scenario 2</b>          | Fortnightly                                                                                              | Fortnightly                                                                                                   | Fortnightly                                                                                                                 | Monthly                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· General waste</li> <li>· Recycling</li> <li>· Garden organics</li> <li>· <b>FOGO</b></li> <li>· <b>Glass</b></li> </ul> | \$102                                                                                                                |
| <b>Scenario 3</b>          | Weekly                                                                                                   | Fortnightly                                                                                                   | Weekly                                                                                                                      | Monthly                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· General waste</li> <li>· Recycling</li> <li>· Garden organics</li> <li>· <b>FOGO</b></li> <li>· <b>Glass</b></li> </ul> | \$160                                                                                                                |

\*Based on year 2025-2026

**Which scenario would you prefer? (Select 1 option)**

- Scenario 1
- Scenario 2
- Scenario 3
- Other

**If other, please nominate (e.g., glass pick up every other month, fortnightly FOGO, other)**

### 11. Trade-off questions

To help reduce costs and emissions, councils across Victoria are reviewing bin collection frequencies. Please tell us what you think:

**11.1 Would you be okay with your glass bin being collected once every two months instead of monthly, if it helped reduce future increases to your charges and supported reducing carbon emissions?**

- Yes
- No
- No

**Comments:**

**11.2 If a 4-bin system is introduced, do you think a separate glass bin would be useful for your household?**

- Yes – I would use it regularly
- Yes – but only occasionally
- No – I'd rather take it to a community drop off point
- No – I don't think I would use it much

**Comments:**

## 12. Optional questions – Helping Reduce Waste

### 12.1 Did you know you can get a 10c refund for eligible cans through the Container Deposit Scheme (CDS)?

*If you would like more information about how to claim your 10c refund, you can find it at: <https://cdsvic.org.au/locations>*

- Yes, and I use it
- Yes, but I don't use it
- No

### 12.2 How do you usually get rid of your old clothes?

*Tip: Donating clothes to local op shop or charities helps the community and reduces waste.*

- Donate to an op shop or charity
- Put in the red (general) waste bin
- Other

**If other, please specify**

### 12.3 Are there any types of waste or items you find difficult to recycle or dispose of correctly? Please specify below.

**13. Other feedback**

**Are there any final comments, suggestions, or improvements you would like Council to consider in relation to waste services?**

**Question 14 – Optional \$50 Giveaway Voucher**

If you would like to enter the draw for a \$50 voucher, please provide your details below.

*Winners will be contacted by email and/or phone.*

Name:

Phone Number:

Email:

**End of Survey**

————— Thank you for your time and your responses! —————

## **7.10 DELEGATION UPDATE - S5 INSTRUMENT OF DELEGATION TO CEO & S6 INSTRUMENT OF DELEGATION TO MEMBERS OF STAFF**

**Author:** Dylan Taylor, Governance Officer  
**Authoriser:** Melissa Mathers (Manager People and Culture), Phil Higgins (Acting Director Corporate Services)

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council, in the exercise of the powers conferred by the legislation referred to in the attached instrument of delegation, resolves:**

- 1. To delegate to the members of Council staff holding, acting in or performing the duties of the offices or positions referred to in the attached *Instrument of Delegation to Members of Staff*, the powers, duties and functions set out in that instrument, subject to the conditions and limitations specified in that Instrument.**
- 2. That the instrument comes into force immediately when signed by the Chief Executive Officer.**
- 3. On the coming into force of the instrument all previous delegations to members of Council staff (other than the Chief Executive Officer) are revoked.**
- 4. That the duties and functions set out in the instrument must be performed, and the powers set out in the instruments must be executed, in accordance with any guidelines or policies of Council that it may from time to time adopt.**

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Gannawarra Shire Council has functions and duties which it must perform and powers which it may exercise, pursuant to the *Local Government Act 1989* (the 1989 Act), the *Local Government Act 2020* (the 2020 Act) as well as a range of other Acts and regulations. Legislation referred to in the attached instrument of delegation provides for Council to delegate certain powers, duties or functions to members of staff rather than having all functions and duties dealt with by Council resolution.

Delegations are regularly reviewed to reflect changes in legislation, regulations and Council's organisational structure.

This report addresses delegations to members of Council staff.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to allow Council to exercise its functions and duties in a timely, diligent, compliant and effective manner.

### **DISCUSSION**

As a statutory entity, Council is only able to do those things which it is authorised by statute to do. As a legal entity and not a 'natural person', Council can act in only one of two ways: by resolution or through others acting on its behalf. The power for Council to act by resolution is set out in section 59 of the 2020 Act.

*"59(1) Where a Council is empowered to do any act, matter or thing, the decision to do the act, matter or thing is to be made by a resolution of the Council."*

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Alternatively, a Council can act through others. Several acts and regulations provide for Council to delegate certain powers, duties or functions to members of Council staff.

Where this is to occur, appointments are formalised through a written 'instrument of delegation'.

This report seeks to update the Instrument of Delegation to Members of Council Staff to reflect the following:

Delegations to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) under S5 relate to wording changes.

Delegation to all other staff under S6 relate to:

#### ***Planning and Environment Act 1987***

Delegations for the approval or endorsement for a plan or other document in accordance with a provision of a planning scheme or condition in a permit moved from the the CEO.

#### ***Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2015***

- Delegations moved from the the CEO and Manager Governance to the Director Corporate Services and Acting Director Corporate Services.

#### **RELEVANT LAW**

- *Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003*
- *Domestic Animals Act 1994*
- *Food Act 1984*
- *Heritage Act 2017*
- *Local Government Act 1989*
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
- *Residential Tenancies Act 1997*
- *Road Management Act 2004*
- *Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2015*
- *Planning and Environment Regulations 2015*
- *Planning and Environment (Fees) Regulations 2016*
- *Residential Tenancies (Caravan Parks and Movable Dwellings Registration and Standards) Regulations 2024*
- *Road Management (General) Regulations 2016*
- *Road Management (Works and Infrastructure) Regulations 2015*

#### **RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS**

Council most recently reviewed delegations to Council staff at its meeting on 19 February 2025.

#### **OPTIONS**

The delegation from Council to members of Council staff must be regularly reviewed to maintain compliance with relevant legislation. Council may choose not to delegate a function or power.

#### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

The legislative changes can have social, environmental and economic implications.

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**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Not applicable.

**INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

Officers regularly review delegations to reflect changes in legislation, regulations and Council's organisation structure.

**COLLABORATION**

Statutory changes are identified and coordinated through an external entity.

**FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

This update to the Instrument of Delegation is covered within the Council's existing budget.

**REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES**

Not applicable.

**COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES**

*Goal 3: Sustainability - Achieve long-term financial and environmental sustainability.  
4. Ensure transparent, inclusive decision-making through effective leadership.*

**TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS**

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in this matter.

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. S 6 Instrument of Delegation Members of Staff Updates [7.10.1 - 8 pages]
2. S 5 Council to CEO - February 2026 [7.10.2 - 4 pages]

## RELIANSYS® DELEGATIONS - EXPORT OF UPDATES BY REGISTER - NEW & CHANGED

### S6 INSTRUMENT OF DELEGATION - MEMBERS OF STAFF

Note - Exported provisions are separated into NEW and CHANGED groupings, sorted by Delegation Source and Section.

21 JANUARY 2026

### NEW Provisions

| #      | Delegation Source                          | Provision | Item Delegated                                                                                                                                                                           | Delegate | Conditions & Limitations |
|--------|--------------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------|
| 783759 | Planning and Environment Act 1987          | -         | Power to decide, in relation to any planning scheme or permit, that a specified thing may be altered or modified with Council's consent                                                  |          |                          |
| 783760 | Planning and Environment Act 1987          | -         | Power to decide, in relation to any planning scheme or permit, that a specified thing may be done subject to Council's prior consent or must not be done without Council's prior consent |          |                          |
| 783761 | Planning and Environment Act 1987          | -         | Power to decide, in relation to any planning scheme or permit, that a specified thing is required to be approved and or endorsed by Council                                              |          |                          |
| 783762 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 38      | Duty to ensure a mausoleum is constructed in accordance with paragraphs (a)-(d)                                                                                                          |          |                          |
| 783763 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 39(1)   | Duty to ensure that remains are interred in a coffin, container or receptacle in accordance with paragraphs (a)-(c)                                                                      |          |                          |

| #      | Delegation Source                          | Provision | Item Delegated                                                                                                       | Delegate | Conditions & Limitations |
|--------|--------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------|
| 783764 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 39(2)   | Duty to ensure that coffin, container or receptacle is labelled.                                                     |          |                          |
| 783765 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 39(3)   | Duty to ensure that remains are interred in accordance with paragraphs (a)-(b)                                       |          |                          |
| 783766 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 40      | Duty to ensure that a crypt space in a mausoleum is sealed in accordance with paragraphs (a)-(b)                     |          |                          |
| 783767 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 50      | Duty to provide statement that alternative vendors or supplier of memorials exist                                    |          |                          |
| 783768 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 51      | Power to inspect any work that is being carried out on memorials, places or internments and buildings for ceremonies |          |                          |
| 783769 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 52      | Power to approval the arrangement or conduct of a funeral                                                            |          |                          |

| #      | Delegation Source                          | Provision | Item Delegated                                                                                                                            | Delegate | Conditions & Limitations |
|--------|--------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------|
| 783770 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 53(1)   | Power to give written direction regarding the manner in which a funeral is to be conducted                                                |          |                          |
| 783771 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 56(1)   | Power to give directions regarding the objects, things or items affixed to, or placed on or around, the places of interment and memorials |          |                          |
| 783772 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 56(3)   | Power to remove objects, things or items specified in (a)-(d) from a place of interment or memorial                                       |          |                          |
| 783773 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 56(4)   | Duty to dispute items under r 56(3) in a manner considered appropriate                                                                    |          |                          |
| 783774 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 59      | Duty to display the hours during which the public can access the cemetery                                                                 |          |                          |

**CHANGED Provisions**

| #     | Delegation Source                          | Provision | Item Delegated                                                                                                                                                     | Delegate       | Conditions & Limitations |
|-------|--------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| 34153 | Planning and Environment Act 1987          | -         | Power to approve and or endorse any plan or any amendment to a plan or other document in accordance with a provision of a planning scheme or condition in a permit | DID, MPRS      |                          |
| 72452 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 36      | Duty to ensure that cemetery complies with depth of burial requirements                                                                                            | DID, MOS       |                          |
| 72453 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 37      | Duty to ensure that the cemetery complies with the requirements for interment in concrete-lined graves                                                             | DID, MOS       |                          |
| 72454 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 43(2)   | Power to inspect any coffin, container or other receptacle if satisfied of the matters in paragraphs (a) and (b)                                                   | DCS, DID, ADCS |                          |

| #     | Delegation Source                          | Provision | Item Delegated                                                                                                                                    | Delegate                | Conditions & Limitations        |
|-------|--------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 72490 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 44(2)   | Power to remove any fittings on any coffin, container or other receptacle if the fittings may impede the cremation process or damage the cremator | Provision Not Delegated |                                 |
| 72456 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 44(3)   | Duty to ensure any fittings removed of are disposed in an appropriate manner                                                                      | Provision Not Delegated |                                 |
| 72457 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 45      | Power to dispose of any metal substance or non-human substance recovered from a cremator                                                          | Provision Not Delegated |                                 |
| 72458 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 46(2)   | Power to release cremated human remains to certain persons                                                                                        | Provision Not Delegated | Subject to any order of a court |
| 72459 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 47(1)   | Duty to make cremated human remains available for collection within 2 working days after the cremation                                            | Provision Not Delegated |                                 |

| #     | Delegation Source                          | Provision | Item Delegated                                                                                                                                 | Delegate                | Conditions & Limitations |
|-------|--------------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 72460 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 47(2)   | Duty to hold cremated human remains for at least 12 months from the date of cremation                                                          | Provision Not Delegated |                          |
| 72461 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 47(3)   | Power to dispose of cremated human remains if no person gives a direction within 12 months of the date of cremation                            | Provision Not Delegated |                          |
| 72462 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 47(4)   | Duty to take reasonable steps to notify persons specified in r 46(2) of intention to intern or dispose of remains at expiry of 12 month period | Provision Not Delegated |                          |
| 72473 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 48      | Power to approve certain activities under the r 57 or 58(2) if satisfied of regulation (1)(a)-(c)                                              | DCS, ADCS               |                          |
| 72474 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 57(1)   | Power to approve the use of fire in a public cemetery                                                                                          | DCS, DID, ADCS          |                          |

| #     | Delegation Source                          | Provision  | Item Delegated                                                                                                              | Delegate                | Conditions & Limitations             |
|-------|--------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 72475 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | r 58(2)    | Power to approve a person to drive, ride or use a vehicle on any surface other than a road, track or parking area           | DCS, DID, ADCS          |                                      |
| 72476 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 |            | Note: sch 2 contains Model Rules – only applicable if the cemetery trust has not made its own cemetery trust rules          | Provision Not Delegated |                                      |
| 72477 | Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulations 2025 | sch 2 cl 4 | Power to approve the carrying out of an activity referred to in rules 5, 7 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17 and 18 of sch 2 | DCS, DID, ADCS          | See note above regarding model rules |

***S5 Instrument of Delegation to Chief Executive Officer***

**Gannawarra Shire Council**

**Instrument of Delegation**

**to**

**The Chief Executive Officer**



**SCHEDULE**

The power to

1. determine any issue;
2. take any action; or
3. do any act or thing

arising out of or connected with any duty imposed, or function or power conferred on Council by or under any Act.

**Conditions and Limitations**

The delegate must not determine the issue, take the action or do the act or thing

1. if the issue, action, act or thing is an issue, action, act or thing which involves
  - 1.1 entering into a contract exceeding the value of \$999,999;
  - 1.2 making any expenditure that exceeds \$999,999;
  - 1.3 any situations where expenditure exceeds the above amount and include the under legislation, required to make in which case amount it must not exceed \$200,000 (e.g. for certain insurances, emergency services and volunteers funding levy, etc);
  - 1.4 appointing an Acting Chief Executive Officer for a period exceeding 28 days;
  - 1.5 electing a Mayor or Deputy Mayor;
  - 1.6 granting of a reasonable request for leave under s35 of the Act;
  - 1.7 making any decision in relation to the employment, dismissal or removal of the Chief Executive Officer;
  - 1.8 approving or amending the Council Plan;
  - 1.9 adopting or amending any policy that Council is required to adopt under the Act;
  - 1.10 adopting or amending the Governance Rules;
  - 1.11 of appointing the chair or the members to a delegated committee;
  - 1.12 making, amending or revoking a local law;
  - 1.13 of approving of the Budget or Revised Budget;
  - 1.14 approving the borrowing of money;

- 1.15 insert any other applicable conditions/limitations; or
- 1.16 subject to section 181H(1)(b) of the Local Government Act 1989, declaring general rates, municipal charges, service rates and charges and specified rates and charges;
2. if the issue, action, act or thing is an issue, action, act or thing which is required by law to be done by Council resolution;
3. if the issue, action, act or thing is an issue, action or thing which Council has previously designated as an issue, action, act or thing which must be the subject of a Resolution of Council;
4. if the determining of the issue, taking of the action or doing of the act or thing would or would be likely to involve a decision which is inconsistent with a
  - 4.1 policy; or
  - 4.2 strategy adopted by Council;
5. if the determining of the issue, the taking of the action or the doing of the act or thing cannot be the subject of a lawful delegation, whether on account of s11(2)(a)-(n) (inclusive) of the Act or otherwise; or
6. the determining of the issue, the taking of the action or the doing of the act or thing is already the subject of an exclusive delegation to another member of Council staff.

**7.11 COUNCIL POLICY REVIEW (NO. 74 & NO. 83)**

**Author:** Phil Higgins, Acting Director Corporate Services  
**Authoriser:** Geoff Rollinson (Chief Executive Officer)

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council endorse the following reviewed policies:**

- 1. Policy No. 074 – Information Privacy and Health Records; and**
- 2. Policy No. 083 – Email, Internet and Intranet Management.**

**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 and Council documents which have recently been reviewed:

- Policy No. 083 – Email, Internet and Intranet
- Policy No. 074 – Information Privacy and Health Records

**PURPOSE**

This report addresses two recently reviewed policies for the consideration of Council. The purpose of these policies is to ensure the information that Council obtains and creates is available to authorised users so that they can make informed and timely decisions.

**DISCUSSION**

Council officers undertake regular reviews of Council policies to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and that they are reflective of current practice. Council policies are reviewed as needed; however, most policies must be reviewed within either 12 months or two years after a General Election. Reviewed policies are presented to Council for endorsement, or for repeal if it has been determined the policy is no longer required.

Council policies provide guidance to staff, Council and the community and are published on Council's website.

Below is a summary of recommended adjustments to reviewed policies and Council documents.

| Policy No. | Policy Title                           | Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 074        | Information Privacy and Health Records | The purpose of this policy is to balance the public interest in the free flow of information with the public interest in protecting the privacy of personal information.<br><br>The recommended adjustments are administrative changes, and reflecting Council no longer operates Community Care. |

|     |                              |                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 083 | Email, Internet and Intranet | The purpose of this policy is to ensure the proper use of Council's email, internet, and intranet systems.<br>The recommended adjustment is a grammatic change. |
|-----|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### RELEVANT LAW

- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*
- *Health Records Act 2001*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1982*
- *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Local Government Act 1989*
- *Local Government Act 2020*

### RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council Policy No. 083 – Email, Internet and Intranet was last reviewed and endorsed by Council on 17 August 2022.

Council Policy No. 074 – Information Privacy and Health Records was last reviewed and endorsed by Council on 18 October 2023.

### OPTIONS

Council may wish to endorse the recommended, or alternative adjustments or decide to not make any adjustments to the policies and Council documents at this time.

### SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

These policies relate to personal information and can have a social impact.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

### INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Council policies provide guidance to Council, staff and the community in decision making and service delivery.

Policies are reviewed as required; however, most policies must be reviewed within either 12 months or two years of a Council election. Regular reviews of Council policies ensure compliance with relevant legislation and that they are reflective of current practices.

### COLLABORATION

Not applicable.

### FINANCIAL VIABILITY

No implications on the current budget.

## **REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES**

The privacy principles are included in the policy.

## **COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES**

*Goal 3: Sustainability - Achieve long-term financial and environmental sustainability*

*4. Ensure transparent, inclusive decision-making through effective leadership.*

## **TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS**

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in this matter.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Policy 074 Information Privacy and Health Records [7.11.1 - 5 pages]
2. Policy 083 Email Internet Intranet [7.11.2 - 4 pages]



# Information Privacy and Health Records

## COUNCIL POLICY NO. 074

### 1. PURPOSE

Council is committed to ensuring that personal and health information received by the organisation is collected, handled and disposed of in a responsible manner and in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles incorporated within the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (PDPA) and the *Health Records Act 2001*.

In fulfilling these objectives, Council will:

- balance the public interest in the free flow of information with the public interest in protecting the privacy of personal information;
- balance the public interest in promoting open access to public sector information with the public interest in protecting its security;
- promote awareness of responsible personal information handling practices; and
- promote the responsible and transparent handling of personal information.

This policy:

- a) applies to all Gannawarra Shire Council Councillors, officers and contractors;
- b) covers all personal information held by Council; and
- c) includes information we have collected from third parties.

### 2. DEFINITIONS

**Health information** includes information or an opinion about a living or deceased person's physical, mental or psychological health; disability, wishes about provision of health services; or a health service provided, or to be provided.

**Health Privacy Principles (HPPs)** are a set of eleven principles that regulate how health information is handled. These principles underpin the Health Records Act.

- HPP 1 – Collection
- HPP 2 – Use and Disclosure
- HPP 3 – Data Quality
- HPP 4 – Data Security and Data Retention
- HPP 5 – Openness
- HPP 6 – Access and Correction
- HPP 7 – Identifiers
- HPP 8 – Anonymity
- HPP 9 – Transborder Data Flows
- HPP 10 – Transfer or/closure of the practice of a Health Service Provider
- HPP 11 – Making information available to another Health Service Provider

**Information Privacy Principles (IPPs)** are a set of ten principles that regulate how personal information is handled. These principles underpin the Privacy and Data Protection Act:

- IPP 1 – Collection
- IPP 2 – Use and Disclosure
- IPP 3 – Data Quality
- IPP 4 – Data Security
- IPP 5 – Openness
- IPP 6 – Access and correction
- IPP 7 – Unique Identifiers
- IPP 8 – Anonymity
- IPP 9 – Transborder Data Flows
- IPP 10 – Sensitive Information

**Personal information** is information or an opinion that is recorded in any form and whether true or not, that could identify a living person (including work related information and images).

**Sensitive information** includes information about a person's racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, philosophical or religious beliefs, sexual preferences or practices, criminal record or membership of trade unions, profession, political or trade associations.

### 3. ABOUT GANNAWARRA SHIRE COUNCIL

As a Council, it is our role to locally govern for all residents, visitors and ratepayers, and provide a range of programs and services that meet the needs of our community.

Many of our powers and functions are assigned to us by other acts of parliament. We also enforce local laws which affect our residents, businesses and visitors to the shire.

Our contact details are:

Telephone: 03 5450 9333  
Email: [council@gsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@gsc.vic.gov.au)  
Post: PO Box 287, Kerang 3579

### 4. POLICY

#### **What type of information does Council collect?**

Forms used by Council to collect personal or health information will provide notice of the purpose of collecting the information and will refer individuals to this Policy for information concerning Council's collection, handling and disclosure practices and procedures.

Council acknowledges the ten Information Privacy Principles (IPPs) contained in the Privacy and Data Protection Act, and the eleven Health Privacy Principles (HPPs) contained in the Health Records Act as being the cornerstone of information privacy.

The following departments within Council collect and use personal and health information:

- Building and Planning
- Local Laws
- Library
- Risk Management
- Accounts (Debtors)
- Infrastructure
- Governance
- Children's Services
- Environmental Health
- Community Sustainability
- Rates and Property Valuations
- Arts and Culture
- Human Resources/Payroll
- GIS
- Community Engagement

Council will only collect personal or health information that is necessary for the fulfilment of one or more of its statutory functions and legitimate business activities, and will do so by lawful and fair means and not in an unreasonably intrusive way.

The following are some examples of circumstances where Council will obtain personal information:

- Details of residents receiving community services, eg child care,
- Planning and Building Permit applications
- Food premises and animal registrations
- Details of volunteers, visitors, committee members
- Ratepayer information
- Applications, enquiries, submissions, surveys and complaints
- Photographs taken at meetings and events
- CCTV footage
- Correspondence from the public
- Insurance claim information
- Immunisations and Maternal and Child Health information.

Council may also collect sensitive information but will only so do where the person has given prior consent or as permitted by law.

The following Acts require the collection of personal information:

- *Domestic Animals Act 1994*
- *Health Records Act 2001*
- *Local Government Act 1989*
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
- *Valuation and Land Act 1960*

If it is reasonable and practical to do so, Council will only collect personal and health information directly from the individual. If personal or health information about an individual is collected from someone else, Council will take reasonable steps to make sure the affected individual is aware of this Policy.

Where it is lawful and practicable to do so, a person may be afforded the option of not identifying themselves when transacting with Council, however, identification is necessary when lodging a complaint with Council to prevent against malicious or non-genuine complaints.

Failure to provide personal information where required to do so may also obstruct Council in the fulfilment of its statutory functions and obligations.

Council's website can be visited anonymously as the site does not record or collect personal information other than information a person may choose to provide.

#### **What does Council do with information?**

Council will only use personal and health information for the purpose for which it was collected, for a related purpose that could easily be expected or where required by law (either privacy legislation or other laws).

At times, a person's consent may be sought to use or provide personal and/or health information to another organisation or for another purpose.

A unique identifier is a number or code that is assigned to someone's record to assist with identification (similar to a driver's licence or Medicare number). Unique identifiers created by another organisation will not be used as reference numbers or identifiers within Council.

Council does not prohibit the transfer of personal information outside of Victoria, but it does place restrictions on when it can occur. This is because the Privacy and Data Protection Act is a Victoria law and therefore the IPPs will not apply to organisations in a different state, territory or country.

Council will only transfer personal or health information outside Victoria in accordance with the provisions outlined in the Privacy and Data Protection Act and Health Records Act.

#### **What disclosures might be made by Council?**

Where it is reasonable and lawfully required to do so, Council will disclose collected personal information to relevant agencies.

Personal information may be disclosed by Council in various circumstances including:

- When someone requests to view a Public Register which Council is required by law to maintain eg Building Permits, Submissions, Dogs/Cats, Certificates of Registration. Owner or occupier names are only included on Gannawarra Shire Council public registers when required by law;
- Where required by other legislation eg ownership information as detailed within the *Fences Act 1958*;
- Where required by contracted service providers who undertake duties on Council's behalf eg waste removal;
- When required by Council's legal advisors, insurance claim agents and insurance providers, for the purposes of complaints or insurance claim investigation and resolution; or
- When in accordance with the public interest, for example to statutory authorities for consultative purposes eg VicRoads, Department Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH). All such disclosures are made under agreements requiring information to be handled in accordance with privacy legislation.

#### **How does Council ensure the information is accurate, up to date and secure?**

Council takes reasonable steps to ensure the information it holds is accurate, complete and current.

A number of procedural, physical, software and hardware safeguards are used, together with access controls, secure methods of communication and back up and disaster recovery systems to protect information from misuse and loss, unauthorised access, modification and disclosure.

Stored information is also archived in accordance with the *Public Records Act 1973*, which determines when it is appropriate to retain or dispose of personal and health information.

#### **How can a person access or correct information held by Council?**

Following the collection of personal information, the individual whose information has been collected, may contact Council for access to that information. The individual can contact the most relevant Council department directly or Council's FOI/Privacy Officer using the contact details in the 'About Gannawarra Shire Council' section on page 2.

Access will be provided except in the circumstances outlined in the Privacy and Data Protection Act, for example, where the information relates to legal proceedings or where the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* applies. If an individual believes that their personal information is inaccurate, incomplete or out of date, the individual may request Council to correct the information. The request will be dealt with in accordance with the Privacy and Data Protection Act.

#### **How does Council Handle Privacy complaints?**

If a person is dissatisfied with Council's handling of their personal and/or health information, a complaint may be made to Council's Privacy Officer. Complaints should be made in writing addressed to Gannawarra Shire Council, PO Box 287, Kerang Victoria 3579 or via email to [council@gsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@gsc.vic.gov.au).

All complaints will be investigated and handled with discretion and confidentiality and in accordance with Council Policy No. 117 – Complaint Handling, and Council's Complaint Handling Procedure. Both documents are available from Council's website, [www.gsc.vic.gov.au](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au) or provided upon request using the contact details in the 'About Gannawarra Shire Council' section on page 2.

If resolution is not satisfactorily achieved within Council, complaints may be re-directed to the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner (OVIC). OVIC will try to resolve your complaint through conciliation, talking through issues and attempting to resolve your complaint in a way that is acceptable to everyone, and which upholds the objectives of the Privacy and Data Protection Act.

OVIC contact details are:

Post: PO Box 24274, Melbourne Victoria 3001  
 Email: [enquiries@ovic.vic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@ovic.vic.gov.au)  
 Telephone: 1300 006 842 (9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday)  
 Website: [www.ovic.vic.gov.au](http://www.ovic.vic.gov.au)

## 5. RELATED PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES

N/A

## 6. REFERENCES/LEGISLATION

*Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*  
*Health Records Act 2001*  
*Freedom of Information Act 1982*  
*Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*  
*Local Government Act 1989*  
*Local Government Act 2020*

## 7. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.

At the time it was reviewed, this policy was compliant with the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

## 8. FURTHER INFORMATION

Members of the public may inspect all policies at Gannawarra Shire Council's Kerang and Cohuna office or online at [www.gsc.vic.gov.au](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au)

Any enquiries in relation to this policy should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer on (03) 5450 9333.

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|                     |            |                        |       |
|---------------------|------------|------------------------|-------|
| Originally adopted: | 1995       |                        |       |
| Reviewed:           | 31/11/2002 | Minute Book Reference: | 2455  |
| Reviewed:           | 24/11/2004 | Minute Book Reference: | 3816  |
| Reviewed:           | 27/06/2007 | Minute Book Reference: | 5895  |
| Reviewed:           | 16/12/2009 | Minute Book Reference: | 7764  |
| Reviewed:           | 19/12/2012 | Minute Book Reference: | 9658  |
| Reviewed:           | 22/06/2016 | Minute Book Reference: | 12419 |
| Reviewed:           | 17/10/2018 | Minute Book Reference: | 13736 |
| Reviewed:           | 18/12/2019 |                        |       |
| Reviewed:           | 20/10/2021 |                        |       |
| Reviewed:           | 18/10/2023 |                        |       |
| To be reviewed by:  | 2025       |                        |       |



# Email, Internet and Intranet

## COUNCIL POLICY NO. 083

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Email, internet and intranet services form part of the official business communication of Gannawarra Shire Council and as such email, internet and intranet services are governed by the same legislative requirements as all records.

Email messages, internet and intranet postings contain information about business activities and therefore can function as evidence of business transactions in a court of law. The records may also be required by Royal Commissions, auditors and other people/bodies to whom they may be subject and/or who request documents under Freedom of Information legislation.

Electronic communication systems should not be treated in isolation from Council's records management system.

### 2. POLICY STATEMENT

Email, internet and intranet services are the property of Gannawarra Shire Council and are provided to employees to be used primarily for legitimate business purposes.

Staff members with email access are responsible for archiving to records all relevant emails, sent or received.

All email, internet and intranet services including the data and messages contained within or transmitted via them are the property of Council and are primarily intended for business use only. Employees are advised that they do not have any personal or proprietary rights over such email, internet and intranet services. Council cannot guarantee the privacy or confidentiality of any email messages sent internally or via the Internet.

Council reserves the right, at any time and without the consent of the user, to inspect, monitor, examine, copy, store, forward, delete, filter and disclose the contents of email messages, internet and intranet history, especially in relation to subpoenas and legal disclosures.

Only the Chief Executive Officer or Director Corporate Services may instruct Information Communication Technology staff to provide access to staff email messages, internet or intranet history.

### 3. POLICY PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the proper use of Gannawarra Shire Council's email, internet and intranet systems.

This policy applies to all Council employees, councillors, contractors, consultants, third party vendors, temporary and casual staff of Gannawarra Shire Council.

Council makes email, internet and intranet services available to its staff so that they may efficiently share and exchange information in the pursuit of Council's goals and objectives.

Council is a diversified organisation where staff work varying hours and days. Email, internet and intranet services allow Council staff to overcome the barriers of time and space in communication.

## 4. POLICY

### 4.1 Email as Official Records

Email messages are official records of Council's business; legislation requires Council to be accountable for that business.

Transactions that provide evidence of business activities and are required for ongoing business should be documented in Council's records management system to provide an official record of:

- What happened
- What was decided
- What advice was given
- Who was involved
- When it happened
- Order of events and decisions

### 4.2 Internet and Intranet

Approved and current official Council public documents are posted on the Internet (website) and are readily available for members of the community and staff.

Approved and current official Council internal documents are posted on the Intranet and should in all circumstances be the first port of call for employee related policies and procedures.

### 4.3 Information Privacy

Sensitive or personal information transmitted by email, internet and intranet services cannot be guaranteed to be completely private as there is always potential for it to be read by or redirected to unauthorised persons.

Email, internet and intranet systems should not be assumed to be secure. When storing and communicating sensitive information or data, consideration must be given to how best to protect it.

Council information and information belonging to others, such as Council customers and suppliers must be protected from unauthorised or accidental disclosure, modification, damage or destruction, consistent with Council policy and the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014.

The most effective method of protecting stored information is within Council's records management system.

### 4.4 Management of Email

Email messages like other business records have different values, some are needed for ongoing business and others have only short-term value.

The value of an email message is determined by whether it relates to a business transaction/activity or contains information only or is a private message.

An electronic document becomes an electronic record when it takes part in a business transaction; records that document business activity are vital for supporting informed decision making and ensuring accountability.

Business transactions should be documented in Council's records management system. Email messages must be retained in accordance with approved retention periods as listed in the Local Government and General Administration Records Retention and Disposal Authorities.

The recipient of an email message must determine if the message is considered to be a business transaction that should be captured as an official record.

### 4.5 Management of Internet and Intranet Content

Following appropriate training, staff in positions required to manage website content may post updates, however all new content, excluding job vacancies, must be approved by a member of Council's communications team as website user manager, via the inbuilt workflows.

All staff may, and in fact are encouraged to, post content to the Intranet. Valid content includes internal-only documents and policies, links to professional and government bodies, official, social and charity events, and general information of an official or social nature. Department managers are responsible for ensuring information on the

Intranet pertaining to their respective department functions is current, accurate and appropriate.

The Intranet Message Board may be used for both professional and social purposes providing all postings remain appropriate (see 4.8. Inappropriate Use of Email, Internet and Intranet).

#### **4.6 General Use of Email, Internet and Intranet**

Reasonable personal use of Council's email, internet and intranet services is expected. Personal use is a privilege, which must be balanced in terms of operational needs; its use must be appropriate, lawful, efficient and ethical.

Any opinions expressed in email messages or internet and intranet postings, where they are not business related, should be specifically noted as personal opinions and not those of Council.

Email messages, together with internet and intranet postings must be treated in the same way as written correspondence on Council letterhead; only employees with specific delegated authority may commit the Council to any action or expenditure.

#### **4.7 Defamation Law**

Forwarding a defamatory email makes the forwarder liable as a joint publisher of the original material. Council may be exposed to liability in relation to defamatory emails sent by users.

Under no circumstances should email messages with defamatory content be forwarded. If in doubt, speak with your manager.

#### **4.8 Inappropriate Use of Email, Internet and Intranet**

- Using email, internet and intranet services for excessive non-business purposes.
- Sending 'chain' letters, 'hoax' mail or other mischievous use.
- Using email, internet and intranet services to solicit outside business ventures or actions.
- Using email, internet and intranet services to distribute software which is inconsistent with any vendor's licence agreement.
- Using email, internet and intranet services to request, access, transmit or convey fraudulent, illegal, offensive, sexually explicit, threatening, abusive or harassing materials.
- Using email, internet and intranet services to defame individuals, groups or organisations.
- Using email, internet and intranet services to harass, abuse, intimidate or interfere with the ability of others to conduct Council business.
- Accessing data without authorisation or attempt to breach any security measures within a system, attempting to intercept data transmissions without authorisation.
- Sending email messages or posting internet and/or intranet content of a defamatory nature.
- Use of email, internet and intranet services to disclose or transmit any classified, staff in confidence, commercial in confidence, restricted or sensitive material.

## **5. VIOLATIONS AND AUDITING OF THIS POLICY**

Council employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

Violating this policy may also contravene the law and subject the employee or Council to criminal or civil actions.

## **6. POLICY REVIEW**

Council will review this policy as required but always within two years after a general election of the Council.

At the time of review, this policy was compliant with the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*

## 7. FURTHER INFORMATION

Members of the public may inspect all Council policies at Gannawarra Shire Council’s Kerang and Cohuna office or online at [www.gsc.vic.gov.au](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au).

Any enquiries in relation to this policy should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer on (03) 5450 9333

Records – Document Profile No. 14/00456

Originally adopted: 2003

Reviewed: 25/06/2008

Reviewed: 15/09/2010

Reviewed: 28/06/2017

Reviewed: 17/08/2022

To be reviewed by: 2026

Minute Book Reference: 6625

Minute Book Reference: 8285

Minute Book Reference: 12551

**7.12 COUNCIL POLICY REVIEW (NO. 129 & NO. 137)**

**Author:** Paul Fernee, Director Community Wellbeing  
**Authoriser:** Geoff Rollinson (Chief Executive Officer)

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council:**

- 1. Endorse the revised Policy No. 129 Diversity.**
  - 2. Rescind Policy No. 137 Abuse and Neglect.**
- 

**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. 129 – Diversity
- Policy No. 137 – Abuse and Neglect

**PURPOSE**

This report addresses two recently reviewed policies for the consideration of Council.

**DISCUSSION**

Council officers undertake regular reviews of Council policies to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and that they reflect current practice. Council policies are reviewed as needed; however, most policies must be reviewed within either 12 months or two years after a General Election. Reviewed policies are presented to Council for endorsement, or for repeal if it has been determined that the policy is no longer required.

Council policies provide guidance to staff, Council and the community and are published on Council's website.

Two policies have been reviewed as a part of this report, being:

- Policy No. 129 – Diversity
- Policy No. 137 – Abuse and Neglect

Recommended adjustments have been made to Policy No. 129 – Diversity including:

- Addition of intersectionality and relevant definition, to ensure how Council views equity, access, and inclusion is clearly understood, ensuring that policies, programs, and community engagement are informed by the lived experiences of all community members.
  - Including commitment to addressing gender-based violence and inequality.
  - Reference to the *Gender Equality Act 2020*
  - Minor administrative changes.
-

Regarding Policy No. 137 – Abuse and Neglect, this relates to the delivery of Aged Care and Disability services, which Council exited in November 2023, and therefore recommends that Council rescind this, Policy.

**RELEVANT LAW**

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010*
- *Gender Equality Act 2020*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.*

A Gender Impact Assessment has been completed on the review of Policy No. 129 – Diversity with key recommendations included as part of the policy amendments.

**RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS**

Policy No. 129 – Diversity was last reviewed and endorsed by Council in May 2022.

Policy No. 137 – Abuse and Neglect was last reviewed and endorsed by Council in July 2022.

**OPTIONS**

Council may wish to endorse the recommendations, suggest alternative adjustments or decide to not make any adjustments to the policies.

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no sustainability implications regarding this report or recommendation.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The community has not been engaged in relation to the administrative review of these policies.

**INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

Council policies provide guidance to Council, staff and the community in decision making and service delivery.

**COLLABORATION**

Whilst the Policy review has not incorporated collaboration with specific partners, the implementation of Policy No. 129 – Diversity will include collaboration across Gannawarra through partnerships such as Gannawarra Local Agency Meeting (GLAM), Gannawarra Community Resilience Committee, Mallee Family Violence Executive and Buloke Loddon Gannawarra (BLG) Community Wellbeing Network.

**FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

There are no financial implications from the review of these policies or recommendations provided.

**REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES**

The Policy has not been specifically aligned with any Regional, State or National Plans as the Policy specifically relates to Gannawarra Shire Council's commitment to community diversity. The policy will be used to guide future planning for the Gannawarra community alongside partners.

### **COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES**

*Goal 1: Liveability - Enhance the wellbeing and liveability of the Gannawarra through infrastructure development and services.*

*1. Celebrate our diverse identity and maximise community health, wellbeing and safety.*

### **TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS**

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in this matter.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. 137 Abuse and Neglect [7.12.1 - 4 pages]
2. 129 Diversity [7.12.2 - 2 pages]

# Abuse and Neglect

## COUNCIL POLICY NO. 137

### 1. POLICY PURPOSE

Gannawarra Shire Council affirms the right of older people and people with disabilities to live their lives free from abuse, neglect and exploitation. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote the human rights of people accessing supports and services provided;
- Create a service environment where risks to the rights and wellbeing of people receiving supports and services are minimised; and
- Ensure that if we become aware of an instance of abuse or neglect, we respond promptly, professionally and compassionately to address the situation in accordance with National Disability Service Practice Standards, *Aged Care Act 1997* and Critical Incident Management System.

### 2. DEFINITIONS

#### Abuse

- Any physical injury which has been caused by other than accidental means, including any injury which is different to the explanation given to the injury.
- Sexual molestation.
- Mental injury (also known as emotional abuse), which is harmful to an individual's ability to think reason, or has a harmful effect on an individual, which can be observed.
- Threat of harm, which includes all activities, conditions and persons which places an individual at substantial risk of physical or sexual abuse, neglect, or mental injury. This includes exposure to domestic violence.

#### Neglect

- When an individual's basic needs, such as their developmental, emotional and physical wellbeing and safety, have not been met.

#### Employee

- Staff, Volunteers and Contractors are classified as employees in this policy.

#### Caregiver

- Any person that provides informal supports for family, friends or community residents.

### 3. SCOPE

This policy highlights the responsibility of all employees to immediately report all suspicion or allegations of abuse and neglect to Gannawarra Shire Council management within appropriate timeframes.

## 4. REQUIREMENTS

Gannawarra Shire Council is committed to:

- Ensuring clients are safe – older people and those with a disability experience physical and emotional safety and are free from abuse, neglect and avoidable injury.
- Providing information in regard to accessing advocacy to deal with allegations of abuse and neglect.
- Providing training to all community care staff upon commencement of employment in regard to identification and reporting of abuse and neglect.
- Responding to any suspicion regarding any potential abuse and neglect to Department Families, Fairness and Housing/Department of Health/NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission or the local police within the required timeframe.
- Upholding fairness and equity standards throughout the investigation of all abuse and neglect allegations.
- Ensuring clients are in receipt of the highest level of quality care.

## 5. POLICY DETAILS

Abuse is a term that may have different meanings for different people. It is fundamentally a violation of an individual's human rights by another person and reflects a power imbalance between the two parties. Older people or those with disabilities may be more vulnerable to abuse as their level of dependence increases and they rely on others for assistance with activities of daily living. Abuse may involve a single act, repeated behaviour or a lack of appropriate action.

Neglect refers to the failure of the employee and/or caregiver to provide necessities or meet basic needs of the client. Neglect can be deliberate or unintended. If it is deliberate, it is considered to be a form of abuse. If it is unintentional, the response will be different and may include the introduction of other services to provide assistance.

Gannawarra Shire Council recognises that each situation is different and that there is an expectation to exercise a degree of professional judgement when determining the most appropriate responses. Gannawarra Shire Council will endeavour to always act in the best interests of the individual who has been abused.

### 5.1 Types of Abuse

**Elder Abuse:** this is the non-accidental use of force to inflict injury or pain on the elderly. Elder abuse can take form in the following ways; Financial abuse, Physical abuse, Sexual abuse, Psychological/Emotional abuse and Social abuse. These types of abuse are also addressed below.

**Financial Abuse:** is defined as the illegal or improper use and/or mismanagement of a person's money, property or resources. It includes forgery, stealing, forced changes to a will, unusual transfer of money or property to another person, withholding of funds from another person, incurring debts for which the individual is responsible, failure of others to repay monies loaned and lack of financial information provided to an individual by their power of attorney.

**Physical Abuse:** is defined as a non-accidental act which results in physical pain or injury and includes physical or chemical restrains or coercion, hitting, slapping, burning, pushing, pinching or forced confinement to a bed, chair or particular place.

Signs of physical abuse include injury or bruises in different stages of healing, abrasions, welts, rashes, swelling, unexplained injuries or hair loss, tenderness or pain when being touched, acting fearfully and being over or under medicated or sedated.

**Sexual Abuse:** includes non-consensual sexual contact, language or exploitation behaviour including rape, indecent assault, sexual harassment or interference. It may also include viewing obscene material or making obscene phone calls in the presence of a child, older person or person with a disability without their consent.

**Psychological/Emotional Abuse:** comprises any language or actions designed to intimidate another person and cause fear of violence, isolation, deprivation, or feelings of powerlessness. Examples include insults and intimidation.

**Social Abuse:** involves restricting or ceasing activities and/or social contact with others, including family members. The alleged abuser may not allow the individual to be alone with other people and may attend medical and other appointments with them. They may also withhold mail and monitor, restrict or prohibit use of the telephone. In some cases the individual may be moved away from their family and community.

## 5.2 Types of Neglect

Neglect can be physical, emotional or financial. It refers to situations where a person has a responsibility to provide care or assistance to an individual but fails to do so. For example, a neglectful caregiver may be one that ceases paying bills or providing food. Abandoning the client is also a form of neglect.

## 5.3 Reporting

Gannawarra Shire Council's Chief Executive Officer is required by law under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic) and the *Crimes Act 1958* to immediately report any suspected cases of abuse or neglect. All suspected cases are to be reported to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing/Department of Health/NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission and Victoria Police.

## 5.4 Service Procedures

A report of abuse may be received from:

- A person using a service by verbal or written communication or any other communication method
- A member of staff or any other person, who may witness abuse of a person and make a report
- A member of staff observing one or more indicators of abuse and who suspects that a person/s has been or is being abused.

## 5.5 Support for Clients

Gannawarra Shire Council will assist any client, family member, guardian or other support person to access any debriefing, counselling, legal or other support services, if that is their expressed wish.

In addition, they will be referred to Victims of Crime – 1800 819 817 so that they are further aware of their rights and of other support services that may be available.

Gannawarra Shire Council will further endeavour to:

- Ensure that clients, both victim and offender, are adequately supported by an independent person, who could be a relative friend, advocacy service or legal practitioner
- Support the victim, family or guardian in accessing services and advice should they choose to pursue the matter through the legal system
- Provide information regarding legal rights, options and support services in a form that suits the client, family or guardian's communication needs.

## 5.6 Support for Staff

Gannawarra Shire Council managers will provide debriefing to their staff within 24 hours of an incident occurring and offer access to Council's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) in accordance with Employee Policy No. 020 – Employee Assistance Program.

## 5.7 Staff Training

Gannawarra Shire Council will discuss identification and reporting of suspected abuse and neglect during the staff induction process. Further training will be provided to all employees who have direct contact with clients upon commencement of their employment.

Gannawarra Shire Council aims to promote a culture of reporting, where all employees are encouraged to report all concerns and observations made to a Gannawarra Shire Council representative.

## 5.8 Access

The abuse and neglect policy and content will be communicated to all clients through the assessment and annual review process.

## 5.9 Confidentiality

All reports will be documented and protected. At the conclusion of any investigation the report may be transferred to the client's file. Confidentiality of all records will be strictly maintained.

# 6. POLICY REVIEW

Council will review this policy as required but always within two years after a general election of the Council.

At the time of review, this policy was compliant with the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

# 7. FURTHER INFORMATION

Members of the public may inspect all Council policies at Gannawarra Shire Council's Kerang and Cohuna offices or online at [www.gsc.vic.gov.au](http://www.gsc.vic.gov.au).

Any enquiries in relation to this policy should be directed to the Director Community Wellbeing Chief Executive Officer on (03) 5450 9333.

Altus ECM Reference: 3.000518

Originally adopted:

17/07/2019

Reviewed:

20/07/2022

To be reviewed

2026



# Diversity

## COUNCIL POLICY NO.129

### 1. POLICY STATEMENT

To demonstrate Gannawarra Shire Council's commitment to community diversity. Gannawarra Shire Council believes in the inherent strength of a vibrant, diverse and inclusive community where the backgrounds, perspectives and life experiences of our people help us to forge strong, respectful connections.

### 2. POLICY

Gannawarra Shire Council is committed to:

- Supporting and encouraging diversity in the community. The policy has been developed in recognition of the changing population of Gannawarra Shire and of the richness that diversity brings to social, political and community life.
- Addressing gender-based violence and economic inequality through engagement with diverse groups and maintaining and strengthening regional partnerships.
- Providing adequate, equitable and appropriate services and facilities to the local community taking into account their diverse needs and community cohesion; and encouraging active participation in public and civic life.

This policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- *Respect*: The need to respect and make provision for the culture, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical and mental abilities, religious beliefs and political beliefs within an Australian legal and institutional framework.
- *Intersectional Inclusion*: Gannawarra Shire Council recognises that diversity is multidimensional and that individuals may experience distinct and compounded barriers at the intersection of multiple identities. An intersectional understanding guides how Council views equity, access, and inclusion are understood, ensuring that policies, programs, and community engagement are informed by the lived experiences of all community members. *Community Relations and Civic Engagement*: All individuals in the Gannawarra Shire should have an equal opportunity to contribute to and participate in all aspects of public and civic life.
- *Accessible and Equitable Service Provision*: All individuals should have equal opportunity to make use of and participate in relevant activities and services provided by Gannawarra Shire Council.
- *Economic Drivers: Using Diversity for Competitive Advantage*: Recognise the diverse population of Gannawarra Shire Council as a valuable resource and promote this resource to maximise the social and economic development of the community.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

**Diversity**: Relates to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical and mental abilities, religious beliefs and political beliefs within Australian law.

**Intersectionality**: is a framework for understanding how various aspects of a person's identity—such as race, gender, class, sexuality, or disability—intersect and combine to create unique, overlapping experiences of privilege, discrimination, or disadvantage.

## 4. RELATED LEGISLATION

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010*
- *Gender Equality Act 2020*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.*

## 5. POLICY REVIEW

Council will review this policy as required but always within two years after a general election.

At the time it was developed, this policy was compliant with the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

## 6. FURTHER INFORMATION

Members of the public may inspect all Council policies at Gannawarra Shire Council's Kerang and Cohuna office or online at [www.gannawarra.vic.gov.au](http://www.gannawarra.vic.gov.au).

Any enquiries, in relation to this policy should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer on (03) 5450 9333.

Records – ECM Folder: 3.000518  
Originally adopted: 15/07/2015  
Reviewed: 18/04/2018  
Reviewed: 18/05/2022  
Reviewed: 18/02/2026

Minute Book Reference: 11842

## 8 URGENT BUSINESS

### 8.1 KOONDROOK CARAVAN PARK

**Author:** Phil Higgins, Acting Director Corporate Services  
**Authoriser:** Geoff Rollinson (Chief Executive Officer)

#### RECOMMENDATION

That Council

1. Continue to operate the land in Keene Street Koondrook as a Caravan Park;
  2. Review operating arrangements and assets at the Koondrook Caravan Park and report back to Council;
  3. Prepare legal documentation for the lease of the Koondrook Caravan Park, including the Koondrook Retreat facility; and
  4. Arrange interim arrangements for the operation of the Koondrook Caravan Park from 2 April 2026 until the new lease arrangements for the Koondrook Caravan Park begin operation.
- 

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council received a letter from the lessees of the Koondrook Caravan Park (KCP) on 24 December 2025, that they are relinquishing the lease of the KCP on 2 April 2026.

The KCP adjoins the Koondrook Retreat (KR) where the glamping tents are situated on crown land. The two tourism facilities are operated by separate entities on separate lease arrangements. The KCP in Keene Street is on prime land on the banks of the Murray River and could be utilised for several different purposes in either Council or private ownership.

The recommendation is to remain in Council ownership, to continue to run it as a caravan park and to combine the operating arrangements for the KCP and KR.

#### PURPOSE

To consider options for the operations of the Koondrook Caravan Park (KCP), with the aim of promoting tourism in the Gannawarra.

#### DISCUSSION

Council received a letter from the lessees of the KCP on 24 December 2025, that they are relinquishing the lease of the KCP on 2 April 2026.

The existing lease of the KCP concludes on 2 April 2026, with a renewal option for the lessee for a further three years.

Adjoining the KCP is the KR where the glamping tents are situated, which is under a different title and not attached to the existing KCP lease.

Koondrook Retreat is a council owned facility situated on crown land. The details of the service agreement are that it commenced on 15 December 2022 and expires on 15 December 2026.

#### RELEVANT LAW

- Residential Tenancies Act 1997
-

- Retail Leases Act 2003

**RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS**

Council received two Briefing reports on the Koondrook Caravan Park in September 2025 and November 2025.

**OPTIONS**

The Council has several options. The first key question is what does Council wish to do with the land? The options include:-

- Subdivision and sale of the land as residential;
- Subdivision and sale of the land as commercial;
- Sell the land in its current state;
- Subdivide and rent / lease the land as commercial;
- Subdivide and rent / lease the land as residential;
- Lease / rent the land as a Caravan Park;
- Some other option as determined by Council.

If the Council wishes to continue to operate the land as a Caravan park, there are several other options to consider with this. They include:

- Combine the lease operations of the Koondrook Retreat area and the caravan park;
- The legal arrangements for the lease / rental including terms, options, rent determination (market rental, percentage of income), capital improvements, tenancy arrangements (cabins, permanent residence, camp sites, ensuites);
- Interim arrangements with the renewal period of the lease of the caravan park being April 2026 and the Koondrook Retreat being December 2026.

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

There are social implications with the caravan park with some permanent residences in the park at present.

There are economic implications with the caravan park providing a tourism accommodation opportunity for the area.

There are environmental implications as the area adjoins the Murray River and a forest area.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

If the land continues to be utilised as a caravan park, the lease would be publicly advertised. Any change of land zoning would require planning approval. The sale of Council land also requires public advertising.

**INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

A new lessee may bring new ideas to the operation of the KCP.

**COLLABORATION**

Not applicable.

**FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

The financial operations of the Koondrook Caravan Park were provided to the October Briefing session. The details show that the Koondrook Caravan Park operations over the three-year period 2022/23 to 2024/25 showed an operating loss of \$88K due to depreciation of \$120K.

The Koondrook Retreat over the same period showed an operating loss of \$64K due to depreciation of \$96K.

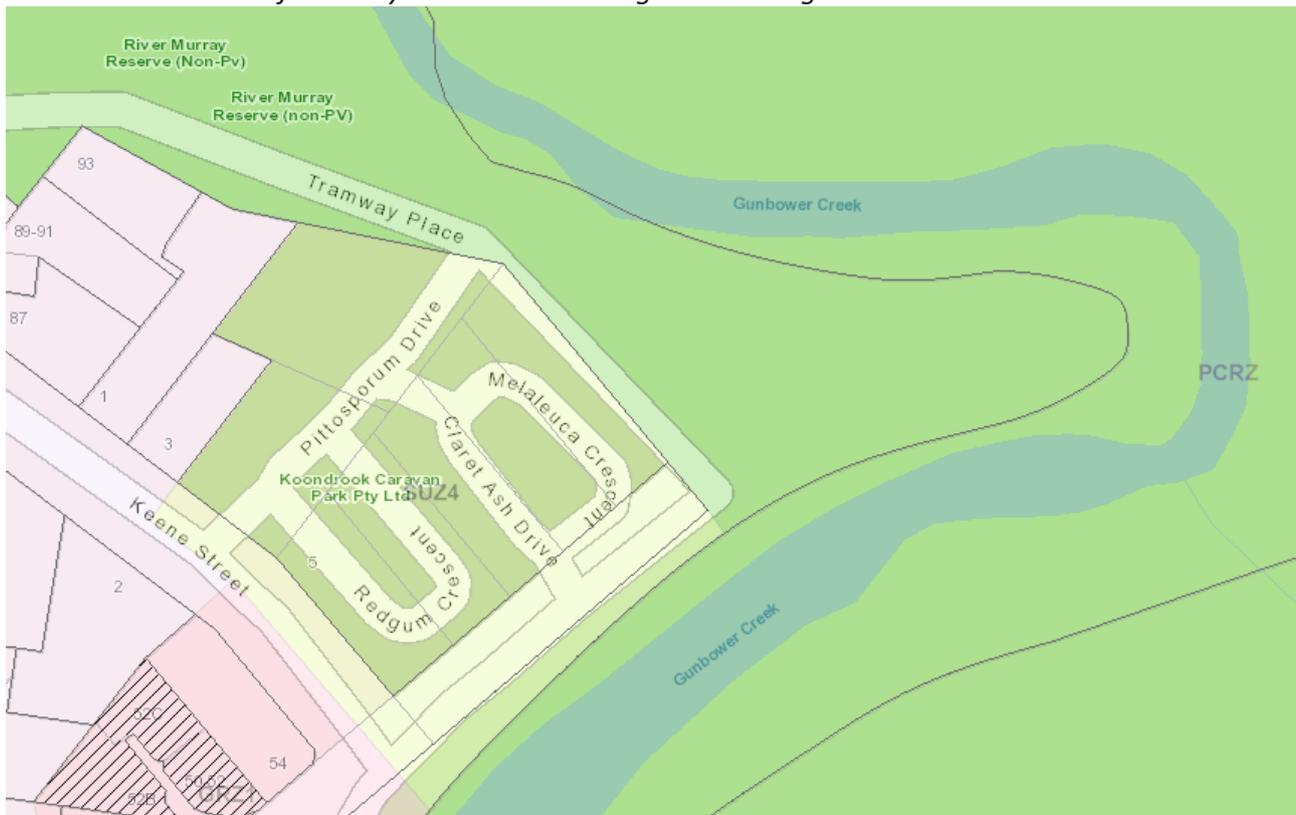
### REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

The land is currently zoned Special Use Zone - Schedule 4 (SUZ4) – Caravan Park.

Where the purpose under this clause is to:

*To recognise and provide for the use and development of land for tourism facilities including the Koondrook Caravan Park.*

*To ensure that the development of these facilities takes place in an orderly and proper manner and does not cause loss of amenity to the surrounding area or neighbourhood.*



The parcels are covered by a Bushfire Management Overlay, Heritage Overlay (HO13) and Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO). Most developments and change in use will require a Planning permit application.

### COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

*Goal 2: Growth - Grow the Gannawarra through a diverse and broad economy.*

*2. Promote tourism and events that showcase Gannawarra.*

### TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report will be considered in an open Council meeting.

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The officer preparing this report declares that they have no conflict of interest in this matter.

### ATTACHMENTS

{attachment-list}

**9 NOTICES OF MOTION**

Nil

## 10 QUESTION TIME

*Question Time provides an opportunity for members of the public to submit questions, in advance, to gain a response at the Council meeting.*

### QUESTIONS FROM THE GALLERY

Completed Question Time forms must be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer via email [council@gsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@gsc.vic.gov.au) no later than 5:00pm on the day prior to the Council meeting.

A maximum number of two questions may be submitted in writing by any one person.

Questions will be read by the author, Mayor or Chief Executive Officer.

The Mayor or Chief Executive Officer may indicate that they require further time to research an answer. In this case, an answer will be provided in writing generally within ten (10) business days.

Questions will be answered at the meeting, or later in writing, unless the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer has determined that the relevant question seeks confidential information defined in Section 3 of the Local Government Act 2020 such as:

- Council business information
- security information
- land use planning information
- law enforcement information
- legal privileged information
- personal information
- private commercial information
- confidential meeting information
- internal arbitration information
- Councillor Conduct Panel confidential information
- an issue outside the Gannawarra Shire Council core business

or if the question is:

- defamatory, indecent, abusive or objectionable in language or substance
- repetitive of a question already answered (whether at the same or an earlier meeting)
- asked to embarrass a Councillor or Council officer.

No debate or discussion of questions or answers shall be permitted and all questions and answers shall be as brief as possible.

## 11 DELEGATES REPORTS

### 11.1 DELEGATES REPORTS

**Author:** Jodie Basile, Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer  
**Authoriser:** Geoff Rollinson (Chief Executive Officer)

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council has memberships with peak Local Government associations, local and regional forums, along with statutory committees. Some memberships require that a Councillor be appointed to act as a delegate to formally represent Council, typically in a voting capacity.

This Agenda item provides an opportunity for Council appointed delegates to present a verbal update on any pertinent matters arising from Council's membership with the following associations.

| COUNCILLOR COMMITTEES 2025/2026                           |                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| COMMITTEE                                                 | COUNCILLOR                         |
| Murray River Group of Councillors (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 Keith Link                      |
| Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)                   | Cr Ross Stanton                    |
| Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) (x2)                       | Cr Garner Smith<br>Cr Ross Stanton |
| Transport Connections                                     | 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                      |
| Community Resilience Committee                            | Cr Keith Link                      |

| <b>Geoff Rollinson, Chief Executive Officer, took Annual Leave from 19 December 2025, returning on 12 January 2026. Wade Williams was the Acting Chief Executive Officer during this time</b> |                                                  |                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Geoff Rollinson, CEO                                                                                                                                                                          | 1 December 2025                                  | December Council Briefing Session in Kerang                           |
|                                                                                                                                                                                               | 2 December 2025                                  | Energy Project Meeting                                                |
|                                                                                                                                                                                               | 3 December 2025                                  | Executive Leadership Team Meeting                                     |
|                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                  | Councillor Christmas Dinner at Leitchville                            |
|                                                                                                                                                                                               | 5 December 2025                                  | Gannawarra Shire Staff Christmas Party in Kerang                      |
|                                                                                                                                                                                               | 8 December 2025                                  | The Glasshouse Official Opening in Kerang                             |
|                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                  | Mallee Regional Partnership Meeting in Kerang                         |
|                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                  | Murray River Group of Councils CEO/Mayor Meeting and Dinner in Kerang |
|                                                                                                                                                                                               | 10 December 2025                                 | GLAM Partnership signing and lunch in Koondrook                       |
|                                                                                                                                                                                               | 11 December 2025                                 | VICGRID Focus Group Meeting                                           |
|                                                                                                                                                                                               | 15 December 2025                                 | MAV Monday Connect                                                    |
|                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                  | Kerang BESS Briefing                                                  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                  | Meeting with Ian Robe, Cohuna Progress in Cohuna                      |
|                                                                                                                                                                                               | 17 December 2025                                 | Executive Leadership Team Meeting                                     |
| Management Team Meeting                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                  |                                                                       |
| Weekly Meeting with Mayor                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                  |                                                                       |
| December Council Meeting in Kerang                                                                                                                                                            |                                                  |                                                                       |
| Wade Williams, Acting CEO                                                                                                                                                                     | 18 December 2025                                 | Northern Mallee Integrated Water Meeting                              |
|                                                                                                                                                                                               | 19 December 2025                                 | Meeting with Grampians Wimmera Water                                  |
| Geoff Rollinson, CEO                                                                                                                                                                          | 14 January 2026                                  | Executive Leadership Team Meeting                                     |
|                                                                                                                                                                                               | 15 January 2026                                  | Unison Housing Project Meeting                                        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                  | Weekly Meeting with Mayor                                             |
|                                                                                                                                                                                               | 16 January 2026                                  | NDCH Friends of Community Meeting                                     |
|                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                  | Unveiling of First Nations Plaque at Kerang District Health           |
|                                                                                                                                                                                               | 19 January 2026                                  | January Council Briefing Session                                      |
|                                                                                                                                                                                               | 21 January 2026                                  | Executive Leadership Team meeting                                     |
| Australia Day Civic Ceremony Awards Night                                                                                                                                                     |                                                  |                                                                       |
| 26 January 2026                                                                                                                                                                               | Australia Day and Citizenship Ceremony in Kerang |                                                                       |

|                                      |                  |                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                      | 28 January 2026  | VP Minerals Presentation<br>Executive Leadership Team Meeting                                                      |
|                                      | 29 January 2026  | Loddon Campaspe Councils CEO Meeting                                                                               |
|                                      | 30 January 2026  | Northern Mallee Integrated Water Meeting                                                                           |
| <b>Cr Garner Smith, Mayor</b>        |                  |                                                                                                                    |
|                                      | 1 December 2025  | December Council Briefing Session in Kerang                                                                        |
|                                      | 3 December 2025  | Councillor Christmas Dinner at Leitchville                                                                         |
|                                      | 4 December 2025  | Timber Towns Victoria AGM                                                                                          |
|                                      | 8 December 2025  | The Glasshouse Official Opening in Kerang<br>Murray River Group of Councils CEO/Mayor Meeting and Dinner in Kerang |
|                                      | 9 December 2025  | Meeting with Koondrook Progress                                                                                    |
|                                      | 10 December 2025 | NGSC Transmission Meeting                                                                                          |
|                                      | 11 December 2025 | Community Kindness BBQ<br>Dingwall CWA Meeting in Kerang                                                           |
|                                      | 17 December 2025 | December Council Meeting in Kerang                                                                                 |
|                                      | 14 January 2026  | NGSC Transmission Meeting                                                                                          |
|                                      | 15 January 2026  | Weekly Meeting with CEO                                                                                            |
|                                      | 19 January 2026  | January Council Briefing Session                                                                                   |
|                                      | 21 January 2026  | Australia Day Civic Ceremony Awards Night                                                                          |
|                                      | 26 January 2026  | Australia Day and Citizenship Ceremony in Kerang<br>Australia Day Ceremony in Leitchville                          |
| <b>Cr Ross Stanton, Deputy Mayor</b> |                  |                                                                                                                    |
|                                      | 1 December 2025  | December Council Briefing Session in Kerang                                                                        |
|                                      | 3 December 2025  | Councillor Christmas Dinner at Leitchville                                                                         |
|                                      | 8 December 2025  | The Glasshouse Official Opening in Kerang                                                                          |
|                                      | 17 December 2025 | December Council Meeting in Kerang                                                                                 |
|                                      | 19 January 2026  | January Council Briefing Session                                                                                   |
|                                      | 26 January 2026  | Australia Day Ceremony in Murrabit                                                                                 |
| <b>Cr Daniel Bolitho</b>             |                  |                                                                                                                    |
|                                      | 3 December 2025  | Councillor Christmas Dinner at Leitchville                                                                         |
|                                      | 4 December 2025  | CVGA Board Meeting #53                                                                                             |

|                              |                  |                                                  |
|------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
|                              | 10 December 2025 | NGSC Transmission Meeting                        |
|                              | 16 December 2025 | VNI West CRG Meeting at Charlton Park            |
|                              | 14 January 2026  | NGSC Transmission Meeting                        |
| <b>Cr Lisa Farrant</b>       |                  |                                                  |
|                              | 1 December 2025  | December Council Briefing Session in Kerang      |
|                              | 3 December 2025  | Councillor Christmas Dinner at Leitchville       |
|                              |                  |                                                  |
|                              | 17 December 2025 | December Council Meeting in Kerang               |
|                              | 19 January 2026  | January Council Briefing Session                 |
|                              | 26 January 2026  | Australia Day Ceremony in Koondrook              |
| <b>Cr Charlie Gillingham</b> |                  |                                                  |
|                              | 1 December 2025  | December Council Briefing Session in Kerang      |
|                              | 8 December 2025  | The Glasshouse Official Opening in Kerang        |
|                              | 17 December 2025 | December Council Meeting in Kerang               |
|                              | 19 January 2026  | January Council Briefing Session                 |
|                              | 26 January 2026  | Australia Day Ceremony in Lake Charm             |
| <b>Cr Keith Link</b>         |                  |                                                  |
|                              | 1 December 2025  | December Council Briefing Session in Kerang      |
|                              | 3 December 2025  | Councillor Christmas Dinner at Leitchville       |
|                              | 8 December 2025  | The Glasshouse Official Opening in Kerang        |
|                              | 9 December 2025  | Municipal Fire Management Meeting in Kerang      |
|                              | 17 December 2025 | December Council Meeting in Kerang               |
|                              | 21 January 2026  | Australia Day Civic Ceremony Awards Night        |
|                              | 26 January 2026  | Australia Day Ceremony in Cohuna and Leitchville |
| <b>Cr Pat Quinn</b>          |                  |                                                  |
|                              | 1 December 2025  | December Council Briefing Session in Kerang      |
|                              | 3 December 2025  | Councillor Christmas Dinner at Leitchville       |
|                              | 8 December 2025  | The Glasshouse Official Opening in Kerang        |

|  |                  |                                           |
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|  | 17 December 2025 | December Council Meeting in Kerang        |
|  | 19 January 2026  | January Council Briefing Session          |
|  | 21 January 2026  | Australia Day Civic Ceremony Awards Night |
|  | 26 January 2026  | Australia Day Ceremony in Quambatook      |

**12 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

Nil